

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

[] Public or [X] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name St. John The Apostle Catholic School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7421 Glenview Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City North Richland Hills State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 76180-8387

County Tarrant

Telephone (817) 284-2228 Fax (817) 284-1800

Web site/URL https://stjs.org E-mail afelton@stjs.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* Mr. Brinton Smith E-mail bsmith@fwdioc.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dioceses of Fort Worth Tel. (817) 560-3300

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. Ben Dzivak
(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

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

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	14	11	25
K	10	10	20
1	11	9	20
2	8	4	12
3	8	6	14
4	4	5	9
5	6	15	21
6	5	4	9
7	9	12	21
8	7	6	13
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	82	82	164

*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
 - 14 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 40 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 35 % White
 - 5 % 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: 2%

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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	1
(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	145
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Polish, Spanish, English, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Swahili, French, Nepalese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 13 %
21 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 3

8. Students receiving special education services 15 %

With an IEP or 504: 24 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>2</u> Autism | <u>1</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>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</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: 9

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.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher, CTE teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 12:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2016	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	98%	97%	98%	98%
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.

Post-Secondary Status	
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. 2008

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

St. John the Apostle Catholic School, established in 1965, follows the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, providing students a challenging education that encourages the success of each student.

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

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.

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

The character of St. John the Apostle Catholic School is defined quite simply by the word ‘family’. The students begin to own this trait from the moment they set foot on the campus because they experience it around them and immediately feel the need to be a part. This is especially true for new students who simply fall in line with the kindness and giving spirit that is exhibited daily by the student body. The same goes for families who are always ready to lend a hand be it virtually or in person.

St. John the Apostle began as a parish school in 1965 and has since been serving Catholic and non-Catholic families from our surrounding areas. Families who visit love the kindness and giving spirit the students have towards everybody who walks into the school. They also like that this is a service-driven school that works with the St. John Parish Outreach Center to feed families in the community. Students draw pictures, write letters, and make cards to send to the assisted living home adjacent to the school. Students raise funds for their sister parish in Patzun, Guatemala, to help students there attend local school.

The school sits on 16 acres of land with a variety of play space outdoors. Classrooms are open to the outdoors. During the last seven years, administration has placed emphasis on outdoor learning. It began simply with flowerbeds and pots. Since then, raised-bed gardens have been added along with a compost pile that faculty, staff, and students add to daily. The students turn the compost twice a year then before spring planting, new compost is mixed into the garden beds and pots.

Two years ago, two small green houses, a rain barrel, and chickens were added, and last year goats were introduced to the campus. The green houses enable the students to start seeds of both vegetables and flowers and have them ready to plant in the school garden. Rainwater is collected in the rain barrel for use in the gardens and pots. The chickens and goats help students learn how to raise small farm animals; the students help clean out both the chicken and goat houses. They also feed and take care of the chickens and goats on a daily basis. The chickens lay eggs daily. These are collected and distributed to various families.

One of the school's families built a worm bin two years ago so students could collect and use castings from the worms. Castings are made from the worms eating old fruits and vegetables. The school bought 1200 earthworms and after six months, they started making castings. Castings are cleaned out every two months and added straight to the garden beds. The students help feed and water the worms weekly.

Last year an owl box was added and mounted with a video camera on which the students can watch the owl, Mr. Wise One. Since then, a bat box and a woodpecker box have been added for the Mr. and Mrs. Woodpecker that live on the preschool playground.

The outside learning space involves every class on campus preschool through eighth grade. Each month a different class oversees the chickens, goats, worms, and gardens. This hands-on experience helps the students understand how the food they eat is grown.

In 2008, St. John the Apostle Catholic School was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School and the recognition was celebrated. The Blue Ribbon process gave administration the desire to improve even more. The School Advisory Council and administration at that time planned to expand the kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades and built a new building which they moved into in 2010, giving more space for the preschool to expand in the former Kindergarten building. Being an open campus, as a safety measure, the School Advisory Council and administration raised money to enclose the entire school campus with an eight-foot-tall iron fence.

