

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

---

Type of School: (Check all that apply)  Elementary  Middle  High  K-12  (PreK-8)  
 Charter  Title I  Magnet  Choice

Name of Principal: Sister Patricia Smith

Official School Name: Waldron Mercy Academy

School Mailing Address:  
513 Montgomery Avenue  
Merion Station, PA 19066-1298

County: Montgomery State School Code Number\*:

Telephone: (610) 664-9847 Fax: (610) 664-6364

Web site/URL: www.waldronmercy.org E-mail: psmith@waldronmercy.org

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

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

Name of Superintendent\*:

District Name: Tel:

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

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

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Patrick Welde

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), 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.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## 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 one or more of 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.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

---

All data are the most recent year available.

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

Does not apply to private schools

**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. 18 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	28	26	54	7	25	27	52
K	27	32	59	8	29	32	61
1	22	27	49	9			0
2	22	20	42	10			0
3	28	23	51	11			0
4	24	31	55	12			0
5	20	20	40	Other			0
6	34	29	63				
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							526

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
3 % Asian  
18 % Black or African American  
0 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
78 % White  
1 % Two or more races  
100 % **Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting 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.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 1 %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	1
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	6
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	7
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	520
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.013
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1.346

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 1

Number of languages represented: 1

Specify languages:

Korean

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 free and reduced-price school meals 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: 9 %

Total Number of Students Served: 49

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>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>35</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

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>9</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>31</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>64</u>	<u>10</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 17 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	96%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	95%	96%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	<u>0</u>	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0</u>	%
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0</u>	%
Found employment	<u>0</u>	%
Military service	<u>0</u>	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	<u>0</u>	%
Unknown	<u>0</u>	%
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

---

Waldron Mercy Academy, a private, Catholic, coeducational, elementary school in suburban Philadelphia claims its roots in the work of Irish heiress Catherine McAuley, foundress of the Sisters of Mercy. Catherine dedicated her fortune to helping the poor. She believed in the importance of education and, as testament to this belief, she opened a school as her first major initiative of each new foundation. Mother Patricia Waldron continued her Mercy mission in Philadelphia serving the poor, the sick, and the uneducated. Waldron Mercy Academy, named for this woman, grows out of this work and claims Mercy as its own.

Waldron Mercy Academy has an eighty-five year tradition of excellence. From its beginnings, as a day and boarding school for boys, to the present coeducational environment for children ages three to fourteen years, the school has excelled. Waldron Mercy Academy is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. In 2001, it was recognized nationally as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence with special honors for its technology program. Commendations have also been received in other areas including science, fine arts, and forensics.

Waldron Mercy Academy stands as a professional educational community, comprised of a dedicated and highly proficient administration and faculty. With its commitment to continuing education and development, this community creates an enhanced learning environment for its students and a dynamic professional exchange among colleagues. In this educational environment, this experienced faculty is empowered to broaden and enrich the curriculum while meeting and exceeding state standards.

Waldron Mercy is founded on academic excellence and educational vision. Teachers strive to foster in students values that will allow them to emerge as responsible citizens and inspired leaders. Students receive a foundation of fundamental skills which integrate the various disciplines and emphasize Christian ethics. Strong curriculum, instruction, and assessment are designed to help students reach their fullest potential. Teachers promote active involvement in all subject areas through instruction, discussion, paired-learning, individual work, research, hands-on activities and field trips. Coupled with academic skills, artistic and athletic development promote the education of the whole child.

Waldron Mercy excels in its use of technology in the classroom. State of the art technology enhances the learning process and is fully integrated throughout the curriculum. Technological tools address the needs of learning differences, while encouraging excellence and individual creativity. By developing technological proficiency and instilling a sense of global responsibility, students at Waldron Mercy learn processes to make discerning choices and to fully participate in the educational process. These skills prepare them to compete in an ever-changing global, technological society.

