

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[ ] Public or [X] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Stacia Andricain

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

Official School Name Saint Joseph's Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3015 Broussard Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Baton Rouge State LA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 70808-1120

County East Baton Rouge

Telephone (225) 388-2240

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL <https://www.sjabr.org>

E-mail [sja@sjabr.org](mailto:sja@sjabr.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\* Dr. Patti Davis

E-mail [pdavis@csobr.org](mailto:pdavis@csobr.org)

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Baton Rouge

Tel. (225) 387-0561

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. John D'Angelo

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

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

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

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 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

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**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	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	256
10	307
11	275
12 or higher	242
Total Students	1080

\*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2.7 % Asian
  - 6.1 % Black or African American
  - 1.8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87.1 % White
  - 1.9 % 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 2021 - 2022 school year: 4%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	28
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	1126
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 18

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %  
Total number of students served 134

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>2</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>134</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>60</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>2</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: 6

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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	74
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

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 15:1

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	95%	98%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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	292
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
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.      2016

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

Educate young women as responsible and unifying members of the world community in the spirit and charism of the Sisters of Saint Joseph,

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

<https://www.sjabr.org/about/diversity-inclusion>

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

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Saint Joseph’s Academy is the home away from home to 1,076 young women from 62 different elementary schools. With an admissions policy that is nondiscriminatory regarding race or national origin, SJA invites applications from students of all faiths, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds with the academic ability and motivation to succeed. Special consideration is shown to Catholic families who have consistently supported Catholic education or who have a legacy at SJA.

SJA families choose an Academy education for their daughters because they desire a rigorous, college-preparatory education, a culture of excellence, and the opportunity to be immersed in the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph, serving the “dear neighbor” without distinction.

SJA students grow in their faith through monthly schoolwide masses or prayer services and annual class retreats. The sacrament of reconciliation is offered biannually. Students may choose to participate in a weekly rosary, weekly Bible study, bimonthly Eucharistic Adoration, mission trips, and various ministry clubs. The four-year service program awakens in students a passion for justice and a desire to be connected with all God’s creation.

A commitment to academic excellence ensures the intellectual growth of each student through challenging courses. A dedicated faculty helps students become life-long learners and critical thinkers who are well-equipped to embrace an ever-changing world. Technology is integrated across the curriculum in a robust one-to-one learning environment.

Experiences outside the classroom are just as rewarding as those inside. SJA offers enriching activities and programs that help each student grow in leadership, responsibility, and collaboration. Students discover new talents and grow as well-rounded young women through 40-plus clubs and 12 athletic teams.

Saint Joseph’s Academy embraces a holistic approach to education, addressing students’ physical, mental, social, and emotional wellbeing. The goal is that students graduate as confident, well-rounded young women who will make a difference in their communities.

Opportunities abound to develop analytical, critical-thinking, and communication skills. Honors courses are offered in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign languages, and 23 Advanced Placement courses are offered across all disciplines. Students can earn up to 24 hours of college credit in dual-enrollment courses in U.S. history, kinesiology, English, and math.

High school is a time of significant transition, and the Academy uses a variety of methods and interventions to accommodate all students, including their social emotional development. Each entering class is assigned a grade-level counselor who follows the grade through its four years of high school. This early connection as well as on-going support have proven to be beneficial to the development of the whole student. They also create a solid connection to parents. Should a student need traditional mental health counseling, her grade-level counselor or SJA’s wellness educator can refer her to a provider.

SJA provides an enhanced health and wellness curriculum that helps students develop interests and skills in life-long activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle. An expanded intramural athletic program enables students not involved in interscholastic athletics to enjoy exercise, conditioning, and fun competition.

A full-time athletic trainer evaluates and treats student-athletes during lunch hours and after school. A full-time school nurse helps ensure a healthy school environment.

Since its founding 154 years ago, traditions have been a hallmark of the Academy experience. Time-honored traditions bind students to one another and to the generations of graduates who came before them. Through shared experiences, students and alumnae become members of a special sisterhood unique to SJA.

As the Academy embarked upon its latest strategic plan, stakeholder surveys called for a schoolwide test



prep program to better prepare students for the ACT. SJA offers several opportunities in and outside of the classroom.

