

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2023 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. Michelle Picchione  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Saint Joan of Arc School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4913 Columbia Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lisle State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60532-3503

County DuPage

Telephone (630) 969-1732 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <https://www.sjalisle.org> E-mail [picchione@sjalisle.org](mailto:picchione@sjalisle.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.

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. James Quaid E-mail [superintendent@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:superintendent@dioceseofjoliet.org)  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Joliet Tel. (815) 221-6100

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.

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

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Jonelle Dzikowicz  
(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.

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

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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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 the current school year (2022-2023) 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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
0 Middle/Junior high schools  
0 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 0 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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	52
K	27
1	43
2	30
3	35
4	30
5	35
6	37
7	38
8	26
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	353

\*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):
- |  |
|--|
| <u>0</u> % American Indian or Alaska Native          |
| <u>3</u> % Asian                                     |
| <u>1</u> % Black or African American                 |
| <u>8</u> % Hispanic or Latino                        |
| <u>0</u> % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| <u>81</u> % White                                    |
| <u>7</u> % Two or more races                         |
| <b>100 % Total</b>                                   |

(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 2021 - 2022 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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	329
(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):

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %  
Total number of students served 41

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>1</u> Developmental Delay	<u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %  
Total number of students served: 0

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 3

11. 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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

12. 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 17:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

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

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2011

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Provide students with a firm foundation in the Catholic faith, thereby creating the opportunity and the means to achieve academic excellence.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://school.sjalisle.org/policies>

18. **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

---

Established in 1926 as a Benedictine Parish School, the Saint Joan of Arc community consists of hard-working students, families, and teachers that are committed to the founding principles of Saint Benedict: scholarship, service, hospitality, and prayer. The majority of our families are Catholic although it is not a requirement for attendance.

Saint Joan of Arc school is comprised of students from Lisle, IL, and several other surrounding cities and towns. Our students are eager young learners who in many cases have had a parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent or cousin attend Saint Joan of Arc School. Returning family members often share their fond experiences when attending school-wide events. Our motto is Tradition with Vision. The traditions of the school are an integral part of our community and with vision, we can further support and challenge our students.

A small percentage of our students have been identified with one or more learning disabilities. These students receive extra instruction through our What I Need Program (WIN). Our WIN teachers push into the classrooms to assist students and their teachers as well as take students out of their classrooms for additional support. Our school works to accommodate this learning opportunity by creating an extra study hall for our students in grades 3-8. It is important that all students receive instruction in art, music, physical education, and all other subjects rather than miss classes to attend WIN.

For many of our families, the tuition cost to attend Saint Joan of Arc School is a significant portion of their income. However, with assistance from the Diocese of Joliet, the Development Team and the school's Adopt a Student program, all students are able to attend. We are also able to offer an affordable before and after school program to accommodate our families' work day.

Some examples of how the Benedictine principles are lived out in our school community include:

### Scholarship:

Our faculty is dedicated to providing a well-thought-out, challenging curriculum that nurtures each child and work together to discuss student development through both data meetings and discussions. Our faculty also learns and grows together through in-services.

One year prior to us closing our doors due to COVID-19, the faculty was learning how to use Google Classroom in case we may need to close for a snowstorm or other natural disaster. When a parent from our school heard that we were interested in learning more about this newer learning platform, he volunteered to help with this effort. He instructed the teachers for several weeks and then set us free to learn how it could be customized or tailored to each grade level.

The students and the teachers nearly seamlessly transitioned to online learning the following school year. We learned, however, that we needed to help parents understand how to access our new platform. Tutorial videos were created and emailed to our families and Chromebooks were sent home to those who need one. Many new tools were also discovered and added to increase student learning and student engagement during those three months when we were closed.

If you were to visit our classrooms today, you would notice that all of our students have access to their own Chromebook and participate in blended learning. The students know how to use this tool and many of the Chrome extensions have proved helpful in engaging students in the curriculum. Pear Deck is one such extension. In junior high, the ELA teacher uses it interactively to see student responses to a prompt and respond to everyone in the class immediately.