Waldron Mercy integrates academic excellence with community outreach and religious instruction. Rooted in a rich Mercy heritage, the school connects the rich to the poor, the healthy to the sick, and the educated to the uneducated through ongoing community partnerships. Catholicism, culture, and a strong commitment to outreach set the school apart from other area independent elementary schools.

Waldron Mercy encompasses a racially, ethnically, geographically, and religiously diverse student body. This diversity provides a rich training ground for students to grow in acceptance and respect for others. Faculty emphasize the importance of actions such as welcoming new students, consoling those who are sad, and providing for those in need. Hospitality leads to students who are able to embrace our global community.

Waldron Mercy Academy cultivates a cooperative role between parents and faculty in the educational process. The school community supports and strengthens mutual understanding and communication between home and school. This partnership calls on the talents of the entire school community – students, teachers, administrators, and parents – to create, sustain, and promote the unique experience in education that is

Waldron Mercy Academy.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

---

### 1. Assessment Results:

The trends in test data delineated by grade and by year indicate a strong and consistent academic program. In reading, the scores are within a 1.5 to 4.3 point range variation in grades two through seven over the five year period as measured by the difference between the highest and lowest scores. The 11.6 point range variation in eighth grade scores shows a significant strength over the five year period, and these scores represent the highest of all grades tested. The math scores are also indicative of a strong academic program. In math, the scores are within a 3.4 to 7.0 point range variation in grades two through eight over the five year period with the seventh and eighth grade scores being the highest.

There are no significant gains or losses demonstrated in reading and math test data because of the strong and consistent academic program supported by highly qualified teachers and administrators. A review of the test data for the subgroups indicates the same.

For the reader not intimately familiar with the school, the low point range variation per grade and per year in reading and math test scores becomes more significant when reviewing several factors particular to the school. These factors include diverse family dynamics, changing student population, socio-economic multiplicity, and varied learning needs.

Students come from a variety of family situations such as traditional, single parent, single grandparent, and shared custody. These different family circumstances affect the learning environment for both the student and the teacher. Students often deal with varied and conflicting parental expectations and degrees of support regarding academic achievement, organization, and study habits. When living between two households, students sometimes have limited access to technology and academic resources. The teachers, who are the constant in these situations, are able to meet the challenges presented by these diverse family dynamics and maintain a high level of student academic performance as indicated by the test scores.

From year to year the student population changes at every grade level. Students transfer in because families are looking for a curriculum that addresses particular needs for their child, a safer environment, smaller class size, and a values-based education. Students also transfer into the middle grades in pursuit of admission into competitive, private high schools. Many Black or African American students transfer in at all grade levels because of the diversity that exists in the school population. With this diversity and changing student population come many academic challenges. Transfer students come with varied educational backgrounds and experiences. Many of these students come from schools with less rigorous curricula. The teachers, by differentiating instruction, are able to maintain low point range variations in both reading and math test scores per grade and per year.

The student population is as diverse as the socio-economic backgrounds that are represented. These cultural and economic differences offer opportunities for a rich exchange of ideas, but they also present a challenge for teachers. Teachers address disparities in breadth of prior knowledge and life experiences to create a common ground for learning. By creating this common ground, teachers are able to maintain consistent test scores across the grades and years.

Teachers meet the various learning needs, styles, and academic abilities of the student population by constantly monitoring student progress and adjusting instruction accordingly as evidenced by test data.

Disparities among grade levels and subgroups are statistically insignificant. However, the reading scores have a lower point range differential than the math scores due in part to the extensive professional development

opportunities in reading afforded to the teachers over the five year test data period.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

The results of assessments such as Terra Nova, classroom tests, teacher observations, Montgomery County Intermediate Unit testing, and portfolios are all used to understand and improve overall student and school performance. The Director of Curriculum reviews the scores annually by grade, by content area, and by individual student to identify strengths, weaknesses, and trends indicated. Then the Director of Curriculum reviews the test data to target students performing below the fiftieth percentile, as well as those students performing above the ninetieth percentile in reading, language, and math. Standardized test data and results of other assessments are studied over time to make necessary curriculum changes in order to support continued student success and improve teaching practices school wide. The Director of Curriculum then meets with the teachers in a large group setting and then by grade level to plan a course of instruction to address the needs of individual students and any area of curriculum that requires improvement.

