

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Holly Wilson  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Immaculate Conception School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3555A S Fremont  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Springfield State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 65804-4237

County Greene

Telephone (417) 881-7000 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://scspk12.org/schools/ic.html E-mail hwilson@scspk12.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Deacon Rob Huff E-mail rhuff@dioscg.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Springfield Catholic School District Tel. (417) 866-0841

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Kent Lammers  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave .blank*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. . For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - Middle/Junior high schools
  - High schools
  - K-12 schools
- TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	27	28	55
K	31	16	47
1	31	23	54
2	26	34	60
3	28	18	46
4	18	42	60
5	23	31	54
6	16	16	32
7	30	17	47
8	23	22	45
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	253	247	500

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 86 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: ≤1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	500
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Indian, Italian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %

0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 14

8. Students receiving special education services 2 %

With an IEP or 504: 10 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2016	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

A vibrant, caring community of Christian families and individuals dedicated to the formation of young people who will be prepared to lead society into the future in a manner that will be pleasing to God.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

Equal Employment

The Springfield Catholic Schools System is committed to providing an equal employment opportunity, and there shall be no discrimination against a present or prospective employee because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, citizenship, disability or handicap, as provided by applicable state or federal laws. It is the policy of the Springfield Catholic Schools System to promote equal opportunity in all areas, including recruitment, employment, training, development, transfer and promotion, consistent with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

17. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.





## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Springfield, Missouri, was incorporated in 1838. The area grew quickly as a center of commerce, farming, and transportation. Established in 1868 and 1870, respectively, Immaculate Conception parish and school were the first Catholic Church and school in the Springfield area. The school relocated along with the parish and settled in its present location in 1980. Since then there have been five additions to the school, in 1988, 1991, 1997, 2003, and 2011. Immaculate Conception School (IC) has two classrooms at each grade level and serves on average 500 students in preschool through 8th grade. We are one of four elementary buildings in the city and together our schools feed into the local Catholic High School. Our students gain the educational foundation to accomplish their dreams, as our graduating high school classes, composed of mostly our IC students, boast above average ACT scores and a 98% college attendance.

The climate of Immaculate Conception School can be best described as a family. Faculty, staff, and administration, with faith at the center, place an emphasis on the involvement of parents in the education of their children. Parents are seen as the first and most important teachers of their children. Maintaining our Catholic identity and presence in the community through service is a priority. In addition there is a strong sense of community and collegiality among the faculty, staff, and administration.

Immaculate Conception School's focus in the future will remain on the importance of educating the whole child, spiritually, emotionally, and academically. To that end we continue to emphasize the integration of the Catholic faith, social-emotional health, and current learning standards into the curriculum.

In recent years, Immaculate Conception School has undertaken and accomplished the following:

completed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) approved and numerous safety renovations to protect from intruders and provide more access to school and grounds, updated core curriculums for kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8) supported by our resources and assessments, implemented social emotional learning (SEL) programs and iReady assessments, developed a middle school campus and program, continued focus on professional development (PD) through monthly professional development, participated in annual book studies, utilized the newly created mentor program and leadership team, created an Official Accommodations Plan (OAP) to bridge the gap for those students struggling to succeed, provided a wide-range of community builders and volunteer positions to strengthen our resolve, and served others with our continual community student-led service projects throughout the school year.

Covid-19 challenged and continues to challenge many schools in the nation. Immaculate Conception School rose to that challenge from day one and did not miss one day of instruction throughout the current pandemic. The following have been developed to teach children not only during the Covid-19 years, but beyond in large part due to our flexible, passionate, and dedicated faculty and staff:

1:1 technological devices with the new software and programs to support virtual learning in grades K-8, online textbook access for all students including new series in mathematics in grades K-8, new and improved cleaning and sanitation practices building-wide, safer protocols for drop off and pick up in our three carlines each morning and afternoon, more effective communication for daily interaction with students and parents, and additional staffing to support individualized learning needs including counselors.

Immaculate Conception started IC Online in March 2020 and continued this program for preschool through eighth grade until May 2020. In August 2020 to the present day, we have successfully provided seated instruction for all our students. Regardless of the health challenges, we have provided stability for families and effective instruction to the entire student body and will continue to do so long after Covid-19 is no longer a threat.

One visit to our building and you will witness the future and its promise. Immaculate Conception School teachers educate the entire child and this has resulted in waiting lists for the current and upcoming year. Our mission is clear, and our faculty and staff are focused on making a difference in the lives of the children who enter our doors each day. It is a large school, but we all know each other's names, we interact throughout the

school day in our faith and learning, we respect each other's differences, and we strive to be the best versions of ourselves each and every day.