### Service:

Opportunities are provided for our students and families to participate in various service projects such as a weekly food drive hosted by each grade level, babysitting services at school events, and letter writing to the



men and women in the service. Some of the opportunities include the wider parish community: Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS), coat drive, decorating the church, and performing for the elderly of the parish.

#### Hospitality:

Most of our families arrive at school in our car line. The students and their families are greeted by name outside daily to provide a warm welcome and set the tone for the day. Inside the classroom we strive to demonstrate hospitality and learn from our students by listening to them and validating their experiences, empowering them to do the same for each other both inside and outside the classroom. When you experience it, you can extend it.

#### Prayer:

The students are specifically taught traditional prayers at each grade level. We begin and end each day with prayer as well as attend Mass together as a community. We pray for each other and for the people of the world.

All of these experiences work together to form our students academically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

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

---

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

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

Primary students receive concentrated instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics (encoding and decoding), word structure, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Decoding and encoding are taught daily with Foundations, a multisensory approach to teaching literacy through Wilson Language Training. Both daily checks and formal assessments are built into the program and can assist in identifying struggling students, differentiation, and monitoring growth.

Students receive instruction in comprehension skills and writing daily through programs like Wonders (McGraw Hill), Six +1 Traits of Writing (Ruth Culham), Michael Heggerty's phonemic awareness programs, Simple Solutions Grammar, and other text resources. Teachers also have access to video lessons from Smekens Education Solutions to assist in teaching writing and reading skills. The engaging stories of the Wonders program align with the Common Core Standards. Explicit instruction in

strategies such as summarizing, inferencing, visualizing, and questioning is integrated into the Wonders program. The teachers use an "I do, we do, you do" model for teaching reading and writing. Teachers model strategies before the students practice and work independently.

We adopted Foundations because we noticed, through data analysis, that many of our students were struggling with encoding and decoding. We researched multisensory programs that would provide explicit, sequential, and systematic instruction, include all of the primary grades, and coordinate with the WIN team to provide consistent instruction to the students who required more support. According to the data and observations, student achievement scores are higher than previously.

ELA class in Junior High is designed to prepare students for the reading and writing challenges they will encounter at the high school level and beyond. The classes build upon work in the elementary grades and encourage students to broaden their thinking, draw connections across readings, and justify interpretations with textual evidence. Interpretation of literature is often shaped by how readers see themselves in the text; class readings have been chosen to help students make connections between their lives and the challenges faced by various diverse characters.

In junior high ELA, we are guided by three essential tasks that make students more able to read with purpose and share their knowledge using clear and effective communication in various forms.

Students explore written works to gain an appreciation for the diverse lived experiences of others;

Students apply strategies to engage with and make meaning of these texts to draw connections to their own lives;

Students utilize structures to organize and extend their thinking of written works by creating original essays, oral presentations, and multimedia projects.

The school year is divided into three broad units, each built around a distinct writing style (narrative, persuasive, expository). Critical analysis of novels and short stories is integrated into each unit to aid students in better understanding the unique characteristics of each style and their application in their writing.

Multiple modes of assessment are used throughout the grades to monitor student progress. First, data is collected using STAR testing, a computer-adaptive, standardized test administered three times a year. Then, the information is reviewed to make instructional decisions, group students, and show growth. In classrooms, students are informally assessed using exit slips and Google's Pear Deck activities integrated into the classroom instruction. Teachers use a variety of summative assessments, including Simple Solutions

quizzes, unit tests in Wonders and Foundations, and standardized writing rubrics. In addition, teachers in grades 4-8 use data from the IXL reading program to monitor student progress toward individual and grade-level goals.

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

With Reveal math by McGraw Hill, math is taught daily with a focus on a growth mindset and the “why” of math. The curriculum is vertically aligned and standards-based. The teachers use direct instruction and guided exploration to introduce new concepts and act as facilitators during student work with math in concrete and collaborative ways. The elementary classes work on number sense, understanding mathematical operations and how the operations relate to each other, patterns and relationships, place value, fractions, and measurement.