Security was the main purpose for enclosing the campus. Since then, video cameras have been added and a Crisis Management Plan approved yearly by the North Richland Hills Police Department and the Diocese of Fort Worth has been implemented. Safety is a priority on the campus and is reviewed throughout the school year.

Knowing that children have different interests, the school provides a variety of opportunities for students to

realize their potential and strengthen their weaknesses. All students are given the same opportunity. The faculty makes it their focus to help students gain confidence which then helps them to anticipate new challenges and face them fearlessly.

The administration is open to new ideas and suggestions on how to improve existing ones. It is these recommendations that have led to adopting the Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW) program, expanding the Saxon grammar program from third through eighth grade, offering a variety of electives.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Every teacher attempts to teach children about the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in the world around them. These three attributes are connected and present in every class, so that one vision for Catholic education is maintained in all the classes. This ensures that the student is growing in knowledge across all the core subject areas. As they learn increasingly complex math, they understand finite truths. As part of our classical education, grammar is taught at all grade levels. In literature, teachers read a variety of works from the classic to the contemporary. Students begin to understand the beauty in human nature and the beauty of places around them and across the world. Socratic discussions encourage students to share ideas as they go in-depth into select passages. Through science and social studies, students become more aware of their civic duties, learn from historical events, and get inspired by reading about people who have made an impact on the world. The desire to do the right thing to help the community is also reflected in service to the community around our school.

SJS provides an exceptional education. With an emphasis on classical education, writing, poetry, grammar, math facts, and research are highly valued. They are taught across all grade levels, increasing in complexity. Hands-on and interactive learning is part of the daily activities. For example, pre-K and kindergarten children learn about worms by going outside and observing them, first grade identify letters from phonic sounds, third grade conducts a store of student-made items to raise funds for a sister school in Patzun as part of their math and economics study. These are just some examples.

At each grade level, teachers try to ensure that all students are well prepared to be successful at the next grade level.

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

Students read a variety of literature in their classes. In the lower grades, students read from the Reading Street program. This series uses short stories that represent a varied sample of genres to illustrate all the literary elements, comprehensions skills and strategies. Each week long unit focuses on elements such as plot, theme, character, setting, sequence, and main idea. These elements are discussed throughout the year. Reading fluency and comprehension are fostered in this manner.

Junior Great Books was added to enhance the Reading Street program. The program is used from the third through the eighth grade. This program adds the component of Socratic discussion which they call Shared Inquiry. The teacher selects one open-ended question that can be answered in two or more ways and encourages the students to delve deeper into the reading to come up with evidence for a point of view. In these discussions, the teacher is only a facilitator. It is a student-led discussion. Many teachers read full length novels along with these reading programs. Some of these novels are selected from the diocesan recommended reading list. The students also read historical fiction to give them a worldview and make them aware of problems and prejudices of the past. This encourages classroom discussion on how we can learn from past missteps. Teachers also read biographical literature which inspires students and makes them want to lead productive lives. Poetry is an important part of classical education which forms the basis of our educational philosophy. Students read and understand traditional and contemporary poetry. They are also taught elements of poetry such as verse, stanza, figures of speech, imagery, and poetic license. The upper grades are taught to analyze and write critical appreciation of poetry. Reading instruction includes close reading, reading aloud, vocabulary study, and recitation. Reading is assessed through multiple-choice questions, short essays, research papers, summative essays, and presentations.

Summer reading is mandatory. In the upper grades, the teacher selects one universal read and then has the student select another book from an optional list. By the beginning of the new school year, students are

expected to take a comprehension test on the books read over the summer. This is done using the Accelerated Reader program. This program is also used throughout the year to track students' reading development. It is used from first through eighth grade.

Grammar is taught using the Saxon grammar program that emphasizes cyclical teaching of material. The lessons repeat concepts periodically which helps students to retain and internalize them. This grammar program is used from third to eighth grade. Each text has brief lessons on vocabulary words with Latin and Greek roots and a grammar concept. The repetition of concepts ensures that students are constantly revisiting grammar already taught. Lesson assessments occur after every five lessons.