We have never sought this esteemed honor, but we look forward to someday joining the impressive list of recipients. We hope to be able to share our successes with other schools, in order to provide for the children of our nation who are in the greatest of need. Immaculate Conception School is anchored by faith and service. We seek to serve other schools both public and non-public, and hope you will grant us the opportunity.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

#### **1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:**

When taking a tour of our campus, one can see that Immaculate Conception School has current textbooks, well-equipped classrooms, and all the latest technology and tools. More importantly though, those touring see our school utilizes our best assets for instruction-our teachers. Our faculty and staff are committed to using all of the resources to motivate and engage students and to individualize instruction for each of our learners. Our faculty and staff consists of more than 90% IC alumni, current parents, former parents, or grandparents. This dedication and investment in the future of IC is evident in the time and love of our school, parish, system, families. Failure is not an option and we support each family and student in all aspects of learning and life. We are traditional and firmly rooted in research-based instructional strategies, but we also know how to use all the bells and whistles to enhance learning!

In recent years, we have adopted the iReady online program to better assess student performance and improve targeted instruction. This piece of the puzzle guides us in helping students master concepts regardless of their level or past experiences. Without excuse, IC teaches the children that are given to us, and we work to help them reach goals in learning and most importantly life.

Our school has also added a social emotional learning curriculum, a school counseling team, a guardian angel program, and in-school tutoring to help families and students. Our use of Clever, SeeSaw, and the Google Suite has been the largest game-changer for our distance instruction. We do not have the staffing to offer full-time online schooling, but our teachers utilize these tools to support students short-term who are not able to attend seated classes due to Covid. Our school has created not only health plans but alternative method of instruction (AMI) plans throughout these past months. These adaptations have kept the "Covid Slide" at bay and made learning continue despite the challenges our world faces.

Our job is to educate and we have not lost sight of that duty since March of 2020.

#### **1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Instructional methods used in English language arts (ELA) classes include a wide range of instructional techniques. Each teacher varies instruction to reach the largest number of learners. Reading and writing lessons are often integrated into topics from science and social studies. Upon entering a classroom at IC one would see whole class instruction, small groups and centers to address specific needs, students working cooperatively both instruction and practice, online tools used to provide tiered instruction for homework and in reading/writing stations, and support from paraprofessionals and reading coaches. Everyone is challenged to be active and engaged in ELA class. All one has to do is read the writing on our walls!

Currently, we use a variety of instructional assessments to gauge the readiness in ELA. Some assessments are from our curriculum-aligned textbooks. Students complete daily formative assessments during the unit to provide ongoing personalized evaluations by the teacher. Diagnostically, iReady data guides differentiated instruction, small group, and whole class instruction that is aligned with specific grade-level skills and objectives. iReady offers our teachers a chance to bring technology into the ELA classrooms as well. Through its individualized online tools, teachers can assign lessons to each student based on objectives that they have not yet mastered. Other online ELA tools accessed are Epic, Spelling City, and Common Lit. These websites offer practice in the area of reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, composition, and fluency. After students are taught a lesson by a certified teacher, students often demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of summative assessments, many times designed by the teaching team, to include oral language skills.

Assessments help track student progress and learning. Every grade performs formative assessments to

continually monitor progress toward mastering standards. Some examples include first grade using running records to instantly make note of miscues or fluency. Fourth grade using Google Form quizzes to provide quick checks for understanding. Middle schoolers are provided daily bell ringers and exit slips. Data is used from these types of assessments to guide teachers in their lesson planning and instruction. Summative assessments are also used to demonstrate mastery of standards and benchmarks. Second grade uses Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) to provide reading accuracy, comprehension levels, and fluency. Teacher-designed summative assessments are used in the 5th and 6th grade for testing fluency, and students are challenged to set a goal within their reading level and are tested quarterly to record student growth data.

Teachers communicate ELA standards to the students by posting and explaining learning objectives. Lesson plans revolve around the expectations of the learning objectives. Class data and the ELA curriculum identifies objectives that need the most attention and lessons are fostered from this important information. The ELA curriculum is revised on a six year rotation by a team of teachers from our system. The team writes and modifies the curriculum standards together using the national ELA standards and our Catholic teachings. Input is provided from teachers from our system high school as well. After the standards are revised, textbooks are reviewed by all the ELA teachers in our system, and a textbook selection is made. Supplemental materials and digital resources are used to provide a multi-layered curriculum support specific to each grade-level.

### **1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

IC Math instructional practices create beneficial learning experiences for our students. Lessons are aligned to the grade-level curriculum that guides teachers in the adoption of textbooks and supplemental materials. A multi-level approach is developed to reach all learners. Whole class instruction, math stations, games, one-on-one support, and cooperative learning are regularly practiced in math classrooms. All are intentionally designed to promote skill mastery and problem solving.