If an area of deficiency is indicated by assessment data, the Director of Curriculum meets with the principal, support personnel, and content area teachers to plan and implement a course of action. For example, when the reading scores showed areas of weakness, teachers identified at risk students at the primary level to receive additional reading support. In the classroom, teachers differentiated instruction for all students by using leveled readers, flexible grouping, and web-based instruction. At risk students were monitored and tested on a regular basis. The Director of Curriculum met with the reading specialists and teachers to evaluate each at risk student's progress and the intervention was modified accordingly. The following year's test data was reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and modifications made in instruction. This process continues on a yearly basis.

## **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

To keep parents informed of their children's progress, tests, quizzes, and projects are sent home for review on a regular basis. Parents receive six formal updates of their children's progress each year. Three narrative progress reports are issued midway through each trimester. Three graded reports are issued at the end of each trimester. This communication is enhanced by informal phone conferences, parent/teacher/student meetings as needed, and by the formal parent/teacher/student conferences which are scheduled twice a year. Support personnel and administrators are involved when appropriate. Teachers respond in a timely manner to parental inquiries and concerns via note, e-mail, or telephone. Participation and outstanding performance by students in competitions and contests is communicated in the weekly newsletter on the school Web site.

Individual test scores on the Terra Nova are sent home to the parents accompanied by an informational letter on how to interpret the scores. Parents are encouraged to discuss the results of the testing with their children. Individual meetings with the Director of Curriculum are scheduled for parents who want further clarification of test results. Each year the Director of Curriculum presents the results of the testing at a faculty in-service day. The scores are analyzed by grade level and content area. Further analysis is done to review trends in grade levels and content areas over a three-year period so that teachers are aware of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. The topic of interpretation of test results has been addressed by experts on faculty in-service days. The school's test results are also compared to other schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia within neighboring counties. This test data is also presented to the Board of Trustees for review. The Board of Trustees recommends areas of deficiency for inclusion in the school's strategic plan.

#### 4. **Sharing Success:**

Waldron Mercy Academy continually makes efforts to share its successes with other school communities. As part of the Mercy Educational Network, the school shares ideas regarding marketing, technology, instruction, mission, strategic planning, and sustainability with other Mercy schools in the United States. The school hosts informal meetings with Mercy schools in the area, and faculty representatives attend the annual Mercy Leadership Conference. This rich exchange of ideas promotes academic excellence across the Mercy network.

As a member of the Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools (ADVIS), ideas and successes in the areas of technology, admission, marketing and communications, development, finance, and governance are shared with other private schools in the area. Teachers and administrators participate in workshops and professional retreats. The exchange of best practices is shared through listservs.

The school shares its successes and the experience of its teachers by partnering with area colleges and universities by providing field experience for pre-service teachers. Full-time pre-service teachers spend a semester with a cooperating teacher. These pre-service teachers instruct the students, attend parent/student/teacher conferences, participate in professional development, and are encouraged to become actively involved in all school activities. Additionally, first and second year education majors spend thirty hours of observation in classrooms each semester.

A bi-annual Blue and Gold Magazine details students' and alumni's successes, faculty accomplishments, outreach activities, and overall school achievements. In addition to alumni, current families, and stakeholders, this communication is shared with Mercy schools across the country and area independent schools.

In recognition of its experienced faculty and longstanding academic successes, the school realizes its responsibility to stay current with educational pedagogy, to model best practices, and to share its resources with other educational institutions including those working with underserved populations. The commitment to continuing these actions will fulfill the school's mission.

# PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

---

## 1. Curriculum:

The school's curricula, which are aligned with state and national standards, along with instructional methods and assessments are designed to help the students reach their maximum potential, meeting the challenges of the 21st century. Technology supports all areas of the curricula, and students learn to use productivity tools, multi-media tools, and appropriate Web 2.0 tools for collaboration, communication, and innovation to demonstrate knowledge in content areas.

**Reading/Language Arts:** The integrated, literature-based program encompasses the teaching of comprehension skills and strategies, phonics/decoding, vocabulary and spelling, grammar and mechanics, purposeful writing, listening, speaking and viewing skills, penmanship, study skills, cross-curricular reading and writing in the content areas, the incorporation of technology skills and a wide variety of literary and writing genres. Instruction is delivered through direct, whole group instruction, guided reading, leveled independent reading, reading/writing workshops, and small, flexible, support groups. Students are engaged through cooperative learning, journals and blogs, role playing, and literature circles.

**Math:** In K-3 the Everyday Math program develops skills such as numeration, computation, measurement, algebra, geometry, and problem-solving. Instruction is delivered through a manipulative based, spiral program. Students are engaged through partner, small group, and whole class activities. In 4-6 the Houghton Mifflin traditional math program is introduced which stresses mastery of basic skills, and problem solving which is delivered through direct instruction and demonstration. Students are engaged in drill and practice, cooperative learning, and peer teaching. In 7-8 pre-algebra and algebra are introduced.

**Social Studies:** The social studies program incorporates the study of history, geography, economics, civics, government, and culture. Instruction is delivered through textbooks, electronic texts, multimedia, lectures, and current events magazines. Students are engaged through debates, field trips, web quests, research, and project-based learning.

**Science:** The program addresses the study of life, earth, and physical science concepts in K-8. Instruction is delivered by lecture, demonstration, textbooks, and multimedia. Students employ the scientific method to help construct their own knowledge through experimentation. Field trips, laboratory process skills, research, and other inquiry based activities enhance their learning.

**Religion:** This core curriculum encompasses the study of creation, Hebrew and Christian scriptures, sacraments, morality, and church history. Instruction is delivered through explicit teaching, structured overview, and relevant readings. The students are engaged through reflective journaling, class retreats, writing prayer services, service learning, and insightful discussions.

**Visual Arts:** This program encompasses elements of visual art, basic design, drawing techniques, papermaking, printmaking, bookmaking, and sculpture, while integrating the study of art history, culture, artists, styles, and techniques. Instruction is delivered through demonstration, visual representations, artifacts, and multi-media. Students are engaged in cross-curricular theme integration employing the processes of printing, weaving, papier maché, mosaics, wire sculptures, drawing, and painting using a variety of materials.

**Performing Arts:** General music classes for grades K-8 include instruction in reading music, notation, the study of composers, and an appreciation of different genres of music. Instruction is delivered through modeling, guest performers, and interactive software. Students are engaged through creative movement,

playing instruments, and singing expressively. Additionally, choral classes in grades 2-8 develop vocal and performance skills.

Foreign Languages: The FLES Model (Foreign Language in the Elementary School), begins in Montessori and kindergarten and continues through eighth grade. Through this model the teacher guides the students toward proficiency in Spanish, using age-appropriate textbooks, CDs, DVDs, and manipulatives that foster skill development in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The students are engaged through conversation, role playing, games, and creation of multi-media projects. An emphasis is placed on recognizing the traditions and customs of Hispanic culture. Additionally, students study Latin as part of the Language Arts curriculum in grades 6-8.

## **2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:**

At the core of the program are the Houghton Mifflin Reading (K-5) and the Prentice Hall Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes and Prentice Hall Writing and Grammar: Communication in Action. The students' skills are enhanced by reading and writing activities based on an extensive collection of quality trade books, poetry books, and library print materials. This literature-based program encompasses the teaching of comprehension strategies, word skills, purposeful writing skills, spelling, grammar, usage and mechanics, listening, speaking, and viewing skills, study skills, cross-curricular reading and writing in the content areas, and the incorporation of technology skills. It also exposes the students to a wide variety of literary and writing genres at every level.