Writing is encouraged through all grade levels. This begins with correctly structured sentences in first grade, well formatted paragraphs in the second and third grade moving into multi-paragraph essays and research papers from the fourth through eighth grades.

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

Mathematics is also taught through the Saxon program that emphasizes cyclical teaching. Each lesson builds on the previous ones. The practice exercises include problems testing knowledge of all the previous concepts taught. The Saxon philosophy "uses a spiral approach that teaches students in small amounts and continually repeats concepts to keep newly acquired skills fresh and active." This spiral program continually forces children to review all concepts, ensuring that they are constantly sharpening their skills. The Saxon format of instruction provides assessments after every five lessons. The lower grades emphasize mental math strategies for computation. Auditory learners learn the concepts through explanations, poetry, and music. In addition, hands-on activities and visual aids are used to ensure learning for kinesthetic and visual learners. For the lower grades, the Saxon math program emphasizes daily math fact practice by providing fact sheets for classwork and homework. In addition, some lower grade classes use the online program Xtra Math for practice. This daily practice is indispensable in their learning of math facts. With a good foundation of math facts, the students are better able to cope with more complex math problems in the upper grades. The upper grades emphasize learning the formulas as well as creative thinking to problem solve.

From kindergarten to sixth grade, all students are taught at grade level. At the end of the sixth grade, the students are given a placement test. Based on their performance on this test, the students are placed in the math or pre-algebra class in the seventh grade. This allows teachers to differentiate to a greater degree in order to meet students' needs. Based on their performance in the seventh grade, in eighth grade they are divided into pre-algebra and algebra. Trigonometry concepts are taught at the end of algebra. These courses really challenge the students, and many of them can opt for geometry or Algebra 2 in high school. Observing the number of students who get accepted into the advanced math classes in high school indicates that our students are well-prepared.

The teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments. Some formative assessments are performance-based assessments such as using manipulatives where the teacher observes how the students apply their knowledge using manipulatives. In upper grades, students demonstrate their problem-solving skills on the whiteboard. For some concepts, oral one-on-one assessments are used especially in preschool through second grade to demonstrate number sense, order of operations, and general math proficiency. Traditional written assessments are also used to assess after every five lessons.

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

Science in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade feature discrete curriculum in Earth Science, Life Science, and Physical Science respectively. Students learn content from reading concepts and discussing the background science in shared inquiry, and then they apply these concepts with inquiry-based hands-on labs in each content unit.

The lab activities in sixth grade model concepts and phenomena in the natural world such as the Structure of the Earth, Volcanism and Plate Tectonics, Earth and Life History, Structure of the Atmosphere, Weather and Climate, Oceans, and Planets in the Solar System.

Seventh grade content investigates classification of life, cells and cell structures, genetics and inheritance, human body systems, and plant and animal diversity. Seventh graders take part in the Science Fair by coming with a question, formulating a hypothesis, doing the relevant research and experiments to seek an answer to the question, and then presenting their conclusion.

Eighth grade content focuses on understanding theoretical concepts in physics and chemistry through student inquiry-driven practical activities. These students reason through the scientific method to document the results of their inquiry as well as answer discussion questions about the ideas in physics and chemistry that the lab activity investigated. Eighth grade investigates physics topics such as velocity, and the Laws of Motion, Work and Energy, Buoyancy, and types of energy. Topics in chemistry include atoms and the periodic table, chemical and physical properties, and chemical reactions.

Assessment includes major projects such as researching the life and contributions of a Catholic scientist in sixth grade, a student project driven science fair in seventh grade, and in labs that connect ideas in math and science together in eighth grade. In addition to these projects, students are assessed through written tests at the end of every unit.

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

Social studies are the integrated study of the humanities and social sciences to promote civic awareness. The purpose of this study is to help students develop the ability to make informed choices as young citizens of a diverse community. It enables them to have a greater Catholic understanding of the various cultures, their rights and responsibilities, and civic practices.

