

# 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. Joan L. Cargill  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name St. Joseph School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 750 Peachtree Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Herndon VA 20170-3700  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Fairfax State School Code Number N/A

Telephone ( 703 ) 880-4350 Fax ( 703 ) 880-4320

Website/URL www.sjcherndon.org E-mail JCargill@sjcherndon.org

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.

/s/ Joan L. Cargill Date: 01/17/07  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Timothy J. McNiff  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Arlington Tel. ( 703 ) 841-2519

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.

/s/ Dr. Timothy J. McNiff Date 01/17/07  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson N/A  
(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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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. 21 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	N/A	N/A		7	34	36	70
K	35	37	72	8	36	27	63
1	29	38	67	9			
2	35	32	67	10			
3	36	28	64	11			
4	32	32	64	12			
5	34	31	65	Other			
6	39	28	67				
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b>							<b>599</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- |            |                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>83</u>  | % White                          |
| <u>1</u>   | % Black or African American      |
| <u>8</u>   | % Hispanic or Latino             |
| <u>8</u>   | % Asian/Pacific Islander         |
| <u>0</u>   | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| 100% Total |                                  |

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 1 %

[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	3
<b>(2)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year	5
<b>(3)</b>	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
<b>(4)</b>	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	599
<b>(5)</b>	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.013
<b>(6)</b>	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1.3

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school 1 %  
5 Total number Limited English Proficient  
 Number of languages represented 15  
 Specify languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Philippine (Tagalog and Visayan), French, Italian, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Polish, Lebanese, Ukrainian, Japanese, Punjabi, Indonesian

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

Total number students who qualify: 0

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:  $\frac{9\%}{56}$  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>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>22</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>15</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>10</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>4</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>4</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>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>24</u>	<u>2</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Support staff	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>
Total number	<u>29</u>	<u>16</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 25:1
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%	97%	97%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	95%	97%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	4%	12%	4%	4%	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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*St. Joseph School embodies the four basic principles of Catholic education: the Teaching of Catholic Doctrine, the Teaching of Academics, the Building of Community, and the Witnessing of Christ by Service to Others. Emulating Christ, the Master Teacher, the faculty and staff are committed to the total growth and development of each child.*

St. Joseph School is grounded in Catholic tradition and consistent academic excellence. The school offers a superior education centered on the teachings of Christ to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or religion. Established in 1978 to fulfill the need for Catholic education in Herndon, VA, St. Joseph School offers an atmosphere of respect, love, and concern as the framework for providing a life-long value system for each student. The school is justifiably proud of its high academic achievement regardless of changes in student demographics and an increase in special needs students. Using percentiles provided by the U.S. Department of Education, St. Joseph School consistently ranks in the top 10% of all schools nationally in reading and mathematics in grades two through seven.

**The Teaching of Catholic Doctrine:** Emulating Christ, the Master Teacher, the faculty and staff are committed to the total development of each child's spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical potential. Elements of the Catholic faith are infused in all aspects of the curriculum.

**The Teaching of Academics:** The school is located within the competitive Northern Virginia technology corridor. This promotes an environment conducive to rich learning experiences that supplement the core curriculum. St. Joseph School is one of 38 elementary schools in the Diocese of Arlington. Its back-to-basics approach ensures mastery of initial skills. It expands to foster decision making, problem solving, and analytical and logical thinking. The school provides a middle school accelerated math program, and a foreign language program for grades one through eight. The implementation of a learning resource program enables the school to support students who have specific learning needs. The faculty averages 14 years of commitment to the school, with one-third possessing masters' degrees. Three members of the faculty have been recognized as outstanding teachers of special needs students by the Diocese of Arlington, and many of the faculty have been instrumental in the development of the diocesan curriculum in their subject area. The faculty has expanded to include full-time encore teachers, instructional aides, a guidance counselor, and a full-time nurse, as well as a director and staff for the extended day program. Continued reinvestment in the school facilities includes state-of-the-art science and technology labs, art and music studios, a 10,500 volume library, and a gymnasium with a performance stage.