ACT strategies are incorporated into the curriculum and utilized during Test Prep Instructional Days throughout the school year. ACT Gear-Up Sessions are offered on weekends. These more intensive test-prep sessions focus on strategies and practice techniques for each content-specific ACT test. ACT Diagnostic Testing is offered throughout the year. Students practice taking a full-length ACT test in a testing environment and receive specific feedback on the areas in which they need to work to improve their scores. An on-campus ACT testing day is provided for seniors in October and for juniors in March.

To address the gender gap in STEM-related fields, SJA provides opportunities for students to study engineering; to join the robotics team, building a robot to go head-to-head against other teams in challenging competitions; and to serve as a paid technician in SJA's student-run Help Desk, diagnosing and repairing all tablet computers on campus.

Having been recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School sets SJA apart in a competitive educational landscape. The award affirms the Academy's commitment to providing an environment of excellence for young women. It underlines the school's high expectations for outstanding performance in academics, co-curricular activities, and service. For faculty/staff, being part of a Blue Ribbon School creates the expectation of high performance, professional development, and professional growth. SJA is motivated daily to live up to high standards for teaching, learning, and improvement.

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

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

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

Saint Joseph's Academy offers a comprehensive, rigorous educational experience for students at all levels in English/language arts. Students are required to complete an English course each year. A variety of options are available at the college-preparatory, honors, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement levels.

Aligned to the Louisiana state standards, College Board's Advanced Placement Standards, and ACT's College and Career Readiness standards, the English curriculum focuses on different genres of literature, composition, and language formation (grammar and vocabulary). Honors courses are more comprehensive and in-depth content focused, incorporating skills such as interpretation, criticism, research, and writing applied to advanced literature texts. Advanced Placement courses require students to critically analyze advanced literature texts and read perceptively; student writing is focused on literary criticism, and in-depth discussions allow students to understand various perspectives of the text. The English IV Dual Enrollment course allows students to earn six credit hours of college courses (English 1001 and English 2000); the main focus of this course is to advance student writing skills in academic, professional, and public genres with an emphasis on research, analysis, and argumentation.

All English courses participate in the summer reading program. The English department facilitates the all-school read.

English/language arts faculty members use numerous instructional techniques to capture student expression and ability to critically analyze: utilizing text analysis activities, literature circles, Socratic seminars, writing workshops, book studies, peer editing, creative writing, and peer consultation. Various assessments allow numerous examples of student achievement and mastery of the content. Students' writing is assessed through peer feedback, rubrics, and teacher feedback via consultation. Common formative and summative assessments created by the teachers are used as unit and semester assessments; data is reviewed and analyzed in Professional Learning Community (PLC) time, department meetings, and department chair meetings with administration to inform curricular decisions and best instructional practices for content. For example, student literature allows for in-depth literary analysis and debate perspectives or theoretical issues of a novel or story. Many teachers use this approach as a "fishbowl" technique, in which students inside the circle are discussing and debating, while students outside the circle are participating by answering specific questions and taking notes. This type of instructional technique allows students to exhibit content proficiency in a collaborative way through student-centered facilitation.

Student achievement on standardized testing also informs curricular decisions and revisions and provides placement data in higher-level courses. All assessment data is analyzed by the teacher, the subject-cohort in their PLC, the department, and administration to find gaps in the curriculum and make decisions for instruction and curriculum that will benefit the learning of all students.

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

Saint Joseph's Academy's mathematics curriculum provides a variety of courses at the college-preparatory, honors, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement levels. Students are required to take four years of math and have the option of also enrolling in math electives such as Accounting and AP Statistics.

Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Algebra III focus on essential math concepts including processing, structuring, and problem-solving. Honors courses are provided for each college-preparatory course, except Algebra III. These honors courses provide more in-depth learning with an accelerated pace and an emphasis on theory and problem-solving. Dual enrollment courses are offered for the upper-level math courses, including Pre-Calculus and Calculus. These courses are technology-based courses where teacher instruction accounts for approximately one-third of the instruction and student-centered lab time fills the other two-

thirds. For the Advanced Placement courses in Calculus (AB and BC), the curriculum focuses on differential and integral calculus, incorporating skills of limits, derivatives, and integrals. All courses and assessments are aligned to Louisiana state standards, College Board's Advanced Placement Standards, and ACT's College and Career Readiness Standards.