In geography, they explore similarities and differences in world cultures. They are also taught to read and interpret maps and demonstrate an understanding of relative location and direction. Students are able to locate and distinguish various landforms and geographic features.

The study of history enables the students to understand different perspectives of the same event. It includes the reading and understanding of primary sources such as documents, letters, and photographs.

Civics allows the students to understand concepts such as needs and wants, demand and supply, and apply this knowledge to develop an understanding of current issues. They develop an understanding of the United States' democratic form of government and citizenship.

In the lower grades, teachers follow the TEKS curriculum and enrich those standards with a variety of activities such as presentations on Presidents, states, famous Americans and other such topics. Videos and literature are resources that help enhance the students' understanding along with project-based activities and crafts.

In the upper grades, social studies focuses on ancient civilizations in sixth grade, Texas history in 7th grade, and US history and civics in eighth grade. All grades discuss how geography affects human behavior in the world. Other topics discussed include chronology and cause/effect of events in history and society. Assessments are formative and summative. They comprise traditional tests, oral presentations, graphic representations, and project-based assessments. Summative assessments include a major research project for eighth grade and participation in the History Fair.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

St. John the Apostle School (SJS) is known for excelling in academics. The school uses a strong curriculum that is aligned from preschool through eighth grade. This alignment is important to ensure a smooth

transition from one grade level to the next. The foundation of the school is its preschool program.

Preschool readiness has changed over the years as use of technology has increased. It has been observed that students entering preschool are not as independent and are lacking in fine motor skills and developmental skills such as reading, coloring, and playing games. Instead, children are kept entertained by hand-held gaming devices or the television. It takes the teachers time to establish a routine that will help all students achieve success in the classroom. For example, students have to be taught proper hygiene, unpacking their backpacks, and getting ready for the school day.

This sometimes poses a challenge for our preschool teachers who plan for a full day of learning activities. Their curriculum covers math, language arts (reading, phonics, and writing), science, social studies, and religion. The teachers use the Happily Ever After Program for reading, Saxon Phonics, and 6-trait writing.

The preschool students work hard on becoming more independent learners. They used to have more center-based group learning. This year, in keeping with Covid protocols, they use individual center learning. This allows teachers more one-on-one time with each student to ensure that all students are meeting their on-level standards.

Preschool students have adapted to wearing a mask all day, having plexiglass on their desks, washing hands often, using hand sanitizer, and social distancing. They have mask breaks outside and lots of playtime with their masks on. As Covid protocols are being relaxed, preschool students are able to enjoy more group activities.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

St. John the Apostle (SJS) offers a variety of experiences to tap into each student's potential. In August 2020, we required all students who had opted for online learning to attend special area classes. Both in-person and online learners followed the same curriculum. In March of 2021, all students returned to in-person learning and that has continued into this school year.

Art is taught in preschool through 8th once a week for 30-45 minutes (based on grade level). The art teacher provides instruction with historical, cultural, and religious references, and the students are encouraged to use their imagination and creativity.

Our Monsignor Charles B. King Multimedia Center is a 1000-square foot computer lab. Computer is taught in K through 4th grade once a week for 45 minutes and in 5th through 8th grade twice a week for 45 minutes. Students learn Logo, improve typing skills, and become proficient with using the Microsoft Office suite. As students advance in grade levels, more skills are added and programming becomes one of the final projects.

The library is a great asset at SJS. The 2000-square foot building has over 11,000 books. Library time is allotted for preschool through 8th grade once a week for 30-45 minutes. Younger students are taught how to select books and take Accelerated Reader tests. The librarian showcases cultural and religious traditions regularly. Students are taught to use the Follett Destiny Search Engine and the Dewey Decimal System.

Music is taught from preschool through 8th once a week for 30-45 minutes. The teacher guides students in understanding how music can enhance learning. Students learn how to play the drums, guitar, ukulele, bells, and sing. The SJS Choir sings at the school Mass and they also perform throughout the school year at various community events such as the North Richland Hills and Richland Hills Christmas Tree Lighting.