This approach was chosen because it is based on instruction that is explicit, systematic, and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Student learning is scaffolded through teacher modeling, visual examples, guided practice, and independent practice. There is consistent development of all strategies and skills across the grades. Students explore multiple reading and writing strategies at every level. Teachers use multiple forms of assessment to plan instruction and monitor student progress over time. Diagnostic tests, periodic reading surveys, baseline group tests, theme and skills tests, portfolios, customized test options, teacher-made tests, and teacher observation are used to identify individual strengths and weaknesses and provide intervention.

Students gain and persist in all skills through the use of varied instructional strategies and flexible grouping. Students' needs are met through leveled readers, Earobics software, publisher provided online activities, classroom centers, reading/writing workshops, literature circles, intervention strategies, and challenge activities. Additionally, early intervention is provided through an on-site, full-time reading specialist, two part-time reading support teachers, and a part-time reading specialist from the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit.

The program sustains reading achievement, promotes life-long literary habits and attitudes, and promotes independent readers and writers in all curricular areas.

## **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The science program reinforces the school's mission that, "the joy of discovery inspires serious study, social responsibility and strong faith." Waldron Mercy Academy challenges students to become responsible members and leaders of the global family.

On all grade levels, students experience the "joy of discovery" by raising questions, formulating hypotheses, testing and experimenting, making observations, classifying, inferring, predicting, measuring, analyzing and communicating results. Whether the first grade is watching life begin with the hatching of an egg or the metamorphosis of a caterpillar; the third grade is designing a habitat for an isopod community; the fifth grade is marveling at the dissection of a starfish; or the seventh grade is exploring life on the cellular level with the extraction of DNA from pea cells, all are experiencing an appreciation of the diversity of life forms. This initial joy of discovery naturally progresses to the development of social responsibility. The study of the dynamics of physical, chemical, and earth science helps to develop this aspect of the school's mission. As the second grade studies the environment and natural resources, students accept the responsibility for recycling school-wide; the fourth grade explores the water cycle and learns the importance of conserving fresh water; the sixth grade does research on alternate energy forms to develop social responsibility for future energy conservation and pollution reduction; the eighth grade becomes cognizant of the consequences of every action as these students study the world on the atomic level.

In a spirit of mercy and justice and in accordance with our faith, the purpose of this science curriculum is to instill in the students a reverence for all creation in order to insure that these critical thinkers become responsible adults who adopt the continued renewal, conservation, and sustainability of the planet as a personal life-long goal.

### **4. Instructional Methods:**

In an effort to accommodate the different ways in which students learn, teachers provide multiple learning strategies to achieve curriculum objectives. Teachers adjust content, process, and assessment in order to meet students at their skill and interest level. Flexible use of instructional materials, block scheduling, and available space further allows teachers to engage students in meaningful learning.

The instructional materials chosen are multicultural in nature to show appreciation and respect for the interests and cultural differences of our White, Black or African American, Asian, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, and multi-racial populations. Cultural explorations are integrated into all areas of the curriculum.

Content is supplemented by leveled reading material chosen according to students' reading ability, interest level, and learning style to capitalize on students' strengths. Across the curriculum students interact with: online texts, manipulatives, models, integrated thematic units, enrichment activities, leveled readers, multi-media presentations, podcasts, digital video, artifacts, field trips, magazines, and guest speakers.

The process of instruction is modified using flexible groups, peer teaching and editing. Engaging in educational games and laboratory experiments, and using graphic organizing tools within Kidspiration and Inspiration allow students to practice and extend learning. Open-ended enrichment activities that allow for student creativity and additional practice and reteaching materials meet the needs of diverse learners. Dramatizations, Reader's Theatre, debates, viewing videos, listening to books on tape, and journaling further support diverse learning styles.