Assessments are a continuation of our instructional practices. Teachers use multiple tools during math classes to assess informally and formally. Many of the tests we use are from the Big Ideas textbook series. Students complete formative assessments for each chapter, and after students are taught a skill, students show their knowledge in summative assessments. Project Based Learning is also prevalent throughout the building. We love to create and see math in the real world!

iReady serves as a math diagnostic with data provided three times annually. This data lends for differentiated instruction and supports whole-class instruction. Teachers use this teaching tool and data to create lesson plans unique to each student or class but that are also aligned with specific grade-level skills and objectives. iReady offers our teachers a chance to bring technology into the math classrooms. Through its individualized online tools, teachers can assign lessons based on math objectives not yet mastered. Teachers are able to use this testing and teaching tool in class, for homework, and during virtual days we may experience.

IXL also provides individualized lessons and review of topics specific to classroom curriculum and learning objectives. Math teachers can assign specific lessons to specific students in areas of concern and also in areas of enrichment.

Assessments are used to monitor student progress and learning. For example, students in kindergarten use formative assessments during each morning meeting and use notebooks to practice writing numbers while counting. The teachers can easily assess which students are in need of more support, which students are on track, and which students are ready for enrichment. Third grade teachers and paraprofessionals do quick checks during math. A predetermined number and type of questions are chosen for demonstration of mastery before progressing. Middle school math class informal tests are given daily using bell ringers and exit slips to gauge student learning and guide teacher lesson planning and instruction.

Our school also provides many types of summative project-based learning opportunities. In seventh grade, the Probability Carnival Game project assesses theoretical and experimental probability.

Math standards are addressed every day. Lessons are developed based on standards and objectives found in the curriculum. Math teachers post and clarify which learning standards will be covered in the lesson and what their expectations are for the specific standards. Data collected from a variety of assessments are used to help guide specific lessons and instruction in areas of great need and also areas of review and enrichment.

Like ELA, the Math curriculum is visited on a six-year rotation by a team of system math teachers who use the national Math standard and our Catholic teachings to revise the K-8 curriculum. Similarly, supplemental materials and digital resources are used to provide multi-layered curriculum support.

#### **1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Instructional methods for Science classes include a wide range of instructional techniques. Differentiated instruction is incorporated throughout our science curriculum. Students are provided with many hands-on learning activities and experimental labs. They learn not only the material but also invaluable experience in working with small group collaboration while still maintaining individual learning responsibilities as a group member.

Problem based learning (PBL) is something we have strived to incorporate over the past couple of years, providing our teachers with opportunities in professional development of PBL. Students are provided with the main objectives and the framework to tackle a guiding question. Students are assigned deadlines and given formative teacher feedback. Our annual school-wide Science Fair is a great showcase for these projects.

Technology is a large part of our science instruction. Our text series, Realize, is also available as an eBook and posted in Seesaw and Google Classroom. These online textbooks allow the students to work through interactive labs, access online preloaded videos, and attend virtual field trips. Science classrooms utilize their textbooks, Google Slides, along with lecture style instruction to challenge students to work independently (or in a collaborative team setting) to build graphic organizers, gallery walk posters, models, and diagrams. This helps students identify the most important content/objectives and practice presentation skills.

IC also uses formative and summative assessments to track and monitor learning, as in the other subject areas. For example, first grade classrooms use the think/pair/share technique to encourage answers that require higher level thinking like explaining what might occur with a disruption in a particular life cycle. In fifth grade science students are quizzed during bell work on different types of rocks and minerals. The teacher uses an online data tracker and he/she can instantly assess whether or not her students can identify minerals and rocks before they move on to a more advanced task. Seventh and eighth grade students use Google Quizzes during bell work. The data collected from the Google Quiz steers that day's lesson.

We love our science lab! Project based learning projects are provided to our students in all grades. These types of projects provide the teacher with summative assessment data. For example, in second grade students show their understanding of landforms by creating a landform based on a real-world application. Eighth grade students use PBL during their Solar unit by creating solar ovens that have to work well enough to toast a marshmallow. We team with the Discovery Center and Wonders of Wildlife Museum annually for live lessons, discussions, and labs including shark dissections and weather simulations. Project Lead the Way has also helped facilitate many science, engineering, and technology opportunities for instruction and assessment for our upper elementary and middle school students.

As in ELA and math, teachers post objectives daily and use data from worksheets, quizzes, and preloaded questions from the Ebook to chart progress. Our system science curriculum is reviewed, written, and aligned every six years as part of our rotation. We are located by two major hospitals and many of our students later pursue the sciences; therefore, science is an area of high engagement and content acquisition. We are constantly working to keep up with the advances in the subject area.

#### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

IC Social Studies classes are cross-curricular. Using the aligned grade-level curriculum for all core subjects, teachers deliver direct structured lessons to students to provide a clear introduction or review of all social studies topics while also focusing on writing, non-fiction reading, and problem solving. Our history ties us to all the other subject areas and our teachers make that visible to our students in the instructional they provide.