Spanish is offered from preschool through 4th grade once a week for 45 minutes and in 5th through 8th grade twice a week for 45 minutes each. Students are taught reading, writing and speaking the language using songs, riddles, games, reading novels, and visiting Spanish-speaking countries virtually.

Physical Education in preschool is once a week, K through 2nd four times a week, and 3rd through 8th three times a week. Physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle are encouraged. Students in 5th through 8th are offered

sports after school. SJS offers cheerleading, football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, and track. Playing sports is an important aspect of a child's development, so the Diocese of Fort Worth sponsors activities with new Covid protocols in place. Students learn sportsmanship and teamwork as they stay physically active.

In addition to our Catholic guidance curriculum, "Faith, Family and Friends", we have added bully prevention education through Stopbullying.gov. This program is provided by the federal government and is used across our curriculum in each grade level.

SJS has offered Lego Robotics and has an active 4-H agricultural club that all students can participate in.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Because we have small classes, teachers find it easy to identify students performing below level. In addition to informal observations, we use checklists and benchmark assessments for a more formal evaluation.

In preschool, the teachers use a skills development checklist. Each quarter, the skills are assessed, and the progress is sent to the parents. If the child is not on target, parents and teacher work together to bring about progress. Pre-primers are used to get Kindergarteners ready to read. All communication and progress charts are kept in Communication Folders in order to track growth. These folders are maintained for all grades pre-K through eighth grade. In pre-K the Kindergarten Readiness Test (KRT) is used at the end of the year. Students identified as below grade level are given additional assistance to get ready for kindergarten.

The Texas Primary Reading Instrument (TPRI) is used as an assessment tool. This is used three times a year for kindergarten through third grade. Their progress is tracked over the years with this assessment. The STAR Renaissance test is another tool used to assess reading level.

In addition to these assessments, we use the standardized test scores to identify areas of need. Students in fourth through eighth grade who score at 35 percentile or below are identified as below grade level. Teachers meet in groups to discuss plans on improving the performance of these students. Additional help is offered as needed and more differentiated methods of instruction are utilized.

In grade sixth through eighth math, if students are under performing for their grade level, we adjust the program to cater to their individual abilities to master basic math skills and gain confidence.

When teachers observe students struggling especially new students, parents are informed, and the students are encouraged to attend a weekly remedial session.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

One benefit of having small classes is the ease with which teachers can identify students performing above grade level. Teachers can observe students on an individual basis and challenge them through rigorous enrichment materials and activities. This enables the teachers to have more meaningful interactions with the students.

Using the same assessment tools as mentioned above, parents and teachers work together to enhance the child's learning and knowledge. In pre-K, students identified as above grade level are considered totally ready for kindergarten and are given advanced readers.

If the STAR Renaissance Test indicates high performance, students are encouraged to read above their grade level to further improve their reading ability. This applies to all students from first to eighth grade.

In addition to these assessments, the school uses the standardized test scores to identify areas of need. Students in fourth through eighth grade who score at 95 percentile or above are identified as above grade

level. Teachers enhance their learning with advanced math classes and membership in the Elementary National Honor Society, the St. John Honor Society, and Student Council. They learn leadership skills, organization and planning. The school also provides a Toastmasters class in the second semester for eighth graders. This increases their confidence and enhances their public speaking skills. At the end of the year, awards are offered in recognition of high performing students.

Students are given a math placement test at the end of fifth, sixth, and seventh grade. Those who are identified as having strong math skills are encouraged to take advanced math classes for the next grade level.

3c. Special education:

St. John the Apostle Catholic School follows the policies of the Diocese of Fort Worth and is required to identify students' unique needs, especially those that may affect their academic performance.

The purpose of the Student Success Program (SSP) is to provide support to teachers and students through carefully designed plans, which are tailored to meet the needs of each individual student. SSP is not a special education program.