**The Building of Community:** St. Joseph School students excel in a wide variety of activities that benefit both the students and the community. Recent honors include receiving first-place in all of the following competitions: Diocesan Science Fair, Diocesan Spelling Bee, Battle of the Books, and the Optimist Oratorical Contest. Awards of distinction have also been earned in national essay contests, art contests, and in the publication of poems and essays over the school's thirty year history. The band, representing one-third of the students, continues to receive high honors at the diocesan level. Numerous athletic achievements have been earned in the NVJCYO basketball, baseball, cross country, track and field, and cheerleading programs, including many sportsmanship awards. Partnership with the community enhances the school experience through involvement of Greater Reston Arts Council, Greater Herndon Coalition, Digital Schoolhouse, Reston Interfaith, Herndon Police Association, U.S. Women's Soccer Team, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, the Lion's Club, Benedictine Counseling Services, Reston Speech and Language, and George Mason University Center for Outdoor Education. Additionally, St. Joseph School has received grants from the Leadership America Foundation for a junior high team-building proposal, and from the "Live-It" wellness program. These support the philosophy of educating the whole student.

**Witnessing of Christ by Service to Others:** St. Joseph School students proclaim the Catholic Church's social teaching of thought and action, through prayer and involvement in service projects. Most recently, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recognized St. Joseph School for outstanding commitment and noteworthy contributions to those of need in the community. Through this strong partnership of parents, faculty, and community, St. Joseph School will continue to model Catholic education at its best.

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

**1. Assessment Results:** As a member of the Diocese of Arlington Catholic Schools, St. Joseph School administers the TerraNova Achievement Test (TerraNova) by CTB/McGraw Hill. The TerraNova includes a battery of sample skills and concepts across curriculum areas that include reading comprehension, vocabulary, mathematical reasoning, mathematical computation, spelling, language mechanics, and language composition. Science and social studies subtests are included at the fourth- and sixth-grade levels as indicators of school-wide progress. This standardized test was administered each September from 1998 to 2003. The results were used to assist teachers in grouping students and in pinpointing areas of concern. In 2005, the administration of the TerraNova was moved to the spring in an effort to more effectively guide teaching practices. The test results are norm-referenced. They compare individual students and groups of students with others in the nation. A criterion-referenced score is also derived. This score assists teachers in defining strengths and weaknesses in their programs and in individual student's mastery of the Diocese of Arlington curriculum.

Part VII of this application includes Assessment Data tables for St. Joseph students in grades two through seven for the past three years. The students' overall performance in reading and mathematics over this period of time is consistently strong. The National Percentile of the Mean Normal Curve Equivalent (NP of the Mean NCE) for each of the grades exceeds the 77<sup>th</sup> percentile across the board for reading, placing the students in the top 10% of the nation. For mathematics, all scores except one exceed the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, again indicating performance in the top 10% of the nation.

Based on the TerraNova test data provided by the Office of Catholic schools, St. Joseph School students have consistently scored at or above the average for the Diocese of Arlington Catholic Schools. The one score that falls below the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile cut-off for the NP of the Mean NCE is the 2003-2004 mathematics composite for grade three. In examining possible reasons for this lower score, teachers reviewed the format of the testing and the expectations at the third grade level. A plan was devised to ensure that best-practice teaching methods were used and that the curriculum was appropriately covered. The following year, that same population scored at the 87<sup>th</sup> percentile in the mathematics composite for grade four. Additionally, the incoming third graders scored at the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile on the same assessment. Consequently, it is believed that any weaknesses have been addressed. Teachers and the administration continue to monitor the growth of these students' understanding in mathematics and the program as a whole.

It should be noted that despite a relatively high percentage of special needs students, St. Joseph School's scores continue to reflect high achievement without special testing accommodations. The scores listed on this application are all-inclusive with no separation of alternatively assessed students.