It has been a practice at Saint Joan of Arc School to use Mastering Math Facts by Otter Creek Institute so that addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts become automatic, much like sight words in reading. The reasoning behind using this program is that when students have memorized their facts, especially multiplication, they can solve future more complex math easily and quickly. Intermediate grades incorporate Khan Course Mastery, a self-paced and goal-oriented program, to support differentiation and build skills and confidence.

Math at the Junior High level is designed to prepare students for high school by providing two years of Pre-Algebra and Algebra at the seventh and eighth-grade levels. The focus is for students to achieve these five general goals:

Learn to value math

Become confident in one’s mathematical ability

Become a mathematical problem solver

Learn to communicate mathematically

Learn to reason mathematically

Teaching strategies may include but are not limited to, providing applications and connections through real-world problem-solving, using cooperative learning groups, asking critical thinking questions, and using technology.

Using Simple Solutions is a critical component of the mathematics curriculum in grades three through eight. Simple Solutions is a daily spiral or interleaving review of previously taught material. The idea is that students have the opportunity to practice and remember mathematical concepts that have been taught previously. This type of daily review creates more of a long-term effect.

Math is assessed in many ways, including pre-test/post-test, daily observations, exit slips, and unit tests. Data is also collected using STAR testing, a computer-adaptive, standardized test administered three times a year. These assessments inform teachers about what the students have learned, what they still need to understand better, when students need to be instructed differently, and changes that may need to be made in the curriculum. Formative assessment may include checkpoint quizzes (one per lesson), mid-chapter quizzes, and chapter tests. Summative assessments may consist of cumulative and semester examinations.

The junior high students also use IXL Math in and out of the classroom. IXL Math has an initial diagnostic to determine students’ working grade levels, and teachers can assign specific skills for students to work on, for differentiation and grouping. The program can also provide valuable benchmarking data. This program is adaptive, and students move through at their own pace.

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

Although each grade level is introduced to different science topics, our elementary science curriculum, Foss, is centered around physical science, earth science and life science. The curriculum provides varied experiences for the students to learn scientific thinking and acquire knowledge of their world. For example, in first grade, there is a unit on sound and light that provides activities to develop an understanding of how to observe and manipulate sound and light. In third grade, there is a unit on water involving the water cycle and how we consume and use water.

The junior high science program is also built around a solid content base that emphasizes the use of hands-on, inquiry-based activities as well as the development of science process skills. Inquiry-based activities are designed to encourage students to observe, question, theorize, analyze data, and make models. In addition, the junior high science program integrates the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will enhance the success of our students in today's world as well as in the future.

Our junior high students study Earth and space, life science, and physical science. All of our students have the opportunity to use engineering and technology when applying scientific principles with 3-D printers, working cooperatively in the STREAM Lab, and classroom application. These engineering activities and performance expectations have been designed to not only develop the students' problem-solving skills but their ability to work together. Lessons are developed and based on the Next Generation Science Standards.

The students are assessed in a variety of ways throughout each unit of study using exit slips, observations, classroom performance, lab summaries, review worksheets and tests.

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

Various topics are covered in the social studies curriculum, including civics, geography, economics, and history. Elementary students learn about wants and needs, communities, powers of the government, laws, regions of the country, states, and significant people and events in history. The Social Studies curriculum is integrated with English Language Arts, so students are focused on social studies content while fine-tuning their reading and writing skills. Teachers develop units of study that allow for new knowledge to be gained while incorporating reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students develop presentations, speeches, and written work to show their new understandings.

The junior high curriculum includes World, US history, geography, economics, and civics. Students use an online textbook and additional primary source materials to view history through a critical lens. Discussions and learning activities help students engage with content and see the perspectives of various stakeholders. For example, students are encouraged to think about different points of view when learning about World War I and World War II.