Using the current textbook series, teachers lead lessons that provide students the opportunity to problem solve, to learn at different levels, to learn to appreciate and respect other cultures, to be the navigator in their own learning, and to create projects that are creatively innovative and unique.

Technology is a great way to begin the lessons of exploration using Google Maps, Google Explore, and many interactive sites and articles to help guide their research. Another online resource is IXL that provides individualized lessons and review of topics specific to classroom curriculum and learning objectives. Social Studies teachers can assign specific lessons to specific students in areas of concern and also in areas of enrichment.

Social studies continues the pattern by using formative and summative assessments. Some examples include; second graders during their geography unit students must draw themselves correctly on the map and label the directions, oceans, continents and their address. This helps teachers assess student readiness to dive deeper into upcoming lessons. Fifth grade uses the app Kahoot to quiz students on knowledge previously learned and offers the teacher instant feedback on students comprehension. In middle school social studies class escape room challenges test for understanding and critical thinking. In terms of summative assessments,

fourth graders show their knowledge of the United States and capitals in their much anticipated summative test. Eighth grade students are given the National Constitution test in preparation for high school. Perhaps one of the most popular summative activities is the Living Museum of Famous Missourians that shows the diversity of the individuals who have made a difference in our world.

Social studies learning standards are addressed with multiple opportunities of hands-on activities and discussions. Social studies teachers post learning standards and discuss with students the expectations of each standard. Hands-on lessons and projects are created based on the written curriculum standards. Data collected is used to assign learning topics based directly off the learning standards using iXL. Teachers receive immediate feedback from the program on the progress and learning growth for individual students and classrooms.

Teachers and principals on the system curriculum team write and modify the curriculum standards together using the social studies national standards and our Catholic Teaching Curriculum. Input is provided from teachers at the system high school as well. After the standards are published, textbooks are reviewed by all the social studies teachers and textbook selections are made for the whole district. Many of our field trips and guest speakers have a direct correlation to the social studies curriculum. Utilizing the many resources from the web, from local museums, and from community members, our teachers provide a true cultural experience for our students as they learn the history of our world.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

#### **1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

Immaculate Conception has a preschool (PS) for students ages three through four and also pre-kindergarten (PK) for students ages four through five. The PS and PK offer a core curriculum in areas of science, math, social studies, reading, religion, and social skills. The core curriculum is aligned with our early childhood grades. Each set of curriculum follows the same subjects, for example, math, religion, and social studies etc.

within the curriculum. Morning meetings, centers, small group instruction, imaginary play, large and fine motor skill activities, and listening and following directions lessons are a daily occurrence in all our classrooms. Curriculum standards are built horizontally on skills introduced, reviewed and mastered in previous years. Learning objectives are created and followed to provide students with a stair-step learning model. It is evident that the curriculum standards created and implemented in the PS and PK are strong influences based on the success, confidence, and readiness students have upon entering kindergarten. These children are eager to learn and our teachers provide play-based learning to both teach and support their need to move.

Concepts and curriculum taught in the PS and PK classrooms are the foundational building blocks of the students' academic career. This is one of the joys in witnessing the success of our students as they progress to eighth grade under the same roof. Most who attended our PK program are prepared for kindergarten and for those in our program needing extra support we are able to provide that with our multiple classroom configuration. The majority of our PK students score above average in the Kindergarten screenings and many are reading prior to the first day of Kindergarten. Socially, they are ready for whole day instruction due to the use of play-centered instruction and established routines. The resources used in our program including Learning Without Tears are effective and our teachers are constantly adding additional activities and manipulatives to support our littlest learners.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Immaculate Conception offers many additional courses and extra-curriculars.

All students participate in physical education (PE) classes. Our PE coach is an asset to our students not only for physical fitness but also as a good listener and a facilitator of conflict resolution. PS and PK have two thirty-minute classes weekly while kindergarten through third attend three times per week. Students in upper grades attend twice a week for forty minutes each session. We value outdoor time and all students are provided with recess and/or outdoor time daily.

Students participate in Music classes each week. PS through fifth grade have the same amount of days and times that are given for PE. Middle schoolers can choose band or music twice per week for forty minutes. Our music teacher has advanced degrees in music instruction and is one of the premier teachers in the state. Our concerts draw large crowds. Our band teacher is shared with the other schools in the system and is building a strong program for our school.

Beginning in kindergarten, students attend Art classes. K-6 attend once a week for a range of thirty to fifty minutes. Middle schoolers can choose this class as well. Our certified art teacher has vast experience in the local art community and hosts a city-wide art show each Spring. Our Early Childhood teachers put on an art show each year for families and the master artists are featured.

K-8 uses the computer lab weekly. K-3 teachers lead instruction each week for one thirty-minute class. Our technology teacher leads instruction for upper grades weekly for two classes per week for thirty minutes. Our technology teacher is certified in Google, Project Lead the Way, and numerous other instructional programs that help her assist and develop strategies for teachers in the classroom and during distance learning. We could not have made it through the Spring of 2020 without her.

Students in grades 3-8 participate in Spanish/World Cultures class twice per week for thirty to forty minutes. Our Spanish teacher is from Venezuela and students learn to understand the diversity among Spanish speakers in our world.

All students visit the library each week. We are blessed to have donors who fund our library. We are able to purchase new material each year and students learn a love of reading from our librarian and parent readers.

The middle school Fine Arts Electives provide two choices for the year from the following: honors choir, band, virtual arts, and visual arts. Each meets twice a week for forty minutes. While the Choice Elective provides one choice per semester from the following: Irish Leadership, Irish IT, Irish Art Box, Irish Mass

Choir, Irish Pride, and Irish Service. Each meets weekly for fifty minutes.

After-school extracurricular activities are also provided weekly by our dedicated faculty. The following are offered to students each year: Math Olympiad (4-6), Math Counts (7-8), Science Olympiad (6-8), Geography Bee (6-8), IC Robotics (7-8), IC Yearbook (8), Irish Singers (3-5), and Girls on the Run (3-6). Our students compete and place in the top spots in the state competitions each year. Amazingly, we were able to offer many of these events virtually in the Spring of 2020 and in-person for the past two years.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

Our teachers are deliberate in designing lessons for our students.

To best identify those performing below grade level, we utilize data from multiple sources including but not limited to: iReady data, formal and informal classroom assessments, Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Official Accommodations Plans (OAP), educational records, collaboration with multi-grade teaching teams, classroom observation, parent meetings, and assistance from our certified Student Services Coordinator.

To best serve the individual needs of those performing below grade level, our classroom teachers provide individual instruction, small group instruction, digital resources to help build basic skills, and tutoring before and after school. Much of this personal instruction is also supported by our paraprofessionals throughout the day.

This year we added an Instructional Coach and a Learning Lab to help students both within the classroom setting and in the lab. We also utilize numerous A+ students from our high school to help with school day tutoring. Our Student Services Coordinator assist students who are struggling with daily interventions, modified schedules, and digital/consumable resources/activities from lower grade-levels to help at home and with tutors. Most importantly this faculty member supports teachers with resources and documentation.

Our part-time instructional coach's protected schedule during three mornings weekly demonstrates how committed we are to providing one-on-one and small group instruction to those in need. Many families are unable to afford after-school tutors; therefore this position fills that need. We began the year with ELA and now are beginning to introduce Math into the program with great success.

We also strive to provide qualified paraprofessionals throughout the week to help all classroom PS-8th grade. Their duties include remediation and helping students who have fallen behind due to COVID-19 catch up in a stress-free space. Sometimes staffing issues have interfered in providing a consistent aide for the upper grades, but in a normal year we are able to achieve this much needed teacher and student support.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

As stated previously, our teachers are deliberate in designing lessons for our students.

We use many of the same processes to acquire data to identify those students above grade level. Of course the IEP and the OAP are not applicable, but testing from our public schools exception pupil program serves the same purpose for identification.

Many of these students participate in the gifted program through our public schools. They are off campus on Mondays but return for Tuesdays-Fridays. These students are only responsible for the content they miss on Mondays, not the daily work. Our Student Services Coordinator is the liaison between our school and the public schools.

Many of the programs and teaching techniques employed for those students performing below level are used for this population as well. In addition, our competitive core subject after-school offerings provide much advanced enrichment for these learners. Many times during the day these students work on projects for these



clubs with their groups. Our science and language arts classes offer many optional opportunities for students to participate and create entries for the Missouri State University science fair, the IC science fair, the Language Arts Development fair, and many other essay and project-based competitions.

Our technology class and electives also provide many opportunities for self-guided learning and exploration that is beneficial to these students. Irish IT students create, publish, and share weekly Mass video presentations, Irish Pride students create, publish, and share a monthly IC Post, and Irish Art Box students have the freedom to create 3D art with student created expectations.

Our teachers also work together to allow students to help in the classroom as tutors. This not only benefits the student needing help but provides social interactions and communication experiences for the student-tutors. We best learn and understand when we teach a skill or concept to others. Together these students can work to make the lesson more applicable and take a direction not always planned by the teacher.

### **3c. Special education:**

These are our system policies for special education: 1.42 The Springfield Catholic School System attempts to address the special learning needs of all students within the parameters of the system's human and financial resources according to guidelines provided in 1.42A. Students are considered for enrollment when educational resources and programming are available which can address their specific needs and allow them to be successful and 1.42A The Springfield Catholic School System attempts to address the special learning needs of all students within the parameters of the system's human and financial resources according to guidelines. Students are considered for enrollment when educational resources and programming are available which can address their specific needs and allow them to be successful.