Multiple types of assessments are used to determine what students have understood, applied, or mastered and may indicate if continued support is needed. Alternative assessment tools used are: portfolios, lab reports, scientific drawings and journals, the creation of models, the use of rubrics, teacher observations, online tests, and presentation of projects and speeches. Traditional tests are modified to accommodate the needs of individual learners. The differentiation of the content, process, and assessment contribute to successful student learning and achievement.

## **5. Professional Development:**

A significant portion of the school's budget is dedicated to funding professional development. Each teacher attends at least one workshop annually, is encouraged to attend conferences and conventions, become a member of professional organizations, and subscribe to online and print journals. Additionally, all full-time employees are reimbursed for continuing education courses at colleges and universities. Monthly in-service days provide additional opportunities for professional development. Guest experts present in areas such as child development, interpretation of standardized test scores, differentiated learning, and technology. Teachers and administrators also present information gained from attending workshops and share an area of expertise with colleagues in a "Teachers Teaching Teachers" model.

This emphasis on professional development has created a culture of academic excellence within the school. Test data places the school in the top ten percent of schools nationwide. Even with the addition of new teachers to the faculty and a changing school population, the low point range variation in both reading and math scores per grade and per year has stayed at a minimum. A focus on professional development in the area of reading over the past five years has resulted in extremely consistent test scores with the highest scores being achieved in eighth grade.

All workshops, conferences, and continuing education courses must be approved by the Director of Curriculum who ensures that these activities are aligned with content standards.

Teachers implement strategies and techniques gained from such workshops and courses as "Wilson Language Training", "Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking", "Comprehension Toolkit", Mel Levine's "The Wrath of Math", "Strengthening Your Algebra Instruction", and Everyday Math training to support student learning. The "Teachers Teaching Teachers" model ensures that all teachers share common knowledge in order to support student learning.

## **6. School Leadership:**

Research has shown that strong leadership is essential for successful schools. Waldron Mercy Academy has had a consistent team of experienced and strong leaders in place for nearly twenty years.

The head of school, known as the Principal at Waldron Mercy Academy, brings many years of experience and educational background. The Principal is supported by two other key administrators, the Vice Principal for Advancement and the Director of Curriculum. Each focuses energy on various aspects of school life while at the same time helping to develop the professional school community.

A second group of administrative personnel supports the school program by developing the technology program, marketing the school community, and managing its financial resources. Regularly scheduled meetings among these individuals encourage open and creative conversations and periodically initiate planning documents.

Oversight of the school is provided by the Board of Trustees. The Board along with the chief administrators set policy for the school. These policies which are clearly articulated in the faculty handbook are reviewed

annually and updated as necessary.

The sense of community at Waldron Mercy is central to the mission and everyday lived experience. Weekly “Community Gatherings,” are planned by administrators and attended by the entire community. These gatherings recognize student achievement and develop a sense of caring and connection for students and faculty.

The Principal, Vice Principal, and Director of Curriculum share responsibility for overseeing teachers in specific grades within the school. They review plans weekly, meet monthly with teachers, monitor the progress of students, observe in classrooms, and discuss the progress of each teacher’s professional goals. One of the most important responsibilities of leadership in a school is to recruit and retain highly qualified and caring teachers. A collaborative hiring process, as well as the allocation of funds for competitive salaries and benefits, assures that our students are receiving the very best learning experience.

## PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

---

1. Private school association: Catholic
2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes  No
3. What are the 2007-2008 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$9550</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$9550</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>				
12th	Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? \$ 11117 (School budget divided by enrollment)
5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$ 2000
6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?  
4 %
7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?  
9 %























Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: Second edition Publisher: CTB McGraw-Hill

Scores are reported here as: NCEs

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing month	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	75.2	76.7	73.7	78.7	72.9
Number of students tested	58	49	59	57	57
Percent of total students tested	95	96	100	98	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	2	0	1	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	4	0	2	3
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Black or African American(specify group)</b>					
Average Score		68			
Number of students tested	8	10	4	8	8
<b>2. Asian(specify group)</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested	3	1	0	1	0
<b>3. Two or more races(specify group)</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>4. (specify group)</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:





