

# 2006-2007 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

## U.S. Department of Education

**Cover Sheet** Type of School: (Check all that apply)  Elementary  Middle  High  K-12  Charter

Name of Principal Mrs. Bernadette Pryor  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name St. Cecilia Cathedral Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3869 Webster St  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Omaha NE 68131-1809  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Douglas State School Code Number\* 01

Telephone (402) 556-6655 Fax (402) 556-9233

Web site/URL [www.stcecilia.net](http://www.stcecilia.net) E-mail bpryor@alltel.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date November 19, 2006

Name of Superintendent\* Father James Gilg  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Omaha Tel. (402) 554-8493

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date 12/12/2006

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date 12/12/2006

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

**[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]**

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2006-2007 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2001 and has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.

## **PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

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**All data are the most recent year available.**

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Middle schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
 \_\_\_\_\_ N/A TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: N/A \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city  
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
 Suburban  
 Small city or town in a rural area  
 Rural

4. 35 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

\_\_\_\_\_ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	25	5	30	7	13	24	37
K	14	23	37	8	20	35	55
1	30	23	53	9			
2	20	23	43	10			
3	14	22	39	11			
4	21	18	39	12			
5	24	24	48	Other			
6	16	27	43				
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b>							<b>424</b>

*[Throughout the document, round numbers 1 or higher to the nearest whole number. Use decimals to one place only if the number is below 1.]*

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- |                   |                                  |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>84</u>         | % White                          |
| <u>9</u>          | % Black or African American      |
| <u>3</u>          | % Hispanic or Latino             |
| <u>2</u>          | % Asian/Pacific Islander         |
| <u>2</u>          | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| <b>100% Total</b> |                                  |

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 0 %

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

<b>(1)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	1
<b>(2)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	0
<b>(3)</b>	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	1
<b>(4)</b>	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	422
<b>(5)</b>	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0
<b>(6)</b>	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	0.5

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 0 %  
2 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: 3  
 Specify languages: English, Spanish, Italian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 23

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the federally supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services:  $\frac{7}{30}$  %  
30 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>    </u> Autism	<u>  1  </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>    </u> Deafness	<u>  3  </u> Other Health Impaired
<u>    </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>  1  </u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>  5  </u> Emotional Disturbance	<u> 10  </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>  3  </u> Hearing Impairment	<u>    </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>    </u> Mental Retardation	<u>    </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>  1  </u> Multiple Disabilities	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

**Number of Staff**

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>  1  </u>	<u>    </u>
Classroom teachers	<u> 21  </u>	<u>    </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  2  </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  2  </u>
Support staff	<u>  1  </u>	<u>    </u>
Total number	<u> 25  </u>	<u>  4  </u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1  24:1 

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates, and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates. Also explain a high teacher turnover rate.

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Daily teacher attendance	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Teacher turnover rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	N/A%	N/A%	N/A%	N/A%	N/A%

## PART III - SUMMARY

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The goal of St. Cecilia Cathedral Elementary School is to strive for academic excellence and spiritual instruction from preschool through eighth grade. Founded in the heart of the city of Omaha, Nebraska, by the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters in 1907, the school is truly the anchor that stabilizes the midtown neighborhood.

In this, the school's centennial year, St. Cecilia's welcomes 424 students from diverse backgrounds. The mission of St. Cecilia's Elementary School is threefold:

- To foster a multifaceted Christian learning environment
- To proclaim and model faith, worship, and prayer
- To build community and support service to others.

The faculty includes one full-time administrator who has held this position for 35 years, and 21 full-time teachers (11 with advanced degrees) who average nineteen years each of teaching experience at St. Cecilia. This longevity is reflected in a <1% annual teacher turnover rate. Additional staff includes 3 full- and part-time special resource teachers, 3 full- and part-time paraprofessionals, and 1 full-time support staff.

The student population, while predominantly Caucasian, includes a percentage of children from every racial/ethnic group. Economic diversity is also a defining characteristic. With 5% of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch, monies are provided annually as tuition assistance from our school endowment.

Major fund-raising sources are parish subsidy, tuition, and an annual fund-raiser, "Comedy and Cuisine." The proceeds from this fund-raiser have been used for capital improvements to the school, including construction of a science lab and computerized piano lab.

While there has been a limited decrease in student enrollment due to declining birthrates and other socio-economic influences, a student daily attendance average of 98% and student turnover rate of 0% reflect a population of students and parents who value the power of education. Children are held accountable for completing their daily work and homework. The success of that accountability is revealed in average composite ITBS scores for grades 2-8 that reach to the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile rank. Students also consistently demonstrate a high level of achievement on all criterion-referenced assessments. Most of our graduates go on to make their high school honor rolls. Approximately 25% of our eighth graders earn academic scholarships to local Catholic high schools.

Activities are the highlights of the children's lives and deemed as significant. St. Cecilia School offers student government, an annual school musical, and a full range of sports, as well as speech, math and chess clubs, and academic competitions in history, science, and math. Students consistently place at the district level and state level in competitions.

Excellence in the arts was recognized by St. Cecilia's selection as the recipient of a statewide award from the Nebraska Alliance for Arts Education. In addition to the normal music and art curriculum, the school has a Camarata (string instrumentation group). Schola Cantorum provides unlimited musical opportunities for liturgical participation and performance in Omaha operas. All students K-8 participate annually in song and dance performances at our Song Fest, and all students 3-8 participate in the school operetta.

As pioneers in the community for Day Care, Snow Day Care, and extended care, St. Cecilia's accommodates today's parents. A breakfast program in Day Care, an after-school Spanish program, and a three-tiered preschool are significant parts of the school's schedule.

St. Cecilia's Board of Education is an integral policy-making body. The Home and School Association is active and practical. Most of the parents are industrious as volunteers on committees, as mentors, as computer moms, etc.

St. Cecilia's stresses and practices social and community responsibility, encouraging children and families to be active in such things as neighborhood associations, Omaha Together One Community gatherings, and Habitat for Humanity projects. Students take part in activities such as the United Way Drive, Jump Rope for Heart, St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Pantry collections, and other projects to

sponsor underprivileged children in other parts of the world.

St. Cecilia Cathedral Elementary School has been honored to be chosen as one of the 25 outstanding schools in the United States by the National Catholic Education Association, as a National Exemplary School by the U.S. Department of Education, and to receive the Presidential Citation Award from Creighton University on October 16, 2006.

## **PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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**1. Assessment Results:** The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is administered annually to all students in grades 2-8. It is important to note that only a limited number of students are excluded from the calculation of the group totals. The students excluded have Individualized Educational Plans (IEP), which are utilized for instructional planning, delivery and assessment of progress. The ITBS test results provide the principal, teachers, and parents with specific information about student learning. The building reports over the past three years indicate that St. Cecilia School makes exemplary progress as compared to other participating schools across the nation.

In reviewing the scores in reading and mathematics, it is important to note that the scores in reading are consistently stronger than the mathematics results. The reading totals are significantly above the national average 50<sup>th</sup> percentile at all grade levels. Also, in many cases, a large percentage of the students are ranked in the top quartile. The reading totals also reflect a consistent growth, especially following the 4<sup>th</sup> grade year, and a significant number of students rank in the top quartile. The reading totals indicate that the students have excellent knowledge in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension, which require the application of higher level reading skills. Comparison of CogAt scores to ITBS scores indicates that St. Cecilia students frequently perform at a higher level than would be expected. The math totals remain above the national average (50<sup>th</sup> percentile). In reviewing the three-year graph, it should be noted that sometimes the changes in the math totals are not significant, but progress is noted. Students of St. Cecilia have a solid understanding of concepts/estimates and problems and data and continue to improve each year in math.

**2. Using Assessment Results:** St. Cecilia School utilizes the ITBS results in a number of ways to both challenge and reinforce student learning throughout the curriculum. The faculty receives assessment results by building level, grade level, and by individual classroom to review and interpret the data with focus on improving student learning. Teachers interpret, analyze, and utilize the data to examine strengths, weaknesses, and areas that need to be addressed in classroom teaching as a whole. Aspects of a professional learning community exist, such as sharing and collaboration by grade level teachers and classroom partner teachers. Time is provided at faculty meetings to continue this sharing. Test scores in each subject area are further analyzed to determine the individual child's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the overall needs of the class. Test results also provide the framework for decision-making about curriculum issues and the ongoing monitoring of the school improvement plan. There is evidence of this occurring in individual classrooms, as well as in the school as a whole. For example, an individual classroom teacher may divide the class into small groups to meet individual needs in reading comprehension and math skills. Also, teachers have developed individual plans for students with special needs by utilizing the assistance of tutors and special materials.

A variety of programs reinforce these same goals. Students qualifying for Title I in math and reading are provided with instructional support that aligns with the math and reading standards. Also, the Sunshine Math Program is used to reinforce basic concepts and provide enrichment for students in first through fourth grades. Math Mentors and Math Maniacs groups have been established for fifth and sixth grades to provide similar experiences. Seventh and eighth grade students can take part in an enrichment program called Math Counts. All the math reinforcement and enrichment programs used at St. Cecilia's align with the Archdiocesan and State Standards. Qualifying eighth grade students are enrolled in an

algebra course at a nearby college prep high school. Enrichment and reinforcement programs, which are aligned with the standards, extend throughout the language arts, focusing on the acquisition and application of both reading and writing skills.

Improvement in writing across the curriculum is a target goal of the school improvement plan. Annually 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing is assessed and blind-scored according to a rubric in a process involving the entire faculty, to provide self-study inter-rater reliability. Analysis of these assessments as well as student writing portfolios and a review of past criterion testing results reflect a significant improvement in applying writing skills in various areas of the curriculum. Use of assessment data in a variety of programs enables teachers to meet the students' needs for reinforcement and enrichment.

St. Cecilia School also administers criterion-referenced testing which includes the Archdiocesan Performance Assessments in Religion, Math, Science, and Language Arts. In addition classroom teachers administer end of chapter/unit tests, partner projects, individual projects, and oral presentations. Teacher observation and teacher interviews are also used to assess student learning. St. Cecilia School also utilizes student self-assessment in the areas of English/language arts, science, and social studies. Consistently, students demonstrate a high level of achievement.

**3. Communicating Assessment Results:** Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) assessment is Administered to all students in grades 2-8 on an annual basis, in late September. This time frame makes it possible to share the results during the individual Parent-Teacher Conferences, scheduled at the end of the first quarter. These scheduled meetings between the parents and teachers allow ample time to discuss each child's current academic performance as well as the achievement results reported on the ITBS. At that meeting parents are also provided with a copy of their child's Performance Profile, which can be used to set both short term and long term goals. In addition, criterion referenced test (CRT) results are also shared. In addition to these formal conferences, parents may meet with any or all faculty members at any time throughout the year to discuss their children's progress. In the third through eighth grades, mid-quarter progress reports are sent home to all parents each quarter, in addition to quarterly report cards, to keep parents fully informed of current performance.

In addition to communication of test results to parents of individual children, school summary data are shared with members of the St. Cecilia's Board of Education. Information is also sent to the Catholic Schools Office, which is responsible for completing additional analysis and reporting the results from all of the Archdiocese of Omaha Schools.

Test results are also used to identify and communicate to the parents of seventh grade students scoring at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile (58% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders in 2006) their children's eligibility to participate in the Duke University Talent Identification Program. Students who enroll in this program are encouraged to take either the SAT or ACT test during that current school year. Once enrolled in this program, students receive further counsel about potential academic possibilities, and become part of the Talent Identification Database.

**4. Sharing Success:** Some specific methods have been identified to communicate the school's student progress. Included consistently are various publications and newsletters designed to keep parents and community stakeholders informed. The school sends out newsletters to the parents and the archdiocese reporting the progress that students are making in specialized areas of math, English, and reading once a year. Throughout the year the principal's weekly newsletter reports individual honors in these areas and others. For example, last year students in the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades competed in the archdiocesan Math and Science Olympics. The outcomes were reported in the *Omaha World-Herald* newspaper and the *Catholic Voice* as well as the school bulletin. Several times throughout the year, Creighton University assigns education students to observe and learn from the math, science, and reading teachers at St. Cecilia's as well. St. Cecilia's was the first Catholic elementary school in the area to earn North Central Accreditation.

Throughout the school year, the faculty meets within the school, with other schools, and with parents. Some examples of these meetings are monthly faculty meetings, principals' meetings, and yearly

parent-teacher conferences. Progress and information are communicated throughout the system and among the faculty.

Teachers have served as presenters at local teacher conferences and for parish groups, as well as serving on committees to develop archdiocesan standards and assessments. St. Cecilia's was selected as a pilot school to participate in the development of the standards, assessment, and curriculum for the Archdiocese of Omaha Schools in the areas of Religion, Math, and Science. All faculty have been actively involved in the process over the past five years. Teachers from St. Cecilia's were selected as presenters for the Annual Fall Conference to present standards and assessment information to their peers. Over 1500 educators attend the conference from the Archdiocese of Omaha.

Honor Roll is displayed in the school for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to celebrate and encourage student learning. Names of St. Cecilia graduates on local Catholic and public high school honor rolls are published in the parish bulletin quarterly.