A final indication of the excellent performance of the St. Joseph School students in reading and mathematics is evident in the test scores for the 2005-2006 academic year. Specifically, the students in grade seven scored at the 88<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading and at the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile in mathematics. Therefore, using the NP of the Mean NCE scores of the 77<sup>th</sup> percentile in reading and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile in mathematics provided by the U. S. Department of Education, St. Joseph School ranks in the top 10% of all schools nationally in reading and mathematics in grades two through seven.

**2. Using Assessment Results:** Assessment data from the TerraNova tests are reviewed annually to determine the strength of various programs throughout the school. The principal conducts a comparison of grade level results from year to year, along with a comparison of St. Joseph School to the overall Diocese of Arlington. These comparisons provide a snapshot of progress within grade levels and as a class matriculates. They also help define how well the school performs compared to schools in its immediate peer group.

Teachers receive class test results, including a breakdown of students performing in each of five quintiles—above average, high average, average, low average and below average. When the testing was conducted in the fall, these quintiles helped teachers form small groups and target specific students for both remediation and enrichment. Two full faculty meetings are dedicated annually to reviewing the results and planning for improvement. Since testing has been moved to the spring, the breakdown is used in the following manner: to help flag students who may need additional help or resources in the coming school year, and to provide feedback to the teacher regarding successful teaching strategies. At the beginning of the new school year, a full day is dedicated to allow the previous teachers to work through the results with the receiving teachers. Students who fall below a mastery level are identified, and teaching strategies are discussed. Additionally, teachers target at least one area in both reading and math to incorporate into their annual goals. Specific steps and materials are identified to improve instruction. Grade-level teams meet to ensure that weekly lesson plans reflect the target areas and strategies. An all-day in-service at the diocesan level is held in the spring to further explore methods and resources for diocesan-wide weaknesses.

Each grade level has been given *A Teacher's Guide to TerraNova* that includes explanations and sample questions for each of the subtests. It also provides an item analysis, so teachers can determine the types of questions with which students are having difficulty. Teachers incorporate similar items into classroom activities and assessments, such as math and spelling questions in a multiple choice format, so that students develop a comfort level with the testing style. Additionally, upper grade teachers have been provided with a website devoted to TerraNova-style questions for further practice.

A school-wide focus this past year has been the incorporation of specific study skills into the curriculum. One component addresses test-taking strategies for both objective and essay formats.

**3. Communicating Assessment Results:** Annual testing results are mailed to parents during the summer. Included is a cover letter from the principal that provides information to help parents understand the reports. In this mailing, the parents receive the CTB Home Report that displays each student's national percentiles in graph form. Additionally, specific strengths and weaknesses for each assessed area are identified. A second report gives parents a criterion-referenced set of results that classify skills with regard to mastery, partial mastery, or non-mastery. A parent meeting is devoted to discussing the results, and parents can request an individual conference to discuss any area of concern.

Interim and quarterly progress reports are formal means for communicating student progress. Every teacher sends home weekly folders with graded work to give parents immediate feedback on classroom tests and activities. Included in the lower grades is a weekly checklist on which parents or teachers can highlight progress. In the upper grades, a grade report is used to communicate areas of behavioral or academic concern. St. Joseph School has a full-time learning resource program and a part-time counseling program to assist students, parents, and teachers in developing strategies for success. Students receive honor roll distinction at the end of each quarter. Individual accomplishments or growth are highlighted in a year-end award for each student. St. Joseph School is a member of the National Junior Honor Society, inducting students in grades seven and eight at the end of the year in a school-wide ceremony. In 2006, 50% of eligible students received this honor by attaining a GPA of 95% or better and by demonstrating leadership and service.

Students have been published in several poetry and short story anthologies, and have been recognized as DeSales scholars. One hundred percent of students have been accepted at the high school of their choice, including such outstanding schools as Paul VI, O'Connell, Gonzaga, Georgetown Visitation, and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology.