Due to lack of staffing and space in our current system schools, we are unable to meet the needs of all students. Our faculty and staff, led by administration and our Student Services Coordinator, work to help many needing special education throughout the day. We meet with families of students with IEPs in August to discuss the upcoming expectations for their children and the accommodations identified on their documentation that we can provide. We also identify the areas we cannot support and help families secure tutoring and/or public school assistance after school hours and in the summer months.

Two years ago IC developed an Official Accommodations Plan for our school and those in our system to help provide documented interventions and accommodations for students who would have qualified for a 504 plan in public schools. Our OAP fills this hole by helping students failing to thrive due to diagnosed conditions receive help during our schools. This document is reviewed annually and accompanies the child to high school for continuity.

Our commitment to in-person seated learning the past two years has supported these learners, as virtual programs cannot accomplish. We may not have the staffing or space to offer a full special education programming, but we find ways to help those who need additional instruction have access.

### **3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

### **3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:**

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Our kids love to come to school or at least they love it when they get here! This is due to our faculty and staff who welcome them each morning, our student leaders who lead morning prayer and announcements, and our volunteers and families who are actively involved throughout our school day. One can visit any classroom and find special events in action or in preparation. Our school is steeped in tradition and students look forward to events and trips specially designed for certain grade-levels throughout the year.

Some events include: Catholic Schools Week activities and dress up days, Polar Express Day, Sacramental Preparation and Celebration, Harry Potter Days, Reading Buddies, ELF Basketball, Pancake Race, Flight to First Grade, Running of the Halls, and Field Day. Our field trips are something the children anticipate. Some trips include visits on the bus to: the State Capital, Bois de Arc fishing pond, Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum, Crystal Bridges, Discovery Center, Fantastic Caverns, George Washington Carver Museum, Springfield Little Theater, Leadership Ranch, Wilson's Creek Battlefield, and many more. We were able to offer field trips to each class last year despite the challenges.

During our short period of remote learning, we made sure to alter or create new events to keep kids engaged including: Drive through parades, Daily Video Announcements from the Office, Weekly themes and dress up days, Virtual 8th grade Graduation, Virtual Field Trips, Video Talent Shows and Award Ceremonies, and Virtual May Crowning for our 1st and 8th graders.

We have uniform buy-out days for charity and weekly all-school Mass which the students lead. We have daily outdoor time for all students including Irish Time for our middle schoolers who snack as well. We greet each other in the hallways by name and join in prayer for one another and our families together each day.

Our SEL program, Friendly, our university counselors, our parish pastors and parishioners, provide many outlets to support our students when times are tough. We live-streamed Masses and have provided virtual counseling sessions to students even after we returned to seated instruction to help those at home or unable to participate.

System athletic opportunities for students often provide an additional boost to student motivation, engagement, and growth. Those offered at IC School include both school sponsored and community Irish teams: Soccer, Softball, Baseball, Football, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Track, and Volleyball.

With the support of our parent organization, we strive to make this a happy and welcoming place full of love and support. The excitement in our halls and classrooms is proof of this goal being achieved!

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Being part of a parish and a system helps our school stay grounded in the lives of our families and our community. Our pastors are very active in our school. Weekly masses and classroom visits occur religiously. Student-led masses on the weekends give families a time to worship and pray together. This is one of the facets of our school that keeps us united and strong in all challenges we face. We truly are a school family. As I mentioned before, we are very vested in the success of our Catholic school and this is evident in our over 95% participation in parent-teacher conferences and many parent and parish volunteers. Our faith keeps us together.

All of our parents are members of our parent group, Home and School. This organization provides funding for upkeep of our school, teacher and student organization memberships and fees, classroom furniture and resources, monthly lunches, and numerous “thank yous” throughout the year. They make sure all our additional financial needs are met in order to best educate our students. All are welcome to the monthly meetings in person or via Zoom. The events they help host each year include: IC Fashion Show, Muffins

with Moms, Donuts with Dads, Book Fair, SCS Soiree, Emerald Evening, Breakfast with Santa, Spring Dance, Spring Fun Night just to name a few...

Our students help us stay connected to our community through service projects. We have a food pantry between our church and school that serves the hungry twice a week and at major holidays. Our student body provides a lot of the food, helps stock the shelves, and some help hand out the food after school. This pantry helps keep the kids connected to the "real world". All students are encouraged to propose new projects. Our student council leads the following service projects annually: Stuff the Turkey, Mitten Tree, Lucky Bingo, and Coin Wars. The student council members choose the groups to receive the funds and over the years we have helped pregnancy care centers, homeless shelters, foster children, veterans, animal shelters, local hospital patients, shut-ins, and the poor.