Following the example of St. Cecilia, patron saint of music, St. Cecilia's strives to involve all students in the arts and to share our involvement with the arts with our school community. Recently St. Cecilia's was named a Creative Ticket School of Excellence by the Nebraska Alliance for Arts Education. This statewide award also makes us eligible for consideration for a national award. The school will be awarded an artist in residence for a week. Our selection reflected the variety of ways the school uses the arts in the classroom and community. For example, we recently had a dance performance at the school and open to the public by dancers from Oaxaca, Mexico; our schoolchildren annually present an operetta and a song and dance performance for parents and the community; our 7<sup>th</sup> graders stage a Christmas play; our students participate in local art contests and operas.

Throughout the year the faculty meets with parents. Some examples include parent-teacher conferences, and a Back to School Night for each level (primary, intermediate, junior high) that focuses on curriculum. In addition, teachers are always available for individual meetings with parents to discuss academic progress and to discuss assessment results.

The Cathedral Chimes, published quarterly and sent to all parishioners, features a column written by the principal communicating academic success.

Historically, about 25% of the students from St. Cecilia's receive scholarships to local Catholic high schools. Half of St. Cecilia's 8<sup>th</sup> graders take algebra; those not taking it at a nearby high school use the same text and follow the same algebra curriculum at St. Cecilia's. As a result, more than 50% of these students are able to start high school at a higher level of math class. Of the students who take French in the eighth grade, 60-75% are able to start with a French II class in high school.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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**1. Curriculum:** St. Cecilia Cathedral Elementary School's program of studies is in compliance with State of Nebraska Department of Education and Omaha Archdiocesan School Office guidelines, which include addressing multi-cultural/global and nonsexist issues. With the curriculum established, each faculty member is expected to maintain the integrity of the content in daily instruction.

The curriculum includes these subject areas: art, computer technology, English/writing, penmanship, reading/literature, spelling, mathematics/algebra, music, physical education, religion (including family life/sexuality), science/health, social studies, and foreign language (Spanish for grade 7 and French or Spanish for grade 8).

The reading/literature curriculum develops phonics and decoding skills, vocabulary, and comprehension competence necessary for our students to read fluently and successfully understand and appreciate literature in all forms. Students develop skills of inference, comparison and contrast, sequencing, drawing conclusions, and critical thinking to enable them to become lifelong effective readers.

The language arts curriculum provides students with a firm grounding in traditional grammar and

strong instruction in and experience with the Six Traits of Writing. The goal is to enable all students to be effective communicators in both spoken and written language. Effective communication combines the skills of critical thinking, writing, reading, speaking, and listening—skills necessary for students to develop the ability to participate as responsible members of a global society. Emphasis is on writing skills, techniques, and fluency, the core of the K-8 language arts curriculum, while penmanship, spelling, and vocabulary are also basic.

The mathematics curriculum prepares all students to apply effectively acquired mathematical knowledge and skills in an ever-changing society. St. Cecilia's students develop skills and operations beginning with simple number recognition through algebra courses. After-school math interest groups help students further develop interest in and appreciation for math; students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade who qualify may participate in high school algebra classes at a nearby college prep high school.

A comprehensive social studies curriculum enables all students to function competently as citizens of a democratic society in an interdependent world. Their knowledge of history and geography enables them to learn informed decision-making and to participate more fully in the stewardship and social justice taught by the Catholic Church.

An exceptionally strong fine arts curriculum includes both art and music for all grades K-8 taught by art and music specialists. Both areas enrich students' lives by teaching appreciation for and knowledge of art and music throughout history and across cultures, as well as teaching art production and musical performance. Students in grades 6-8 receive regular instruction in a computerized piano lab as well as in the classroom, receiving a level of music instruction usually available only through private lessons.

Throughout the science curriculum, students develop a curiosity and respect for God's creation through scientific knowledge and hands-on experiences and learn to understand and appreciate the physical laws governing their existence. Students in grades 5-8 have the opportunity on a weekly basis to conduct experiments in a state-of-the-art science lab and learn to act and think as scientists.

Weekly classes in computer technology, closely linked to other curriculum areas, offer all students the opportunity to develop competence in the use of technology as a tool for learning and development of problem-solving skills. Technology specialists work closely with classroom teachers to ensure that technology serves learning needs.

Physical education provides opportunity for students to gain knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes that will encourage lifelong participation in healthy physical activity and enable them to be good stewards of what God has given them.

Finally, the religion curriculum is integral to everything done at St. Cecilia's, working to fulfill the fourfold educational mission of the Catholic Church: to proclaim the message of faith and morals, to foster community, to encourage worship and prayer, and to motivate service to others.

**2. Reading Curriculum:** The St. Cecilia reading curriculum is a theme-based reading/language arts program. The textbook series offers a wide variety of contemporary and classic works of literature; in addition, trade books and novels are used to introduce students to a wide variety of literatures and genres. Supplemental books and activities address all learning styles, through discussions, journal writing, art projects, movement, choral reading, and plays. Numerous interventions for all levels of learners are provided, from the emergent reader to those reading above grade level. Comprehension instruction builds critical thinking skills through specific lessons. Shared writing responses to literature integrate reading instruction with our six traits writing instruction. Students are assessed frequently in comprehension, reading fluency, and decoding, allowing teachers to monitor progress through portfolios, benchmarks, oral reading, and rubrics. Independent reading is encouraged through the Accelerated Reader program, used throughout all grades, and by classroom teachers' use of literature circles.

The reading series was chosen for its strong phonological awareness. Use of songs, rhymes, and word games helps develop skills. Audiotapes of stories help develop fluent expression. There are abundant review and practice activities for reinforcement. The reading series selected correlates well with phonics instruction in the primary grades. The reading series, and the entire reading program, is a balanced, comprehensive program that helps all students to become fluent, lifelong readers.

**3. Writing Curriculum:** Several years ago, the faculty selected improvement of all students' writing skills across the curriculum as the school self-improvement goal. While writing is a primary focus in language arts, writing takes place in every subject across the curriculum. From kindergarten through eighth grade, all teachers (including special teachers) use the six traits model to work on consistent development of written communication skills. The faculty chose the six traits model not only because it is an effective instructional model, but also because it provided a common, easily understood vocabulary to use in communicating with parents about writing. At St. Cecilia's students write daily; these writing experiences include daily journaling, personal narratives, opinion and persuasive writing, creative writing (stories and poetry, exploring various poetic forms), research report writing, and other expository writing. Every student, whatever his/her ability level, is encouraged to improve his/her skills with attainable goals. Students learn to use writing as a learning tool, to develop critical thinking and an ability to focus and organize their ideas. Students become decision makers by selecting and developing topics and taking responsibility for revision and editing of their own work.

The writing curriculum relates to the school's mission by promoting lifelong learning, and by teaching writing as a skill and a learning tool as well as an enjoyable interest that students will use throughout their lives. Learning to be good writers enables them to communicate effectively, a skill which they will need to function as capable citizens in a democratic society.

**4. Instructional Methods:** At St. Cecilia, a wide range of instructional methods is employed throughout the school day and across the curriculum. Teachers strive to be creative in use of teaching methods to enable them to reach all students and to meet individual needs.

Auditory methods are used in traditional teacher-directed instruction. Students can also listen to stories on tape in class or in small groups, or can listen to music that reinforces math facts, for example, or parts of speech. Auditory instruction in music involves not only singing and listening to recorded music, but also producing music and listening through headphones in the piano lab.

Visual learning methods are employed through use of graphs, charts, pictures, maps, overheads, displays, and videos. Every classroom is equipped with a VCR, DVD player, or both, making a wide range of visual materials readily available. Teachers can also project images (powerpoint presentations, websites, video, etc.) from computer workstations in each classroom to their television screens or with a projector. These aids capture the attention of visual learners and generate interest and excitement, as well as making class presentation of material more interactive.

Hands-on, kinesthetic learning takes place throughout the day, not only in art and physical education, but in science experiments, in creating a medieval castle or an African mask, on nature walks, or when a literature class presents Dickens's "Christmas Carol" to the school, enabling students to become directly, physically involved in learning. Eighth graders meet regularly with their "kindergarten partners" to engage in hands-on, multi-age, cross-curricular learning experiences.

Exposure to all methods of instruction gives all students greater opportunity to grow and learn and to reach their full potential.

**5. Professional Development:** Professional development at St. Cecilia's is dictated by (1) school improvement goals and (2) personal educational growth goals. In addition to annual in-service days related to religious topics, faculty are offered development opportunities related to school improvement goals; for example, the current school-wide focus is on 6-Trait Writing and improving writing instruction, so a school leadership team attended a series of workshops on this topic and came back and shared what they learned at monthly faculty meetings. Another school improvement goal has been safety and security; regular in-servicing has been provided for faculty and staff to obtain CPR and first aid certification, as well as training in use of epi-pens and the nebulizer. Teachers are also encouraged to attend workshops and conferences related specifically to their grade levels and personal growth goals. For example, five teachers have attended workshops in Holocaust education and the relationship between the Catholic church and Judaism; one teacher spent three weeks in Japan learning about the educational system and culture; one

teacher traveled to Israel with a group of Catholic educators last summer; another traveled to Guatemala. Eleven faculty members have advanced degrees. The faculty was also provided this fall with a faculty retreat day, led by the pastor, which not only fostered spiritual growth but also strengthened faculty unity and sense of mission.