Teachers utilize engaging instruction to facilitate each student's path to mastery. In addition, the utilization of differentiation techniques is key in lesson planning to connect to each student's learning style. Teachers use group work, in-class practice, guided practice, progress checks, and one-on-one support to help students gain understanding of the content. Data from practice and formative assessments during lessons leads the instruction for the following day.

Standardized testing is used as a tool to monitor student skills and inform curricular decisions. Students are given the ACT 8/9 as an entrance placement test in order to gather individual baseline data, assist with course placement, and provide data for skills to be emphasized in the curriculum. Pre-ACT 10 and ACT tests are used to monitor student progress and emphasize certain content to be implemented or emphasized in the curriculum. Additional data is gathered from formative and summative assessments given throughout the course. Summative assessments for curricular units and for semester exams are analyzed and discussed in PLC meetings and department meetings to address areas for improvement in the curriculum and to determine best practices. Formative assessment data is used to inform instruction and as a tool for the school's math interventionist instructor. Curriculum is evaluated for needed modifications each year based on student need.

Online software programs including MyMathLab, MathXL, and textbook software are also used to assess students. These online supplemental programs enhance instruction by helping students to understand concepts by individualizing the content and offer additional practice in order to reach mastery. All the instructional techniques, supplemental programs, assessments, data analysis, and curriculum choices utilized by the math department allow students to build their math confidence and promote success at every level.

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

The science curriculum allows students to explore different genres of science during their four years with the requirement of at least one science course per year. The science department offers courses at the college-preparatory, honors, and Advanced Placement levels to allow students to thrive in this core subject area.

College-preparatory courses include Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. These courses focus on basic concepts and skills needed to understand the subject area. Honors courses go a step further with an emphasis on making connections between concepts and allowing for greater experiences in independent research. Honors courses are offered in Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Advanced Placement courses include Biology AP, Chemistry AP, Physics AP, and Environmental Science AP and focus on inquiry-based investigations of the course concepts. These courses challenge students to explore concepts at the highest level.

As part of a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) initiative, the science curriculum offers additional courses that introduce students to STEM topics and career paths including Project-Based Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, and AP Computer Science: Principles.

All science courses are aligned to the Louisiana state standards, Next Generation Science Standards, ACT College and Career Readiness Standards, and College Board's Advanced Placement standards.

To make science concepts come alive, science faculty utilize many hands-on experiences to convey the content. In addition to teacher-led instruction, students are exposed to labs for experiments, both in-class and virtually, group projects, scientific research, cooperative learning, and presentation activities. Students in courses at the honors and AP levels participate in a research-based science fair, which includes working with a mentor for a year and a half to complete their project on a topic of their choice.

and to inform instructional and curricular decisions. This data expresses best practices for instruction and gaps of knowledge for curriculum revision.

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

The social studies curriculum exposes students to a comprehensive study of history, political science, and current events in the community, nation, and the world ensuring the compilation of diverse voices and perspectives. Courses are provided at the college-preparatory, honors, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement levels. Students are required to take three years of social studies courses offered by the department in addition to a required Church History theology course at the sophomore level. The department offers the most AP options with seven to choose from and an honors Dual Enrollment United States History course.

Numerous electives based on student interest are offered, including Criminology, African American History, and Entrepreneurship. Students learn various historical perspectives with the use of primary documents, documentaries, guest speakers, virtual reality simulations, debates, and research projects. Teachers use a variety of instructional methods to check student understanding and support knowledge of the content. Instructional techniques, including virtual escape rooms and reality simulation, and software, including Pear Deck, are applied to stimulate learning and observe student input.

The social studies department members and students devoted time to special projects and promotion of historical events. As part of the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote, U.S. History students collaborated on a visual timeline of the movement and women's empowerment. Numerous extracurricular clubs allow students to pursue other interests in the field of social studies and learn about the systems of the nation, including Student Council, Youth and Government, Mock Trial, Future Business Leaders of America, Criminal Justice Club, and the Historical and Geographical Society.

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

Saint Joseph's Academy is a college-preparatory school known for its rigorous academic education. Student leadership and a devotion to serving others is instilled through the school's four-year service program. Each year, more than 35,000 hours are shared with the local community. SJA provides opportunities for students to serve as peer tutors in a variety of subjects and standardized tests.

To provide additional course opportunities for students, SJA shares classes with Catholic High School, an all-boys school located nearby. Interaction with CHS students in performing arts, electives, upper-level core courses, and supplemental programs affords both schools a chance to explore new areas of study and expose students at the single-gender schools to socialization.

Dual enrollment courses are offered in English, math, social studies, and health. Advanced Placement courses are offered in English, math, science, social studies, and the arts. These courses provide college-level content and expectations and allow students to explore career options. All core subjects are aligned to ACT's College and Career Readiness and Reading Standards.

SJA provides opportunities to explore future careers through various electives and school initiatives. STEM electives and extracurricular opportunities are available in Robotics and eSports. Students can be trained as interns in the school's student-run Help Desk. Students who show initiative and excel in the training can become paid student employees who diagnose and repair the 1,200-plus laptop computers in use at the school.

Entrepreneurship class, Future Business Leaders of America club, and an on-campus business space allow students to explore future business and career opportunities. In addition, electives including Law Studies, Criminology, Sports Medicine, Clothing Construction, Nutrition, Media Arts, and Journalism expand students' knowledge in an area of interest that may be fruitful in their career path. School events, a career day expo, and job shadowing allow students to explore career interests with exposure to professionals in the field as well as on the job.

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

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

The arts curriculum enhances the educational experience by providing students the opportunity to explore new interests, unlock new skills, enhance talents and gifts, and discover their unlimited and unique potential. Students can choose from 35 applied, performing, and visual art courses at both the college-preparatory and Advanced Placement levels. Advanced Placement courses are AP Music Theory, AP Studio Art in 2-D Design, AP Studio Art Drawing, AP Studio Art 3-D design, and AP Art History.

Courses including Food and Nutrition, Clothing Construction, Adult Responsibility, and Media Arts teach students real-world skills. Additional art-focused opportunities are available to students through collaborating and sharing classes with Catholic High School, an all-boys school located near SJA. Band, Choir, Dance, and Theater are a few of the shared classes and programs with CHS.

The skills gained by students from art course offerings transcend the daily classroom and allow students to exhibit their creativity to the community. Highlighting the work of their students is an objective of the entire art department. By participating in state-wide art shows and contests, performing for local elementary and middle schools and the community, art students are able to reveal their talents and share their passion for the arts with others.

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

The physical education curriculum emphasizes a holistic approach to educate students about the necessity and benefits of good health and wellbeing at all stages of life. With a focus on healthy life choices, teachers use lectures, research, class presentations, guest speakers, projects, and videos to enhance their lessons. Topics relevant to today's youth are covered, including drug use, vaping, alcohol, and eating disorders.

Students are required to take two full credits of physical education courses throughout their high school career; however, SJA requires a semester of health and physical education every year because of its belief in the benefits of an active lifestyle. Health is a requirement by the state of Louisiana and is a part of every physical education class; grade-level-appropriate health topics are incorporated at each course level. To accommodate all skill and ability levels, students have the opportunity to take higher intensity courses including Health and Physical Education Accelerate and Health and Physical Education Fun Intense Training (F.I.T.). The accelerated course is for students who enjoy the competitiveness of sports, and the F.I.T. class is based on individual goals that are determined through student/teacher collaboration. F.I.T. students are required to complete a duathlon. A dual enrollment course in Individual Wellness and Public Health is offered, as are Sports Medicine electives.

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

SJA students enhance their education by gaining language skills and knowledge of other cultures. French, Spanish, and Latin are offered to students at the college-preparatory, honors, and Advanced Placement levels. Students are required to take two years of the same foreign language with many choosing to take beyond the requirement.

The foreign language curriculum incorporates speaking, listening, and writing proficiency as well as comprehension of the language. The curriculum incorporates the unique aspects of the culture, traditions, and geography. Students who take upper-level language courses are offered an immersive opportunity to travel to a country of their chosen language elective. The school has also hosted foreign exchange students

and visitors.

Students with previous language coursework from middle school take a placement test to assess the best level placement. This affords students the opportunity to reach levels five and six in high school.

Students who take four years of a foreign language, have maintained an overall grade point average of at least 3.0, and earned qualifying scores on the English and Reading sections of the ACT are awarded the Louisiana Seal of Biliteracy as a special recognition on their diploma.

Those students who want to learn American Sign Language can join the school's ASL Club.

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

SJA's Technology and Learning Center (TLC) is at the heart of campus. This multiuse space houses resources aimed at promoting students' success and technological advancements. The Learning Center and Writing Center are open each school day to provide tutoring and additional support in the areas of English, math, science, and writing by utilizing certified teachers and peer tutors.

The student-run Help Desk employs students from all grade levels to diagnose and fix computer issues in-house. This program drastically reduces labor and shipping costs and, more importantly, significantly reduces computer downtime along with a loaner computer program.

All incoming freshmen begin their time at SJA by attending a week-long computer orientation course in July. Each student is issued a laptop computer and taught basic technology skills and software applications that allow for a smooth transition to SJA's one-to-one campus. Students are exposed to the benefits of technology, learn fixes for common technology issues, and learn how to utilize the Help Desk for complex problems with their devices.

Technology courses allow students to pursue interests in Computer Architecture, Programming, and A+ Certification. The technology department offers Advanced Placement Computer Science: Principles. This course is also part of the STEM initiative and teaches students skills that can be used in math and science, as well.

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

SJA offers a capstone experience through the AP Capstone Diploma, which includes a two-year commitment to taking AP Seminar and AP Research. These courses require students to explore academic and real-world topics or issues and analyze through an inquiry framework. Students design, plan, and implement research to address a student-generated question. These courses allow juniors and seniors to have college-level research experience.

Another innovative program that began this school year is a focus on entrepreneurship. Students are engaged through an Entrepreneurship course, Future Business Leaders of America Club, and student-owned business showcase week. Members of the Entrepreneurship class are tasked with using class lessons and guest speaker advice to build a business model and implement the plan to be housed in the Center for Entrepreneurship business space at the school.

Skill development in collaboration, critical thinking, innovation, and scientific literacy are hallmarks of the school's STEM program. Students have access to multiple 3-D printers, scanners, laser cutters, and more to show ingenuity in conception, design, creativity, and innovation. While STEM initiatives are across the entire curriculum, Project-based Engineering and Principles of Engineering courses are also offered. Projects ranging from developing hydroponic systems to recreating a model of the Roman Colosseum enhance students' learning and teachers' ability to assist in helping student ideas come to life.

## **3. Academic Supports**

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

From the start of a student's high school journey, the admissions team, administration, and grade-level counselor monitor her progress. Students take the Pre-ACT 8/9 as an entrance test; this test is used as baseline data for that student. Scores help determine course placement and if there is a need for special interventions and resources to boost student success. Grades, recommendations from previous school, and test scores are also used to determine placement and the need for additional academic support. If indicated, the student will be enrolled in the Freshman Foundations (FF) course. FF is a daily class developed to help students build an academic foundation while transitioning to high school-level academic rigor. The course focuses on study and test-taking skills, time management, organization, and presentation skills. In addition, tutors from the Learning Center offer assistance in the areas of math, science, and English. The counselor and Dean of Academics closely monitor student progress throughout the first year to ensure student success.

The Math Interventionist supports students below grade level in math. This is a new role for the 2022-2023 school year that was created based on assessment data and teacher feedback. The interventionist works with students individually and in small groups who are struggling with foundational skills and key concepts. Data from these sessions and assessments are used to monitor progress.

Building math confidence in students begins before the first day of school. The freshman class participated in an online math course covering the top 15 skills needed to be successful in Algebra I. Students take a pre-test and post-test to see their progress and participate in practice lessons on each topic. Feedback from faculty and data from student work allow SJA to gauge skill proficiency for each individual student.

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

Students performing above grade level have the opportunity to select honors-level courses as well as college-level courses through the dual enrollment and Advanced Placement programs.

Students performing above grade level are challenged to share their knowledge with others both inside and outside of the classroom. Groups for activities and assessments are carefully chosen by the teacher to match the needs of the assessments; students of different abilities are grouped in order for those who are more proficient to assist those who might struggle in a certain area. By taking the time to do this, teachers see a more powerful, collaborative experience that allows all students to flourish in their own way.

Students above grade level are presented the opportunity to help others by becoming a peer tutor in the Learning Center. This is a wonderful opportunity for students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to help others who need additional support to succeed.

Students who perform above grade level in science are part of SJA's science fair program. Students collaborate with their teacher and full-time science fair coordinator to determine their project topic. Science fair participants also work with a mentor on the projects and have access to labs and lab equipment needed for their projects. The year-and-a-half-long project, while intense, has not only increased the students' knowledge of collaboration and research, but it also allows them the experience to hone their verbal and presentation skills. Competing at the local, regional, and state levels, many SJA students have earned the wonderful opportunity of presenting their projects at the local university as well as the International Science and Engineering Fair.

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

The Dean of Academics and school counselors work closely with students with disabilities to ensure they are supported in the best way possible. Students with the proper documentation are given accommodation in the classroom including preferential seating, extended time for testing, written-paper testing, recording the lesson, and precautions for hypersensitivity to sound. Students with more severe disabilities are reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the best plan possible for student success. Differentiated instruction is used to connect a student's individual learning style to the lesson. Teachers follow individualized student accommodations for optimal performance on course assessments. The standardized test coordinator follows

all allowable testing guidelines for student accommodation for students with disabilities. Providing the best possible testing environment for those with specific accommodation is made a priority.

**3d. English Language Learners:**

The student body at SJA consists of a diverse group of learners; however, there are no English Language Learners in the current student population.

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



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

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

Saint Joseph's Academy challenges students to have eyes open to the ever-changing world and ears attentive to the cries of others. With her spirit alert and a compassionate heart, the SJA student embraces the differences and unique gifts offered by all. With sleeves rolled up in service to the dear neighbor, she becomes a woman for others so that all may be one.

Service is a vital component of the faith development pillar of the SJA mission statement. The program's goal is to foster an encounter with Christ through serving alongside those most in need and a desire to sacrifice oneself for others with acts of charity and mercy. Students form sustained, interpersonal relationships that allow them to see all people as created in God's image and likeness.

In the classroom, students flourish in a rich and rigorous academic curriculum. College preparatory, dual enrollment with Louisiana State University, honors, and advanced placement classes prepare students to be successful at the next educational level, with nearly 100 percent of graduates attending four-year colleges and universities.

The Technology and Learning Center is home to numerous resources to help students achieve academic success. The Learning Center provides assistance to any student needing extra help with math, science, English, or writing. Peer tutoring in foreign languages is provided by members of the National Honor Society and Beta Club. Trained peer consultants in the Writing Center help students gain competence and confidence as writers through one-on-one sessions. The Writing Center is modeled on university writing centers. To further build students' confidence in mathematics, a math interventionist works directly with teachers and students. Students have daily access to the state-of-the-art STEM lab, where they learn a varied set of skills, including 3D modeling, using power tools, laser cutting, robot design, the general engineering and design process, soldering, programming, research, and electronics.

Engaging in more than 40 clubs and organizations, students learn skills to become effective leaders. Whether a student joins the Literary Ladies Society or the Respect Life Club, she is afforded opportunities to work collectively and collaboratively toward common goals. Twelve athletic teams enable student-athletes to realize the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship, and healthy competition.

The Big Sis/Lil Sis program is a long-standing Academy tradition in which seniors are paired with freshmen. Seniors serve as mentors, friends, and guides to welcome new students into the sisterhood of the school and help them make a successful transition from elementary school to high school.

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

Working in partnership with the families of Saint Joseph's Academy students and the community at large is vitally important to the strength of the school and its longevity. Established in 1868, SJA is the oldest high school in the city. In recognition of its time-honored presence in the Baton Rouge community, SJA was designated as the first Local Historic Landmark by the Metropolitan Council.

Recognizing that students can positively impact the local environment and conserve natural resources, SJA participated in The Wyland National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation. Students raised awareness of the importance of using water more efficiently, reducing pollution, and conserving energy. They pledged to make good choices in their daily lives to conserve precious national resources. As a result, SJA was named the Most Water Wise School in East Baton Rouge Parish.

For the last 10 years, SJA has partnered with the St. Vincent de Paul shelter to make brown bag lunches, called Sticker Sacks, which are distributed once a week to those facing food insecurity. The program began in 2013 after students read the New York Times bestselling book *An Invisible Thread* as part of their required summer reading. Students were inspired to provide meals for those in need as the author of the

book did when she befriended an 11-year-old panhandler. Author Laura Schroff was so moved by the school's ongoing commitment that she included the Sticker Sack program in the foreword of the 10th anniversary edition of the book. The SJA community has provided approximately 5,000 lunches each year.

Parents are invited to be part of the school community in several ways. Joining the Mothers' Club or Dads' Club enables parents to volunteer their time and talents in support of events throughout the school year. Parents, alumnae, and neighbors are invited to join SJA for all school masses, prayer services, guest speakers, and other events.

Guest speakers present relevant topics, including responsible digital citizenship, perseverance, inclusion, faith, and mental health. During the COVID pandemic, SJA continued its speaker series by offering virtual seminars and presentations.

As a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of Saint Joseph, SJA was instrumental in creating the CSSJ Leadership Conference for Catholic school leaders across the country. Guided by a common mission and charism, these schools meet annually to learn best practices as they navigate teaching and learning in today's world. Keynote speakers and affinity groups guide conversations and provide support. SJA was the host site for this year's conference in November.

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

When Saint Joseph's Academy opened its doors for the first time after the lifting of COVID-dictated school closures, every faculty and staff member showed up for work. This unwavering dedication spoke to the heart of the team, and while there was uncertainty and a measure of nervousness, these dedicated professionals came ready and determined to get students back into the classroom. While traversing the unknowns of COVID, teachers and staff became adept at webinars, online learning and zoom meetings. Navigating a hybrid, synchronous learning plan which eventually morphed into a full return to in-person teaching and learning, faculty and staff persevered.

The 2022 school year began with a renewed focus on the joy of teaching and learning with the theme Rejoice! Rise Up and Lead. New teachers were welcomed with a mentoring program to help them acclimate to their new environment. A new position, the executive director of mission integration, was created from a strategic initiative to integrate gospel values, Catholic faith and the Sisters' charism of unifying love throughout the school community. The office of mission integration also focuses on the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Each year, school leadership names one member of the faculty and staff as the recipient of the Charism Award. The recipient receives a monetary award for his or her dedication to the charism of the Sisters and the mission of the school and for serving as a model of Christ for his or her students and colleagues.

Teachers are encouraged to be lifelong learners. The Faculty Education Grant was established to provide teachers with assistance in earning an advanced degree or certification or for their spiritual advancement. Many members of the school community have benefited from this grant as well as generous budgetary support for attending workshops, conferences, and other professional development opportunities.

This year's professional development is centered around academic rigor, depth of knowledge, and differentiation in the classroom. Designated time for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is provided monthly as are professional development and department meeting time. The purpose of PLC time is to set learning goals and outcomes, analyze data to inform best practices, and explore new resources.

The faculty and staff participate each year in a retreat experience that allows them to connect to their faith. The retreat location is specifically chosen so that time can be spent with nature in silence and also as a time for colleagues to connect with like-minded professionals who have devoted their careers to Catholic school education.

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

Saint Joseph's Academy is a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph. The school operates with a president-principal model of leadership working with the board of directors and a team of dedicated laypeople who make up the faculty and staff.

Grounded in the gospel teachings of the Catholic church and the mission of the school, SJA leadership strives for excellence in the areas of faith development, academics and personal growth in the development of the whole person. Blending rich traditions and innovative teaching and learning practices, SJA endeavors to foster relationships and uphold the dignity of each person.

Understanding that each student travels her own unique path, SJA offers resources and opportunities so that every student can be successful in and out of the classroom. SJA works in partnership with parents to support each student's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being and ensure her safety.

The president's primary roles are to promote the school's vision and mission, protect its financial viability, ensure adequate facilities, and ensure that the charism of the Sisters is alive in the school community. The president is responsible for the current and future success of the school.

The roles of the principal are to ensure the academic viability of the school while maintaining a safe environment and positive school culture. Sustaining a premier faculty is achieved through healthy relationships rooted in compassion and commitment to the mission of educating young women.

The administrative team is composed of the dean of academics, dean of women and dean of curriculum and instruction. The latter role was added in recent years to focus on supervision, planning, implementation, development, and evaluation of the curriculum and to support professional growth. This administrator has also been instrumental in developing the standardized test preparation program and teacher coaching.

The dean of academics strives to promote student success in the classroom by working directly with students, teachers, and counselors. She works to hire and maintain premier faculty, builds the master schedule, and chairs the academic excellence aspect of the strategic plan.

The dean of women is the chief officer of school culture. She is highly visible throughout the school day and works to build relationships with students. She collaborates with grade-level counselors to ensure the personal growth of students and maintains the system of discipline which is rooted in upholding the dignity of each student in a fair and caring manner. Guiding students to make good and healthy choices along with showing respect to others are central to this role.

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

Saint Joseph's Academy strives to achieve inclusive excellence as it educates students to be responsible and unifying members of the world community. SJA is committed to embracing open, honest dialogue as the school community listens, learns, acts, and leads. Parents (current and former), faculty, staff, community members, alumnae, students, board members, and school leadership came together in mutual respect with a goal of advancing equity, engagement, and inclusion in all facets of SJA. The Diversity Action Committee was formed and invited stakeholders to participate in forums surrounding topics of equitable learning, cultural tolerance, racism, diversity, and affirmation.

To strengthen its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices, SJA committed to mapping its curriculum to ensure alignment and eliminate bias and gaps. Using a variety of resources, teachers ensure that multiple perspectives and diverse voices are part of each course. The use of primary source documents enhances students' experiences of relating to the past and promotes deeper understanding.

As part of the school's strategic plan, the Diversity Action Committee developed initiatives in the areas of faith development, academic excellence, personal growth, enrollment, and governance.

To remain competitive as an employer of choice, SJA hosted an open house for college of education deans and administrators from across the state. This networking effort has been impactful in the hiring of diversely

talented faculty and staff.

Admission strategies focus on appealing to a diverse population for each new freshman class. Inviting middle school girls from across the region to attend special events showcases SJA's unique offerings to students from diverse religious, academic, school, economic, and racial backgrounds.

Research shows that girls are more prone to anxiety and depression than their male counterparts. This led to a new role in the counseling department: the wellness educator. This professional has implemented programs, presentations, and guest speaker events about social media, body image, healthy relationships, suicide, and being kind. The wellness educator has also been instrumental in assisting parents and faculty in understanding the social emotional needs of adolescent girls.

Named after this year's freshman class mascot, the new Turtle Talk program assists ninth graders with their transition to high school. Navigating a rigorous academic program, making new friends, and being responsible with new freedoms can present challenges. Mentor leaders work with small groups to help freshmen adapt to the school culture, understand policies, and plan for upcoming events. Additionally, all upperclass transfer students are invited to join the Sticker Sisters Transfer Club. This mentoring program helps new students learn about school culture and develop friendships.

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

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Saint Joseph's Academy expects its students to lead as women for others and embrace lifelong learning in an ever-changing world. SJA believes that the school's success is attributed to allowing students to be the driving force behind initiating and developing new programs, clubs, and opportunities.

Elective courses are incorporated into the curriculum based on student interest. SJA offers 70 elective courses across all departments. As students improve their skills, higher-level course options are incorporated. Creative scheduling measures are utilized to make these courses available, including combining course levels.

As students express interest in career paths, SJA increases career-based course offerings. During COVID, many students started small businesses. With a desire to propel interests and talents, students created the Entrepreneur Club which led to a new entrepreneurship class. Other electives, including criminology, law studies, technical theater, and sports medicine, were developed because of students' desire to pursue careers in those fields.

Courses have been created outside of school hours to accommodate students' busy schedules and their desire for additional opportunities. Journalism students complete online assignments and meet once a week after school. Dance and physical education courses are held before first period to allow for necessary extended time.

SJA's advanced placement and dual enrollment programs grew significantly in a few short years due to the desire of students to earn college credits and build competitive resumes for college admissions. SJA currently offers 23 AP courses and seven dual enrollment courses.

SJA empowers students to initiate club creation and other extracurricular activities. Fueled by student interest, powerlifting was recently added to the lineup of interscholastic sports. The intramural program was created when a student survey indicated they were interested in being part of a team but could not meet the demands of a full competition season or that local competition opportunities did not exist. Rock climbing, lacrosse, and kickball are now standards of the popular program.

Students have also created service opportunities to assist with needs in the broader community. Student-initiated collection drives secure items ranging from school supplies to feminine hygiene products for financially disadvantaged women.

The practice of encouraging students to propose, plan, and implement opportunities has blessed the school community with a wide variety of offerings, both academically and personally. SJA offers each student a place to contribute, to lead, and to soar. They become confident leaders, better communicators, and well-rounded young women who advocate for themselves and others.

## PART VII - NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

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

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes X      No
3. What is the educational cost per student?      \$14851  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
4. What is the average financial aid per student?      \$5129
5. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?      5%
6. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?      14%

## PART VIII – NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### FOR NORM-REFERENCED TESTS

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*Non-public schools must report norm-referenced test (NRT) results in reading and mathematics for students tested in grades 3 and higher in the most recent administration of the test within the most recently completed school year (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.

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

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

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