**4. Sharing Success:** St. Joseph School has a talented and generous faculty through which the school's successes are shared. Various faculty members have been asked to provide in-services at the Diocesan level, including training for new religion teachers, scheduling and program development for physical education teachers, and testing overviews for learning resource personnel. Each year, at least one faculty member serves at the diocesan level for curriculum planning and textbook reviews. Recent curriculum reviews include math, reading/language arts, science, and the kindergarten report card. Additionally, several members of the faculty, including the principal, have served on visiting teams for the accreditation of diocesan schools. In a process for school improvement called Design for Excellence, team members review the programs offered at a particular school and spend three days observing the programs in action. Recommendations and insights are shared along with a decision as to whether accreditation is merited. For the past two years, the review of standardized testing results has culminated in a diocesan-wide sharing session to address specific weaknesses as indicated by testing results. St. Joseph School faculty members have led and participated in these sessions at all grade levels. In 2005-2006, the physical education teacher won a grant to develop team-building activities for the student councils at St. Joseph School and St. Theresa School in Ashburn, VA. Utilizing special instructional materials, the students meet in an annual gathering of the two schools to foster camaraderie. In 2006, the librarian guided fifteen diocesan schools through the Battle of the Books program, a literary contest for fifth and sixth graders. At the local level, St. Joseph faculty members provide an annual in-service for the parish's catechists. Breakout sessions are offered on classroom management, text utilization, and craft projects. The current faculty features teachers who have been honored in Who's Who in American Teachers, and three recipients of the Seton Center Outstanding Teacher award given annually by the diocesan office.

St. Joseph School will continue to employ current methods to share its successes with other schools locally and at the state level. If distinguished as a No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon School, St. Joseph School will eagerly expand its role as a model school of excellence. Open houses showcasing students' achievements will be scheduled and published in local newspapers and on the school's website. Additionally St. Joseph School faculty will mentor other diocesan schools wishing to apply for Blue Ribbon status.

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

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**1. Curriculum:** St. Joseph School curriculum is based on the guidelines of the Diocese of Arlington Office of Catholic Schools.

Emphasis in **Religion** is on Catholic doctrine, prayer, and preparation for reception of the sacraments. Catholic moral teaching is incorporated into all academic subjects. Students practice virtues and serve the needy through a wide variety of service projects.

**Reading and Language Arts** are the foundation of academics because these skills cross the boundaries of all other subjects. The language arts program is one of formation and integration, beginning with the emergent reader and moving on to the adult reading level. Four areas are highlighted: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Particular emphasis is given to word study skills, grammar, and written expression. Spelling is taught in the context of phonics and word study. At the middle school level (grades six through eight) both grammar and writing instruction are taught, and vocabulary is incorporated into both areas. The school librarian teaches story appreciation, as well as reference and word power skills. Students in grades seven and eight participate in writing and oratorical competitions. All grades have daily periods of sustained silent reading for pleasure.

The **Mathematics** curriculum objectives begin in kindergarten and expand each year as children develop increased computation abilities and higher order thinking skills. The curriculum covers problem solving, communications, number sense, computation and estimation, statistics and probability, geometry, measurement, patterns, graphing, functions, and algebra. Special emphasis is given to problem solving skills at all grade levels. Math manipulatives and computer-aided instruction assist in hands-on visual problem solving. At the seventh and eighth grade levels, students are given the opportunity to test into pre-algebra and Algebra I. Mathematics is integrated into science, technology, and writing.

Classroom instruction and technology integration provide a framework for hands-on **Science** experimentation that takes place in the state-of-the-art science lab. The scope of study emphasizes the use of scientific investigations, logic, and predictions. Students study plant and life science, human anatomy, physical science, matter, and earth science. Scientific writing also is incorporated into the curriculum at the upper grades. All students in grades seven and eight are required to compete in the school science fair, with winners advancing to a regional competition.

The **Social Studies** program evolves from the appreciation of self, others, family, and community in kindergarten to the study of American history in grade eight. The curriculum also includes the study of economics, civics, geography, world cultures, Virginia state history, and ancient history. Other learning opportunities include visits to the Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Capitol, and Revolutionary and Civil War sites. In addition, students in grade eight spend a day at Circuit Court viewing the proceedings of trials. A combined American History II/English thesis paper is required of all eighth-grade students.

**Spanish** is offered in grades one through eight. Basic words, phrases, and numbers are taught at the primary level. Vocabulary expansion and sentence formation follows in the middle grades. At the seventh and eighth-grade levels, students engage in conversational Spanish and study the grammar and structure of the language. Cultural studies and exhibits supplement classroom instruction.

In **Computers**, all students are given opportunities to engage in computer literacy, desktop writing and publishing, and information management and retrieval in the school's fully equipped, 35-station technology lab. Technology instruction is integrated into classroom instruction across all curricular areas.

**Artistic** expression is fostered in the well-supplied art studio that is used by all grade levels to create multi-media art works. Community art docents give monthly art presentations and workshops about famous artists. A school-wide art show displays students' works.

The **Music** program focuses on musical concepts, the study of artists and composers, and individual and group performances including a Christmas program, and a eighth-grade musical theater production.

In **Physical Education**, students develop motor skills, participate in fitness programs, learn directionality, develop social skills and game strategies, and practice safety and cooperation. **Health** education, focused on wellness and fitness, is incorporated into all grade levels.

**2. Reading Curriculum:** The strong reading/language arts program at St. Joseph School provides students with the literacy skills and strategies needed to become literate, life-long learners. The focus of the program progresses from learning to read, to reading to learn, to learning for life. St. Joseph School uses a strong literature-based reading/language arts program to ensure the development of the five essential components of reading development: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills and strategies. The Harcourt reading program provides a strong foundation for students in kindergarten through grade five. Word Study, a program based on phonemic awareness, phonics, and spelling development, is an integral component of the language arts instruction. The reading/language arts program is further supplemented through journal writing, trade books, literature circles, vocabulary books, language handbooks, daily language review activities, reading buddies, and daily sustained silent reading. Additionally, the Lexia Primary Reading Computer Program is used to help develop and reinforce automatic word recognition and word attack strategies that lead to stronger reading comprehension. To assure individual progress, complete and consistent assessment is essential. Identification of needs is provided via the Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) and Terra Nova testing as well as curriculum-based assessments. The data gained from these tools assist teachers in tailoring instruction to meet the needs of the students.

Students transition to a more novel-based reading/language arts program in middle school. The McDougal, Littell Literature series used at this level encourages students to apply their skills within the context of various literature types. Spelling, grammar, vocabulary, literary terms, and oral presentation skills are taught throughout the various curriculum areas. The students use their reading/language arts skills daily in preparation for science fair projects, thesis papers, word power challenges, oratorical competitions, and published student works in prose and poetry.

**3. Curriculum Choice—Science:** The St. Joseph School science curriculum cultivates a love, respect, and stewardship of God’s infinite creation. The school adheres to Diocese of Arlington science guidelines that emphasize a hands-on approach to learning. Teachers facilitate the exploration of the universe through meaningful and enjoyable scientific inquiry. The process of scientific investigation, reasoning, and logic begins in kindergarten and continues through grade eight. Students explore the domains of life, earth, and physical science with increasing levels of complexity. Ethical and social perspectives are examined at developmentally appropriate levels.

In the primary grades, no text is used so that the emphasis is on exploration and natural curiosity. This innovative program uses parent volunteers who assist teachers with labs during which students move through stations linked together by a common scientific principle. Teacher-developed classroom kits ensure that activities match the concepts. Technology is integrated into the science curriculum as all grades use interactive encyclopedias, science websites, and multi-media lesson formats.

A highlight of the St. Joseph School science program is the state-of-the-art science laboratory that opened in 2004. Centrally located, it offers a teacher demonstration station, permanent lab tables with sinks, rolling lab stations, a dishwasher, and a full-size refrigerator. Wall cabinets are fully stocked with supplies, microscopes, balances, slide viewers, measurement equipment, and professional lab glassware. Safety goggles, aprons, and lab coats are used, and an eye-wash/shower station is available for treatment. A generous annual budget provides ongoing reinvestment in the facility.

St. Joseph School’s commitment to science is evident in annual programs featuring speakers such as astronaut Tom Jones, meteorologist Bob Ryan, and officials from NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey. A summer enrichment program established in 2006 provides hands-on exploration for students interested in further developing their science skills with student experimentation centered on varied science themes.

The regional Diocesan Science Fair provides an opportunity for seventh- and eighth-grade students to demonstrate their understanding of higher scientific concepts. In 2005, St. Joseph School achieved third place overall in this highly competitive event. In 2006, students received honors in categories such as behavioral and social sciences, biochemistry, botany, and physics resulting in St. Joseph School winning **first place** overall among 38 competing schools in the region.

**4. Instructional Methods:** St. Joseph School employs a variety of instructional methods to address students with diverse learning styles. The goal is for students to become independent, strategic learners. Teachers of the same grade level form partnerships and share their individual talents and skills to achieve and exceed grade-level curriculum standards. Differentiated instruction, cooperative learning activities, modified lessons to accommodate students' needs, peer tutoring, small work groups, one-on-one instruction, and the use of teacher aides and parent volunteers are strategies routinely used to provide students with different means of reaching their full potential. Study skills are a focus for all grade levels.

Teachers collaborate monthly to integrate core subjects through cross-curricular lesson mapping. Computer, library, music, and physical education teachers plan lessons that integrate grade-level curriculum into their lesson plans so that material is reintroduced and reinforced through visual, tactile, auditory, and kinesthetic strategies. This engages all students regardless of their learning style.

The St. Joseph School learning resource program addresses struggling students and collaborates with local county programs to assist students identified with specific learning disabilities. Student assistance teams (a part of the learning resource program) address students with learning and/or emotional challenges. A team consisting of the learning resource teacher, classroom teacher(s), counselor, principal, two objective classroom teachers from different grade levels, and parents meet to discuss, plan, and implement strategies in order to ensure that the students of concern succeed in school.

The kindergarten team uses Phonological Awareness Learning Strategies (PALS) testing in the fall to chart beginning benchmarks for reading readiness. In the spring, a more advanced PALS test is administered to compare and track growth. New benchmarks are recorded for each kindergarten student.

Grade-level programs enhance social studies and language arts. Native American Day, Colonial Day, and a variety of oral presentations are performed. These special events are presented to the school community and parents. A summer enrichment program showcases science, art, and mathematics.

Middle-school age children enter contests to challenge and showcase their individual talents. Students have competed in annual poetry, essay, speech, science, and art contests. Outstanding seventh- and eighth-grade students are invited to join the National Junior Honor Society. Students participate in numerous school-sponsored clubs and activities including chess club, book clubs, math club, show choir, robotics club, scouting, and student council, along with fitness conditioning and sports team activities.

**5. Professional Development:** The faculty's professional development is a means to improve students' learning and success. The full faculty attends the Diocesan Education Institute each fall. Faculty members attend professional workshops pertinent to their subject matter expertise and grade level. Several faculty members serve on diocesan curriculum committees and regularly meet in grade-level teams across the diocese to share instructional practices. Recognizing the growing importance of technology in the lives of students, the faculty has pursued training in web page design, Microsoft PowerPoint and Excel usage, GradeQuick electronic record keeping, and multi-media lesson planning. In-service sessions offer information and instruction in current teaching trends, study skills, and teaching special needs students. Diocesan summer sessions encourage faculty to implement new instructional strategies in differentiated instruction, standardized test interpretation, and wellness. St. Joseph School's principal routinely invites guest speakers to present educational topics at faculty and parent meetings.

A mentoring program provides new teachers with instructional and moral support. It also promotes teamwork and collegiality. Several faculty members have advised new faculty as student teachers and assisted members studying for advanced degrees by being sponsors. The principal and several faculty members also serve as mentors in other diocesan schools.

Teachers are encouraged to seek grants to enhance curricular areas. The school has successfully applied for and received grants such as the Lead America Classroom Grants for middle-school children. In addition, a grant entitled "Live-It", part of a nationwide campaign encouraging youth to lead healthy, active lifestyles, was awarded to St. Joseph School.