## **PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM**

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*The purpose of this addendum is to obtain additional information from private schools as noted below. Attach the completed addendum to the end of the application, before the assessment data tables. Delete if not used.*

1. Private school association(s): NCEA, NEA, NCA  
(Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. List the primary association first.)
  
2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status?      Yes   X   No
  
3. What are the 2006-2007 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)
 

<u>\$1850</u> K	<u>\$1850</u> 1 <sup>st</sup>	<u>\$1850</u> 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<u>\$1850</u> 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<u>\$1850</u> 4 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$1850</u> 5 <sup>th</sup>
<u>\$1850</u> 6 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$1850</u> 7 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$1850</u> 8 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$      </u> 9 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$      </u> 10 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$      </u> 11 <sup>th</sup>
<u>\$      </u> 12 <sup>th</sup>	<u>\$      </u> Other				
  
4. What is the educational cost per student? \$4000  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
  
5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$800
  
6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?   7   %
  
7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?  25  %

## **PART VII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Subject Reading and Math      Grade 2-8      Test Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year 2001-2002      Publisher The Riverside Publishing Company

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs             Scaled scores             Percentiles   X

St. Cecilia Catholic Elementary School ITBS Results:

**READING:** Based on Percentile Rank of Average SS: National Student Norms  
 Norms: Fall 2000                      Test Month: September

Note: Students who were excluded have Individualized Educational Plans (I.E.P.) that would warrant modifications in standardized testing procedures. These students participated in the testing, but their scores were not included in the total group scores.

Grade Level Information	2006	2005	2004
<b>Grade 2</b>			
Reading Total	83	70	74
# students tested	43	37	44
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	0	0	0
% students excluded	0	0	0
<b>Grade 3</b>			
Reading Total	75	74	76
# students tested	40	48	51
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	1	0	1
% students excluded	3%	0	2%
<b>Grade 4</b>			
Reading Total	87	81	84
# students tested	37	48	47
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	1	1	1
% students excluded	3%	2%	2%
<b>Grade 5</b>			
Reading Total	88	86	85
# students tested	48	45	38
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	1	0	3
% students excluded	2%	0	8%
<b>Grade 6</b>			
Reading Total	85	76	77
# students tested	43	38	59
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	0	0	2
% students excluded	0	0	3%
<b>Grade 7</b>			
Reading Total	84	79	89
# students tested	35	57	55
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	2	0	5
% students excluded	6%	0	9%
<b>Grade 8</b>			
Reading Total	81	83	83
# students tested	55	59	55

% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	4	1	1
% students excluded	7%	2%	2%

St. Cecilia Catholic Elementary School ITBS Results:

**MATH:** Based on Percentile Rank of Average SS: National Student Norms  
 Norms: Fall 2000                      Test Month: September

Note: Students who were excluded have Individualized Educational Plans (I.E.P.) that would warrant modifications in standardized testing procedures. These students participated in the testing, but their scores were not included in the total group scores.

Grade Level Information	2006	2005	2004
<b>Grade 2</b>			
Math Total	65	67	68
# students tested	43	37	44
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	0	0	0
% students excluded	0	0	0
<b>Grade 3</b>			
Math Total	73	69	73
# students tested	40	48	51
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	1	0	1
% students excluded	3%	0	2%
<b>Grade 4</b>			
Math Total	84	80	82
# students tested	37	48	47
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	1	1	2
% students excluded	3%	2%	4%
<b>Grade 5</b>			
Math Total	82	82	81
# students tested	48	45	38
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	1	0	3
% students excluded	2%	0	8%
<b>Grade 6</b>			
Math Total	82	76	71
# students tested	43	38	59
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	0	0	1
% students excluded	0	0	2%
<b>Grade 7</b>			
Math Total	77	70	83
# students tested	35	57	55
% total students	100%	100%	100%

# students excluded	2	0	5
% students excluded	6%	0	9%
<b>Grade 8</b>			
Math Total	74	74	73
# students tested	55	59	55
% total students	100%	100%	100%
# students excluded	4	1	1
% students excluded	7%	2%	2%