Our teachers host speakers in-person and virtually. We work closely with local universities and small businesses in town for special events and student teachers. During Catholic Schools Week alumni return to share about their careers and volunteering in the community. This is a wonderful way for the students to "see" what is possible and for the adults to "see" how bright the future truly is. Our school family remains strong due to our shared faith and dedication to serve.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

This is an area of focus each year because if our faculty and staff do not feel valued and supported then retention of our highly-qualified professionals will be in danger. Even during the challenges of the Spring of 2020, when we had to create a distance learning model from scratch, the teachers and support staff did not waver. As mentioned before, we did not miss a beat and kept teaching until the end of May 2020. Everyone had a role and everyone exceeded the expectations of administrators.

During these times we had weekly faculty meetings, weekly team meetings, home deliveries, and many text chains and phone calls. We not only made sure everyone was supported in their job but in their health and that of their families as well. Administration worked hard to make contact with each member of the faculty daily and tech support was provided seven days a week. Not only did the administration show their support and admiration for the faculty and staff, but our parents really rallied to keep everyone going with kind emails, gifts, videos, banners, and social media posts.

Upon returning to school in 2020-21, the changes were overwhelming to everyone. To keep morale high, professional development was offered in-house numerous times throughout each month, Zoom meetings with providers of our new programs were provided as needed, and a lot of collaboration was utilized within our building. We leaned on each other's strengths to find success. We have little turnover due to our passion, commitment, and love for one another.

All faculty and staff are encouraged to seek professional development. Most are at no cost to teachers. One graduate class is reimbursed per semester as well. New ideas and approaches are encouraged and supported by administration, and opportunities to visit other classrooms to observe are scheduled for those requesting them.

Although outside events have been hard to find, we are blessed by a wealth of knowledge/experience within our own walls and strive to use it.

Administration makes a goal to visit all classrooms daily and provide positive encouragement and support to teachers. Meals, fun surprises, team building activities, and social events keep us lighthearted and provide many chances for laughter. We have fun together. Weekly quick meetings allow for questions and discussion. Formal and informal evaluations lead to individual meetings that help principals support their needs and intend to make each one feel valued as a professional. We trust one another. Because of this culture, we are thriving professionally and our students are continuing to achieve growth, faith, and resilience.

### **4. School Leadership:**

For thirty-five years, IC was led by the same principal. Six years ago, a major transition began to take place. The principal retired and the assistant principal took over allowing an IC teacher to become the assistant principal. For three years the new principal trained and mentored the assistant knowing she too would soon retire. This was a great way to begin a historic transition in a very tight-knit community.

In 2019, when the current principal took the reins, Covid-19 hit. Talk about a short honeymoon. Principals everywhere, including IC, had to create a plan for running a virtual school in the Spring and one for returning to school in August. The toughest part though was convincing everyone to jump on board. With the help of the assistant principal, other administrators in the system and area, and our fearless IC team, we kept things afloat.

Amidst chaos of a pandemic, the IC administrators, along with a newly formed leadership team, kept moving forward. While everything was being reimaged and tweaked, the vision and mission of our school never wavered. Administration helped implement new student programs, math curriculum, SEL curriculum, and new assessments. This focus on student achievement kept the Covid Slack from entering our building/homes and allowed us to stay united and hopeful.

Weekly faculty meetings and daily classroom visits allow the administrators to keep abreast of any issues. Being present is strongly valued by the school leaders and sets the stage for authentic observations, personal and professional conversations, and support throughout the day. The leadership team serves as the student council and helps keep the school on task and administrators informed. Even when there are conflicts, we are able to talk and come to an agreement. Administration leads daily prayer and offers both professionally and personally. Administration strives to be leaders of faith, academic excellence, and service for this school.

Each teacher and paraprofessional is evaluated in order to discuss strengths, new strategies, and needs for success. Teachers and the principals set annual goals that drive these evaluations. These serve to help everyone improve, not to bring one another down.

Surveys from the office help stakeholders express concerns and share triumphs. Communication with the principals happens daily via text and email or face-to-face meetings. The IC school leaders make tough decisions and value input from employees, experts, and parents. The weight is often heavy and the battle difficult, but the leaders of Immaculate Conception School are strong and steadfast, remembering that this is not a job done in isolation. Leaders of this school follow in big footsteps. Strong leadership is deserved and ready to be continued.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Springfield is not located in an overwhelmingly diverse region of the Ozarks. We seek community events and organizations to help educate ourselves and our students on the need for acceptance and respect for individuals who may differ from us in appearance, religion, belief, and socio-economic status. Our community provides many avenues to support our quest including Missouri State University, Drury University, and Springfield Public Schools. These educational institutions team with us and provide resources including student teachers, performances in our local theaters, activities many times connected to our area churches, and community outreach projects. Utilizing the resources and knowledge of others in the area has been very helpful in educating our students on the importance of cultural awareness and the need for peace.

As evident in our information above, most of our cultural diversity is from the Hispanic, Filipino, and Vietnamese students and families. In current years, administration has made it a priority to hire faculty and staff from these cultures. These teachers and paras work in our early childhood, elementary, and middle schools. This helps students/families find support and also helps our students experience other cultures through their integration in the classroom lessons. We are always encouraging all our families to learn of their past and share traditions in the classroom.

Our veterans, current events presentations, and family tree projects in the upper grades really provide

opportunities for "hot topic" discussions in a safe, respectful setting. Our study of the Saints of the church truly helps us learn about other cultures throughout time and their struggles for equality. Our Social Studies and SEL curriculums do so as well. Again we are continually striving to find more ways to "see" and "understand" the world. We are part of the Community of Churches and work together for good. Our Theology of the Body curriculum helps our students navigate the world and provides parents a guide to answer the tough questions. Thanks to our new digital resources we are able to do so more effectively.

We also do not have much diversity in our socio-economic status, as our free and reduced percentage indicates. Again, our service projects and food pantry help us stay connected and understand the importance of helping others and treating all people with dignity and respect. Our mission to serve and love others is the foundation of our cultural activities, lessons, and discussions throughout our building.

The perfect plans for bridging the gaps among cultures is something everyone must continually address. We do not have that perfect plan yet, but we are dedicated to supporting our diverse student populations in our school and community.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The faculty and staff at Immaculate Conception are what truly set our school apart. Each believes that teaching is his/her vocation. The retirement and salaries are less than the surrounding public schools, and the expectations are extremely demanding. Many are spouses, parents, and grandparents, and every one of them are passionate about helping children of IC achieve their full potential. This dedication is unmatched, and more than 90% are alumni or have children who attend/attended Immaculate Conception. They are truly vested. The turnover rate is low and most retire only to return as substitutes. We have all the same resources, training, and programs found in most schools, but the results achieved by this group are consistently high.

Academically they will do whatever is necessary for a student to grow. The last few years are a testament to that. Following the instructions of the Covid-19 plans requires patience, understanding, and hard work. Their faith is stronger than their fear. When substitutes are not available, this group is willing to help cover and keep the building open. All have strong faith and this guides them. Their commitment to excellence is innate, and they support one another on the journey. The students of Immaculate Conception are treated with love, respect, and kindness.

One of our staff in our school lost a spouse very unexpectedly. An AMI day was scheduled in order for those wishing to attend the funeral to be able to do so. Not only did our teachers work overtime to provide AMI, five pews were filled with the IC faculty and staff. There was no expectation for attendance, but these individuals all attended to support one of our own and his/her children. Again, this is one act of many that demonstrates their vocation and commitment to their faith.

When families are in need, this group rallies to provide what is needed. When results are impressive, this group finds ways to continue to find excellence. When someone is left behind, this group will join forces to achieve the often impossible. When it is time to gather and celebrate, this group knows how to have fun. Everyone who visits our school comments on the positive energy found from the hallways, in each classroom, and on the playgrounds. The students and families of IC are blessed to have this group of professionals who are worthy of this Blue Ribbon recognition.

## **PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION**

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1. Non-public school association(s): Catholic

Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. Select the primary association first.

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No
3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$5056  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$1777
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      20%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      17%

## PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

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*Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (2019-2020)<sup>1</sup>. Each school must obtain grade level summary reports from the test publisher for students tested in reading and mathematics for each of these grades.*

These reports must include:

1. the number of students tested;
2. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for all students in each tested grade; and**
3. the average student scale score or the national percentile equivalent of the average scale score in reading and mathematics **for each sufficiently large subgroup<sup>2</sup> in each tested grade.**

Please make notations on these reports to explain results that represent fewer than 95 percent of the students enrolled at the time of testing (e.g., the number of students who took alternative assessments<sup>3</sup>).

A copy of these reports (in a PDF file) must be uploaded through the National Blue Ribbons Schools Portal.

Also, one hard copy of these reports must be submitted by mail to CAPE with two hard copies of this application.

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<sup>1</sup> Because of school closings due to COVID-19, schools may use test results obtained in the fall or spring of 2019 or the fall of 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Possible subgroups are those identified in Items 4, 6, 7, and 8 in Part II of this application (racial/ethnic groups, ELL students, students eligible for free or reduced meals, and students receiving special education services). A sufficiently large subgroup is one that represents at least 10 percent of the school enrollment as reported in these items.

<sup>3</sup> Alternate assessments are used to evaluate the performance of students who are unable to participate in a school's norm-referenced test (NRT) even with accommodations. These assessments are based on the grade-level content covered by the NRT, but at reduced depth, breadth, and complexity. (adapted from National Center on Educational Outcomes)