Determination of an educational need includes several steps. The teacher's input and observations of a student's progress over a set period are taken into consideration. Administration and the learning specialist give Tier I paperwork to the teacher and start giving accommodations. Parents are notified and the teacher is in weekly contact with the parent to help the student. Tier II paperwork is given, and the Learning Specialist for the Diocese of Fort Worth is contacted. Parent and teacher stay in constant contact to help the student. If Tier III evidence shows that a student will need permanent accommodations to meet minimum course requirements, parents come in for another meeting with administration, the learning specialist, and the teacher who guide parents through the process of having their child seen by a diagnostician. After a student has been formally evaluated by a diagnostician and accommodations are given, an SSP plan is written and signed by administration, parents, and teachers. The SSP plan is reviewed throughout the school year to help students grow in their learning. In addition, in August of each school year, the administration and parents review and rewrite the plan for the new school year.

St. John the Apostle also works with Birdville Independent School District (BISD) regarding speech screening by a certified speech therapist. This is available to all parents in preschool through 8th grade upon parent request.

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

1. Engaging Students:

St. John the Apostle Catholic School's faculty and staff encourage their students to strive for excellence. Teachers are aware that the students' social emotional learning is of prime importance. Some strategies used are reflection, meditative prayer, and constant communication to establish a relationship. The school follows the guidance program as outlined in the StopBullying.gov website. Teachers always make themselves available at recess time and after school should students need additional guidance.

To instill responsibility and respect, SJS teaches the Golden Rule and has students follow the Code of Conduct. The school follows a buddy system whereby older classes are paired with younger classes allowing students to put into practice these character traits. The buddies share activities throughout the year. Some activities were being pen pals, reading partners, and making crafts together. Service is an important component of SJS culture. On Mass Day, students bring food items for our St. John Church Outreach Center to help local families in need. Kindergarten has a baby shower for Jesus to help the Baby World Outreach Center.

The school has a diverse student body and attempts to celebrate many cultures and traditions. Some activities include Red Ribbon Week, Catholic Schools Week, Texas Day, Pioneer Day, Native American Day, Talent Show, Mardi Gras Parade, Thanksgiving Fruit Sharing, the Christmas Program, and All Saints Day.

Virtual activities began in March 2020 and have continued into this school year. The National Junior Honor Society presented a short video depicting traveling around the world. The school also began virtual Bingo in the afternoons with faculty, staff, and students. We also said a weekly rosary together online, and this year classes invite parents on Facebook live for the rosary. Even though the school was unable to hold some of the annual events in person, the school was creative, and held the annual School Art Night and the annual School Auction Night virtually.

In April 2020, teachers found that students needed to talk about what was happening and the school started offering weekly guidance classes for each grade. The school counselor held a session with each grade encouraging them to voice their concerns. The school also offered meetings with parents who were struggling to find a balance with their jobs, distance learning, and being at home all day. The teachers have continued this in their classrooms after returning to in-person learning. This has continued to bring the SJS community even closer together during challenging times.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

St. John the Apostle is gifted with strong parent involvement. The school faculty and staff acknowledge that parents are essential for the school to grow. Involvement of families and the North Richland Hills (NRH) community is stronger than ever, but it has changed since COVID-19. Parents have become even more supportive and are willing to go the extra mile to help teachers and their own children with what they might need in and out of the classroom. Families over the past two years have endured distance learning, quarantining and a return to in-person learning and they witnessed the dedication and professionalism of teachers in this time. These changes have allowed learning to flourish even in the midst of disruption over the last two years.

The school has increased social media interaction with daily posts to Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. The 8th grade students say morning announcements including prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, birthdays, daily weather, and any special announcements to keep parents, grandparents, and alumni updated on the latest activities.

The St. John's school is known for its service-oriented environment. The Student Council and St. John Honor Society have kept the student body busy with in-school and out-of-school activities. Five years ago,

the Honor Society joined the North Richland Hills Adopt-A-Spot program by taking responsibility for cleaning an area near the local hospital. Students take the time to clean the area once a month with their parents and then send a report to the NRH Neighborhood Services representative.