Students use online resources such as Junior Scholastic and National Geographic to deepen their understanding of social studies. Assessments range from multiple-choice quizzes and exit slips to extended responses and multimedia presentations. In addition, grade-level teachers guide their students in completing an appropriate research project during the year's final semester.

#### **1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:**

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

Saint Joan of Arc is proud to provide a well-rounded and hands-on preschool curriculum. The goal is to meet a child's educational needs, enhance social-emotional development, and provide higher-level thinking. In a safe and nurturing environment, students develop skills at a very young age to help them grow into lifelong learners. We base our curriculum on the Illinois Early Learning Standards which aligns with the curriculum of our K-8 classrooms. The Illinois Early Learning Standards provide a comprehensive resource of reasonable expectations for the development of children in preschool years (ages 3 to 5).

The teaching staff provides the students with experiences in listening, speaking, reading, writing, math, science, social studies, physical development, health, and the arts. The students in preschool are not expected to master the standards. Many of the early childhood standards mirror the primary grade standards. For example, a preschool standard is to use adjectives to describe people, places, and things. Another is to use new words in a conversation. With appropriate scaffolding, preschool students can be successful with these standards. Similar standards are used in grade two, “L.2.6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe (e.g., When other kids are happy that makes me happy).”

We have consistently found that students who begin their school experience with Saint Joan of Arc preschool tend to have more success in kindergarten and grade one. As a result, the students who matriculate to the primary grades seem to be more able to express themselves and control their emotions. These two critical skills support academic learning. Through expert teacher support and a range of engaging developmentally appropriate activities, the Saint Joan of Arc preschool students develop into successful learners.

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

### **2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

In the classroom setting, Saint Joan of Arc students participate in a fine arts curriculum that engages their creative abilities. Art and music classes meet twice a week for all kindergarten to eighth-grade students. We focus on the Elements of Art and Principles of Design. We also have a special focus on art history. We explore these elements and principles through songs, stories, and videos. Students will develop their fine motor skills while experimenting with various art media and materials to create art. All lessons are aligned with the National Standards of Visual Arts and Music.

We teach the elements of music so students can begin to understand how a song is created. We allow them to create their own music using tools such as Chrome Music Lab. Students experiment with instruments in centers, so they gain an understanding of how these instruments are used properly and how music is created. In addition, we introduce students to various musical genres ranging from classical, gospel, jazz, and hip-hop, to name a few. Saint Joan of Arc takes a “full circle” approach to teach art and music together to our students. For example, introducing the Birth of Rock and Roll in America through listening to music samples, along with question and answer discussions, video presentations, etc., help the student understand where the roots of music began. Once an introduction to music is completed, we move on to an art project that would complement that genre of music, such as painting retro album covers or discovering artists such as Andy Warhol and painting Pop Art soup cans with their own creative twist.

Our preschool students participate in a fine arts curriculum as well. They meet once a week. Their expectations are learning songs and participating in dance and movements. We also begin basic knowledge of the elements of art, such as color and line.

Outside the classroom, Saint Joan of Arc offers a wide variety of ways students can participate and broaden their knowledge of fine arts. We offer weekly band and piano lessons, a drama program with a once-a-year spring play, a variety show for Grandparents Day to help them express their individual talents, and a Christmas Concert. In addition, we have a Christmas junior high choir and school-wide liturgical music who practice weekly with our music director.

### **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

Physical education is taught twice a week to all students from preschool through eighth grade in our large gymnasium. The overall goal of the program is for the students to participate in and value physical activity; understanding its importance to a healthy lifestyle. Some of the essential skills that are taught include: locomotor skills, hand-eye coordination, following directions, working independently, working

cooperatively, and monitoring heart rate.

The knowledge that the students gain through physical education class includes: components of health and skill related fitness, SMART goal setting, benefits of warm up and cool down, how to play and basic rules for lifetime sports, and benefits of maintaining a health enhancing level of fitness.

We also provide an extra health class for all students in grades one through three that teaches proper hygiene, importance of sleep, medicine safety, nutrition, dental hygiene, cardiovascular system and bullying.

## **2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)**

Saint Joan of Arc offers fifth through eighth-grade students the opportunity to learn Spanish. Learning a second language is more than memorizing words and structures. During daily instruction, we emphasize developing language proficiency in context through listening, reading, writing, speaking, deciphering body language, and other non-verbal cues unique to Spanish cultures. Most students are proficient in these skills in their native language (English and others). At SJA, we work on transferring and taking advantage of these existing skills to further our student's academic growth and widen their knowledge of other cultures.

Spanish class encompasses all four language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All lessons begin with students listening to the spoken language from an authentic source. The teacher models the correct pronunciation for students, who are asked to mimic sounds, words, and phrases. Students receive immediate feedback on their attempts. When students practice Spanish at home, they can refer to the online textbook with pronunciation videos to further assist them with the correct pronunciation.

Students also learn how to read and write in Spanish. Although these skills may be challenging for some students, they can all be successful with practice, persistence, and scaffolding from the teacher. Students learn that spelling, like in English, matters. In addition to spelling, students must learn about accent marks when reading and writing in Spanish.

Students are also given the opportunity to hone presentation and interpersonal skills when they engage in conversations and present and exchange information with class audiences.

While students are learning a new language, they start gathering new ideas and insights from other cultures' perspectives that, in time, will help to create career possibilities in international or multinational companies in the Spanish-speaking world.

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

Students have the opportunity to visit the school library once a week. Primary students hear stories read aloud and pick books to take home and enjoy with their families. The librarian gives book talks to students to expose them to new books and encourages them to try different genres. Older students visit the library weekly to check out books and work toward their individual Accelerated Reader goals. The librarian and teachers work closely with the Lisle Public Library (located across the street) to ensure our students have a great selection of fiction and nonfiction books.

Kindergarten through eighth-grade students have access to their individual Chromebooks during the school day. Students are taught basic computer skills in the primary grades, including accessing specific websites and using Google applications such as docs, slides, and classroom. As students grow in age, they are taught how to use technology as a tool to aid in their learning. Intermediate students master how to work in Google extensions such as Pear Deck, and they learn to operate video editing software to create original video presentations. The junior high students use Chromebooks throughout the school day to aid in their learning. To begin each school day at Saint Joan of Arc, several eighth-grade students present the morning announcements from the STREAM lab to each homeroom Smartboard. Students learn to infuse technology to meet their goals.

## **2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share**

In order to encourage STREAM, Saint Joan of Arc School offers two very unique classes to junior high students on a weekly basis: coding and robotics. In coding class, the students become logical thinkers and problem solvers. Using Code.org, our students learn block coding that they will use in science class to later create websites, use robots, and operate drones. Our elementary students use Bee-Bots and Scratch as introductions to the coding world.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

All of our students are given benchmark assessments four times a year. Once the assessments are complete, we meet with a team of teachers for each grade level. This team includes the classroom teachers, intervention teachers, and administration. We review the data and determine if any students are not meeting the standards and are in need of intervention support. If performing below grade level, a student will receive intervention support in reading and/or math, depending on their need, with a certified teacher. Scientifically researched intervention programs such as Wilson Reading System, Flyleaf Reading Series, and Do the Math are used with the students. Most students work in small groups or one-to-one with a teacher to help close any learning gaps. We progress monitor the students to measure their growth and determine if support is still needed or if current interventions need to be adjusted.

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

When we have our data meetings, we also look to see what students are performing above grade level. We provide enrichment through Junior Great Books reading program. These students are given the opportunity to read grade-appropriate but higher-level texts, and to work on advanced critical thinking skills in a small group environment. In grades 4-8, the students are assessed for their ability level in mathematics and are given enrichment problems using Khan Academy, Aleks Math, and IXL online programs. This gives each student reinforcement to advance at an individualized level, whether filling in gaps of missed skills or moving ahead to learn new content.

#### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

St. Joan of Arc School collaborates with Lisle Community Unit School District 202 to determine the eligibility of students with disabilities. The Lisle District provides Child Find Services. If a student is found eligible for special education, the school district will provide services for students with speech and language, as well as hearing and vision disabilities, using proportionate share funding. Our speech pathologist is provided through the school district and works with students in our building four days a week. If a student has been diagnosed earning disability, they receive intervention services. This intervention service provides a more intensive program to help accommodate the disability leading to greater success in school. A student with a health or psychological diagnosis is given a Student Success Plan, a list of accommodations, to help the student be successful in the school environment. These plans are shared with the teachers and parents. Saint Joan of Arc School also provides accommodations for students who may not qualify for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) through our local school district.

#### **3d. English Language Learners:**

#### **3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

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

---

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

Daily lessons at Saint Joan of Arc are engaging for students because they are presented in various ways. For example, teachers use Smart Boards, Chromebooks, Bee-Bots, and 3-D printers. In addition, teachers incorporate small-group, partner, and individual learning activities as well as whole-group instruction. Students show learning through written work, digital presentations, oral presentations, videos, and print displays. Movement and education brain breaks are also incorporated to keep students engaged.

As children progress through the grades at Saint Joan of Arc, they are taught to set goals and monitor their progress toward these goals. Young students use Accelerated Reader and other web-based programs to work on individual learning goals. Fourth through eighth-grade students use the IXL program to work at their independent levels in both reading and math. Teachers support and encourage students with frequent check-ins and goal adjustments if necessary. These check-ins allow students to learn persistence and problem-solving in a non-threatening environment. Students are motivated to reach their own goals when they are in charge.

Friendships are cultivated in a variety of ways in order to promote students' social and emotional growth. Children have lunch and recess with students from other classes and grade levels. This simple activity allows children to develop friendships across classes and grade levels. Teachers encourage students to manage conflict through peer mediation and assist and guide students in the process if needed. "I-statements" are modeled and encouraged to help students learn to hear other people's feelings and begin to understand their points of view. Older students are paired with younger students in our Buddy Program where younger children look up to their older buddies, and older students model appropriate interactions. This long-standing tradition at our school is one that all children eagerly look forward to participating in each year. The buddies read books, complete projects, and attend Mass together.

Students are taught to self-advocate. When children learn to express their needs and frustrations appropriately, they feel empowered. Teachers model and assist students in grade-appropriate expressions and how to seek help. Throughout the school building, teachers and students alike take each day as a new chance to rise to the day's challenges.

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

Our school year begins with a back-to-school event where parents can get information about the various volunteer opportunities and extracurricular activities that are offered at Saint Joan of Arc School. We encourage our families and students to be as involved as possible with their school. One volunteer opportunity that has been very successful is WATCH D.O.G.S. (The Dads of Great Students) program.

This volunteer program offers dads or father figures the opportunity to volunteer at school for a full day. The dads welcome students as they arrive, participate in our morning announcements, supervise at recess, read to students, walk the halls, participate in math drills, monitor the lunchroom, and make connections with students to keep the learning environment positive and respectful. Through these experiences, the dads have a greater understanding of what teachers do each and every day and tell others about it. We have found that this program is both enjoyable and enlightening to the volunteers, students, and teachers alike. The WATCH D.O.G.S. program has been so successful that we "fill up" on the very first day that the sign-up is offered.

Another successful program at SJA partners our school library with our local public library. They work with us to provide materials that support our curriculum, and they deliver! The library also has a fabulous youth services department and director, Will Savage. Mr. Savage frequently comes to Saint Joan of Arc bringing his excitement for literacy while introducing our students to wonderful stories that captivate and entertain.

Every year we offer families the opportunity to participate in our STEM or STREAM night as well as our



reading night. Our STREAM night this year was themed around the Artemis launch and was organized by the team of teachers who are part of the family engagement team. The event was fun, educational, and well-attended by the families at Saint Joan of Arc. We look forward to planning our reading night for this spring.

To keep our families informed of these events, the administration team publishes a weekly school-wide newsletter. The newsletter includes information about extracurricular activities, fundraisers, upcoming social events, financial aid opportunities, messages from our Parent School Organization, community service projects, and accomplishments of our students and staff. When families are informed and engaged in their students' education, students are more successful.

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

One of the best ways for teachers to feel valued and supported is when others listen to their needs, opinions, and ideas. The open door policy of the administration, weekly staff meetings, surveys, and monthly check-ins from the administration with each teacher are a few of the ways this is accomplished. The Diocese of Joliet, which oversees Saint Joan of Arc, has focus areas for professional development. However, when possible, teachers' needs and the needs of their students are considered when planning for professional development. Professional development is most effective when it is relevant, collaborative, and makes a difference in student performance.

Teachers expressed frustration in the students' ability to transfer their spelling knowledge to their written work and decode multisyllabic words. In response to this problem, the school adopted the Foundations phonics program. Each teacher took a training class, and the entire team met weekly before school to discuss how the lessons were going and how to manage the materials. The team also talked about how students were responding to the instruction. We have found that this type of experience creates a positive learning atmosphere for the staff and provides collegial support. In addition, teachers are encouraged to take risks and are empowered to implement new strategies and learning activities to improve their professional practice and student learning. All new teachers, regardless of experience, are assigned a mentor teacher for their first year at Saint Joan of Arc School.

Teachers and administrators work side by side in professional learning communities to grow in knowledge and understanding of best practices. Both book studies and video series are used to gain knowledge, and then rich discussions allow all members to contribute. Sometimes PLCs have developed into coaching sessions, where one staff member is a subject knowledge expert and can help clarify concepts for others.

The administration team realizes how important it is to acknowledge the hard work that the staff does and take time to offer words of encouragement, explicit praise, incentives, and fun activities that promote collaboration. It is also the practice at the Saint Joan of Arc school office to communicate as much as possible with the staff. Helping every staff member feel valued and informed is a necessity because when the faculty and staff feel they are valued team members, there is more collaboration and growth. There are many ways information is shared with the team. For example, we have an online "hub" that stores all essential documents the teachers may need to reference, a weekly calendar is sent via email with notes about important happenings within the school, and daily updates are shared each morning. The school also utilizes a shared online calendar system for meetings and notes, a test schedule calendar, and a STREAM lab use calendar. All of these communication tools help keep everyone informed about their school.

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

The leadership philosophy of the school administration team, principal and assistant principal, is to lead by example, build trusting relationships with clear and consistent communication and make decisions based on student needs. We are servant leaders and coaches for staff, students, and parents.

The administration team is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school, managing the school budget, hiring new staff members, monitoring teacher performance, assisting the staff in curriculum development and material selection, promoting and designing professional development, and communicating with all constituencies.

The principal role has changed over the years from a managerial position to one focused on deep involvement with the students and teachers in the school. Administrators must promote an environment that is conducive to learning and collaboration. By establishing a reliable and trusted relationship with the students and teachers in the building, the administration team builds a healthy collaborative environment for learning. The best way to do this has been to ask for staff opinions, listen, and make decisions based on all input. Principals also must stay current regarding best teaching practices and curricula while being willing and able to support teachers in all their endeavors.

Our school leadership ensures that policies, programs, relationships, and resources focus on student achievement by clearly communicating the policies and programs to our students, staff, families, business manager, and school board members. School policies are designed to keep our children physically and emotionally safe and focused on learning. These policies include standards of behavior, bullying, cell phone usage, dress code, and more. When these policies are not followed, the administration team promptly addresses each issue according to our school handbook.

The administration secures funds for the resources that are needed in the school. Much of this is done during the budgeting process. The administration is also involved in fundraising for resources that are beyond what the budget can cover. Last school year, a significant amount of money was raised through fundraising for the purchase of a large screen and projector in the gym and new entry doors. These projects were possible because the administration team communicated the need to the families, school board, and community and was actively involved in the process. In addition, the administration team knows professional development can benefit teachers and students directly. Therefore, the administration team actively seeks opportunities, participates, and funds professional development.

One of the most important resources the administration team ensures is time for collaboration. Time is dedicated to scheduling professional learning communities, student data meetings, and additional training. As a result, teachers focus on student success and improving their practice.

The school advisory board is an integral part of the Saint Joan of Arc community. The board is comprised of the school administration, pastor, parents, and grandparents. This group meets monthly to discuss relevant issues, including budgeting, enrollment, extracurricular activities, curriculum, and building needs.

Another key stakeholder is our church pastor. He is the servant leader and coach of the spiritual life for staff, students, and families. He works with the principal to ensure that building needs are being met and that students are successful. The pastor works to build relationships with students by being an active presence in the school building as well as in extracurricular activities.

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

The approach to equity and inclusion which Saint Joan of Arc uses is formed from our unwavering belief in the human dignity of every person. We recognize that having students and teachers with varied backgrounds does not ensure that everyone feels equally welcome and valued.

We feel that one concrete way that we strive to create an equitable and culturally aware community at Saint Joan of Arc School includes the creation of our Adopt a Student program and other forms of financial aid have been established for families who otherwise would not be able to afford to attend our school. Each year we are able to fully or partially fund many students' tuition.

To be as equitable as possible, we recognize that learning differences are a form of equity within the classroom. Our staff works to vary instruction using visual, oral, and verbal modalities as well as technology. Students work in pairs, in groups, or work independently to accommodate their learning styles.

Our school also purposefully exposes our students to a wide variety of literature, texts, and experiences to potentially represent our students' cultural backgrounds and make connections to their lives. One example is our third-grade wax museum. Children study a variety of famous people who have made contributions to

the world. Equity and cultural awareness are at the forefront in our ELA classrooms when discussing books such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*. We also know that all of our students and teachers have important customs and traditions that can be shared. This is honored in our classrooms when they create their All About Me digital presentations or share their personal stories.

The real power of respect for all students, teachers, families, and staff lies in the prologue of the Rule of Saint Benedict. Essentially, Saint Benedict states that we must listen with the ear of our hearts. We must really listen with our ears, body, heart, and soul to recognize, understand and honor the cultures, customs, and traditions of our school.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

---

Due to our campus design, a preschool through 8th-grade school, we have intentionally cultivated a school community that supports teachers in maintaining a deep understanding of our students and their diverse learning needs. This structure allows for the continuity of instruction and services to be seamless.

Our collaborative school culture also permits communication among and across grade levels that ensures that each student is deeply known and effectively served. We maintain a shared document with test scores for all of our students for this purpose. This data helps in decision-making for class placement, instructional planning, and marks student growth. This makes our teachers more effective and impactful and makes a smooth transition between grades.

Transitioning from an elementary school to a middle school setting can be a scary proposition for some students. At Saint Joan of Arc School, the transition to middle school is much less of a concern because many of the adults in the building remain present in their lives and continue to offer support. An extra benefit of this model is that it gives middle school students time to mature while honing their social, academic, and leadership skills.

We encourage leadership with our student government, but we also promote individual ideas as well. This year will mark the third year in a row that we will have the opportunity to participate in the “Sweeney Shootout”. This idea was conceived by a fifth-grade student. He met with the administration to pitch his idea, and he works extremely hard every year to improve this important school event that honors a past principal who died suddenly in 2019. This experience has fostered his leadership skills and will prepare him well for his high school years and beyond. This was possible because of our campus design and culture of housing and supporting any students’ ability for growth.

Our campus design also encourages parents to stay active in their children's education. Family engagement is so very important to our students’ success. Our families are comfortable volunteering well into the middle school years because they continue to be a part of the Saint Joan of Arc School community and are connected and invested. Saint Joan of Arc School is a support system for our parents as well. The school partners closely with families to determine high school selection, knowing students so well.

Our ultimate goal is to teach the whole child academically, socially, and spiritually and our culture as well as our campus design enable that to happen.

## 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?      \$7700  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$2506
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      0%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      8%

## 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 (2021-2022)<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.

---

<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)