School and parent-teacher organization funding is provided for each faculty member to pursue graduate courses and attend professional seminars to meet state and VCEA requirements for certification.

## 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): Virginia Catholic Education Association (VCEA); Virginia Council for Private Education (VCPE); National Catholic Education Association (NCEA); National Middle School Association (NMSA); National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM); National Association of Student Councils (NASC)

(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 √ No

3. What are the 2005-2006 tuition rates, by grade?  
Tuition Rates are the same for all grades K-8 but vary by family status as shown below:

	<b>CATHOLIC PARISHIONER</b>	<b>NON-CATHOLIC</b>
One child	\$4,350 per year	\$5,850 per year
Two children	\$7,300 per year	\$9,050 per year
Three children	\$9,000 per year	\$10,800 per year
Four children	\$9,000 per year	\$10,800 per year

4. What is the educational cost per student? \$4,564  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$2,519 - 29 students
6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 3%
7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 100%\*

\* A St. Joseph Parish subsidy is provided to every child to meet the actual cost of his/her education that is not covered by tuition. In addition, the school participates in the Diocese of Arlington Tuition Grant Programs. St. Joseph School has contributed \$45,439 in 2005-2006 for funds to be available for needy families who desire a Catholic school education for their children, but lack the financial means to provide it.

## **PART VII – ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

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### **ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS**

**Grade: 2**

**Test: TerraNova**

Edition/Publication Year: Edition 1, CTBS-5/1997 Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill

What groups were excluded from testing? None Why and how were they assessed? N/A

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs \_\_\_ Scaled scores \_\_\_ Percentiles: √  
(NP of the mean NCE)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing month	April	April	September
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>
Total Score	87/83	89/78	88/89
Number of students tested	65	65	63
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	None	None	None
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%

**Grade: 3**

**Test: TerraNova**

Edition/Publication Year: Edition 1, CTBS-5/1997 Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill

What groups were excluded from testing? None Why and how were they assessed? N/A

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs \_\_\_ Scaled scores \_\_\_ Percentiles: √  
(NP of the mean NCE)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing month	April	April	September
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>
Total Score	91/86	87/86	78/70
Number of students tested	62	61	70
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	None	None	None
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%

**ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS**

**Grade: 4**

**Test: TerraNova**

Edition/Publication Year: Edition 1, CTBS-5/1997 Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill

What groups were excluded from testing? None Why and how were they assessed? N/A

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs \_\_\_ Scaled scores \_\_\_ Percentiles: √  
(NP of the mean NCE)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing month	April	April	September
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>
Total Score	85/87	86/87	83/79
Number of students tested	59	64	69
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	None	None	None
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%

**Grade: 5**

**Test: TerraNova**

Edition/Publication Year: Edition 1, CTBS-5/1997 Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill

What groups were excluded from testing? None Why and how were they assessed? N/A

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs \_\_\_ Scaled scores \_\_\_ Percentiles: √  
(NP of the mean NCE)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing month	April	April	September
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>
Total Score	85/79	88/77	80/80
Number of students tested	65	69	68
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	None	None	None
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%

**ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS**

**Grade: 6**

**Test: TerraNova**

Edition/Publication Year: Edition 1, CTBS-5/1997 Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill

What groups were excluded from testing? None Why and how were they assessed? N/A

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs \_\_\_ Scaled scores \_\_\_ Percentiles: √  
(NP of the mean NCE)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing month	April	April	September
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>
Total Score	85/90	84/83	86/87
Number of students tested	68	63	70
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	None	None	None
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%

**Grade: 7**

**Test: TerraNova**

Edition/Publication Year: Edition 1, CTBS-5/1997 Publisher: CTB/McGraw Hill

What groups were excluded from testing? None Why and how were they assessed? N/A

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs \_\_\_ Scaled scores \_\_\_ Percentiles: √  
(NP of the mean NCE)

	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing month	April	April	September
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>	<i>Reading/Math</i>
Total Score	88/86	86/84	84/88
Number of students tested	61	62	64
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	None	None	None
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	0%	0%