Two years ago, the Student Council sponsored the Soldier Service Project for Christmas. The students collected items to make care packages to send to soldiers deployed in Germany. The school is proud to have an SJS alumna as the platoon leader in this unit. A total of 28 large flat rate boxes were mailed for her to deliver to the troops she leads to boost morale.

SJS maintains a close relationship with the local community, which includes the police and fire departments, first responders, and city hall. This relationship fosters a safe and comforting environment for the students and their families, and it also provides knowledge about careers for SJS students.

St. John the Apostle acknowledges that parents are the first teachers of their children. The school wants to continue working with them to help form children who are well-rounded in academics and faith.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Diocese of Fort Worth has always provided amazing workshops that bring traditional Catholic teaching back into the classroom. It has also created an environment that is focused on God and each individual student's learning style. The administration wanted to create clear expectations in the classroom, so the discipline plan was streamlined to reflect consistency in behavior expectations from preschool through eighth grade. With all faculty and staff following the same plan, it allowed parents to understand expectations and be supportive of them. This enables the faculty to focus on preparing each student's mind for a lifetime and each soul for eternal life.

As the school moved forward with more traditional Catholic teachings, the faculty and staff would benefit from special time for reflection and spiritual rejuvenation. In-service has included prayer time, retreat, and a special faculty mass. Throughout the year, lead teachers select Catholic philosophy-oriented books. Teachers read, meet and discuss the books. All faculty has been trained in Junior Great Books which is one of many classical ways of teaching reading and comprehension through classical readings for grades third through eighth grades.

The principal strives to provide professional development that will be relevant and beneficial to teachers and staff based on observations and conversations throughout the year. When a teacher wants to enrich the curriculum by adding new programs, the principal is very supportive and encourages innovative ideas.

Administrative support during the transition to distance learning was vital. Principal and teachers met to make quick decisions. Book bags were organized for every student on campus and distributed through a drive-through process in one day. Frequent communication with parents kept them informed and calm. The school experienced no loss of learning. Some programs that have been expanded are junior grade books and Saxon grammar. And new programs added include IEW (Institute for Excellence in Writing) and S'cool Moves.

When the principal comes across books or programs that would help teachers professionally, they organize book studies where the entire faculty reads the book and discusses it.

Periodically, the principal provides refreshments and lunch during the school day to motivate and appreciate the faculty and staff.

4. School Leadership:

St. John the Apostle Catholic School is a parish school overseen by the Bishop and Superintendent Offices. The pastor and principal meet monthly with the advisory and finance councils to keep them informed regarding SJS operations.

SJS follows all policies and practices as outlined in the Policies and Procedures from the Diocese of Fort Worth Catholic Schools Office. These guidelines provide oversight of fiscal management, which is outlined by the diocese, approved by the pastor, and reviewed by the Parish Finance Council.

SJS has a Faculty and Staff Handbook and a Parent Student Handbook both containing COVID-19 procedures that are reviewed and updated weekly with new guidelines from the CDC and the Diocese of Fort Worth.

The school is accredited through Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops – Education Department (TCCB ED). TCCB ED requires each Catholic school to be accredited every seven years. In 2015, St. John the Apostle earned an Exemplary status at accreditation. This reinforced for the SJS faculty and staff, and assured parents and students that the school is providing a high quality education immersed in faith.

SJS is an open campus and safety is at the forefront of all decisions made on the campus. Monthly fire drills, tornado drills (three times a year), and intruder-on-campus drills (twice a year) are conducted. These drills bring peace of mind to the faculty, staff, parents, and students as they each understand how to handle the situation should there be an emergency on campus.

Administration believes in establishing strong guidelines so that expectations are understood yet allows teachers to have flexibility and be creative in the classroom. Administration makes every attempt to be supportive of teachers' needs while still keeping school guidelines in mind.

Classroom observations are not just student-focused observations, they allow the administration to see active learning taking place in the classroom, as well as understand what additional support teachers might need. The administration is able to monitor feedback given to students and see how digital learning is taking place especially during these challenging times.

Our teacher evaluation process is focused on the personal and professional improvement of faculty members in an effort to improve student learning and success. Informal staff evaluations and individual meetings with teachers occur throughout the year to make sure the administration is meeting the needs of the teachers. Formal staff evaluations occur at the end of each year.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

St. John the Apostle has a culturally diverse student community. The school also believes that God created every person on earth differently, yet in His image. Every life God created looks different and learns in a different way. This makes it important to see and reach each individual student from a unique perspective. SJS encourages students to see themselves as agents of positive change in the world. The Catholic worldview insists that justice and peace are the need and responsibility of every person. People must use their faith and reason to discern the truth. SJS practices this skill by exposing students to culturally diverse literature and experiences. When students grow in empathy for others by reading books and discussing challenges that many people face every day, they explore themes that lead them to discover the God-given dignity that is inherent in all people.

Since March 2020, many traumatic events have happened in the world. Students need to recognize SJS as a safe place for them. That is why the Guidance Program and Religion Curriculum have become a vital part of daily life at SJS. This gives the students the opportunity to ask questions and process what might be happening in local, state, or world communities.

Furthermore, SJS regularly updates families through weekly News and Notes with information about classroom happenings and how teachers are guiding the students during these times. Some families feel ill-equipped to discuss issues regarding race and mental health or offer guidance when the need arises. Students are faced with even more anxiety and uncertainty when they lack answers or emotional support.

To bridge this gap, the school provided a workshop last year called Wellness Night. A psychologist from Cook Children's Hospital and three experts from the martial arts field gave presentations and provided

opportunities for parents and students to try kickboxing, karate, and jiu jitsu, and visit with the psychologist. The parents gained insight into the emotions their children were dealing with and the importance of staying physically and emotionally healthy. Both parents and children thoroughly enjoyed the physical activities.

Teachers also incorporate calming music, breathing exercises and relaxation techniques, S'cool Moves, and an environment that fosters respect, peaceful conflict resolution, and success.

The word Catholic means universal, and St. John the Apostle culture embodies this concept.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one strategy that has contributed to the school's continued ability to successfully educate and support students since March 2020 is clear planning on the part of administration.

When school shut down in March, administration did not look for new programs. Instead, teachers used the technology and materials they already had. Every teacher on campus packed up all the books and resources each student would need and held a drive-through for parents to pick up these supplies.

The teachers started Zooming and teaching from home. It was hard for everyone involved because it was not the same as being on campus. Teachers, parents, and students finished the school year physically and emotionally tired but satisfied that progress was made.

In April 2020, administration started looking ahead to the new school year. Administration realized the need for a program that would be easy and accessible to all. Having used RenWeb for grades, lesson plans, and accounting, the Learning Management System (LMS) they offer was chosen. The administrative team took classes and found it user-friendly, so school adopted this program in June 2020. The entire staff was trained on it.

With a system in place for academics, administration turned its focus to campus safety and protocol. The team closely followed the Tarrant County Health Department, CDC, and Diocese of Fort Worth guidelines regarding safety in the classroom. In June, the administrative team, which includes the school nurse, set up classrooms with desks 6 feet apart to see how many students could be accommodated. Teachers were called in to set up their classrooms and remove excess furniture.

In August 2020, the school started out in a hybrid model with 12% of students online and the rest of the student body in person. Then in March 2021 all students returned to in-person learning and have continued into the 2021-2022 school year.

Plexiglass is still in use, cleaning protocols, and the new arrival and dismissal procedures have been adopted permanently. Teachers are still encouraged to plan ahead and make changes to their teaching in the classroom for those students who may need to quarantine through the school year.

Administration has stayed abreast of developments regarding the spread of the disease and changing guidelines from the Tarrant County Health Department, CDC, and the Diocese of Fort Worth throughout the school year.

PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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? \$12344
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student? \$3466
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? 71%

PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

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)¹. 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 subgroup² 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 assessments³).

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.

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ 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)