

*U.S. Department of Education*  
**2011 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**  
*A Private School*

School Type (Public Schools):                                                                        
(Check all that apply, if any)    Charter                      Title 1                      Magnet                      Choice

Name of Principal: Mrs. Sandra Roden

Official School Name: Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School

School Mailing Address:    5510 Double Oak Lane  
   Birmingham, AL 35242-3513

County: Shelby                      State School Code Number:

Telephone: (205) 991-5963 E-mail: sroden@olvsch.com

Fax: (205) 995-1251                      Web URL: www.olvbirmingham.com

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.

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

Name of Superintendent\*: Ms. Fran Lawlor Superintendent e-mail: flawlor@bhmdiocese.org

District Name: Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama District Phone: (205) 838-8303

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.

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

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mrs. Gina Hagelskamp

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.

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

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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11PV138

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 2010-2011 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 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
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

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All data are the most recent year available.

## DISTRICT

Questions 1 and 2 are for Public Schools only.

## SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 17

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	19	39	58		<b>6</b>	18	23	41
<b>K</b>	26	21	47		<b>7</b>	25	28	53
<b>1</b>	18	22	40		<b>8</b>	26	17	43
<b>2</b>	22	14	36		<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	19	20	39		<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	15	19	34		<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	27	21	48		<b>12</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>								439

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
2 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
1 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
91 % White  
4 % 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 2009-2010 school 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, 2009 until the end of the school year.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	1
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	5
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	483
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.01
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 1%

Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 4

Number of languages represented, not including English: 3

Specify languages:

Spanish, Polish, Vietnamese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1%  
 Total number of students who qualify: 1

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-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 0%  
 Total number of students served: 0

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>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>26</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>6</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>1</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>1</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>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>22</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Support staff	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>36</u>	<u>9</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: 20:1

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

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	97%	97%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	97%	98%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	7%	3%	6%	7%	6%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other	_____ %
<b>Total</b>	<b>_____ 0%</b>

Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School (OLV) remains faithful to its founding vision of providing a solid Catholic education to the students of the surrounding suburban community, yet continues to incorporate new, research-based teaching methods to remain in the forefront of academic excellence. Within the boundaries of the parish served by the school are award winning public elementary schools. However, OLV draws parents and students to an environment steeped in Christian values and high academic goals and achievements fostered by enthusiastic support from the administration and boundless talents of the faculty and staff. The OLV K-8 faculty boasts 69% (18) with advanced degrees, and 100% who attended continuing education workshops in 2009-2010. Faculty members are extremely dedicated and on average have taught at OLV for 13+ years.

Founded in 1984, the school received accreditation within two years by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and has continuously maintained accreditation. In its 25-year history, OLV has had an extraordinary record of success: a high percentage of students have consistently qualified for the Duke Talent Identification program, Science Olympiad teams that have been in the top three in Alabama for each of the last eight years, a Thespian Troupe that has received superior honors, and many more. Among the most coveted honors received by OLV was the 1998-1999 U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School of Excellence designation. The school believes that these honors carry with them a responsibility to promote a culture of continuous improvement and to share the lessons learned with other educators. The school is currently in the third year of a five-year plan of improvement. Development of the plan spanned a 12-month period and reflected the perspectives of all stakeholders including students, parents, parishioners, faculty and staff, and administration. Today, the involvement of stakeholders continues to be an integral part of the successful implementation of the plan. Data from standardized tests supports the effectiveness of initiatives in the school's five-year plan of improvement and indicates that instructional methods are successfully enhancing student performance.

The involvement of the community in the school continues to be a catalyst for its success. In excess of 90% of parents serve in the school in some way including extracurricular activities, classroom projects, field trips, fundraising, school committees, and Parent Teacher Organization. Members of the parish are also active in supporting the school and serve with parents on the School Advisory Council and school improvement committees. The parish also supports the fundraising efforts of the school. With such a high degree of participation, parents display a commitment to partnering with teachers in the educational process and serve as role models of faith to their children.

It is with the support of the community that the school is able to provide expansive facilities and resources for the many educational opportunities awaiting the 439 students currently enrolled in preschool-grade 8. The school campus includes a state of the art library with more than 13,000 volumes, an extensive science lab, a gym with a performance stage, two computer labs, a full-service cafeteria, an adjacent preschool building, a playground, and outdoor areas for children to play and to learn. These facilities provide space and resources for students to explore their creativity and talents through a wide variety of activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, student council, drama, sports, yearbook, choir, scouts, math club, band, altar servers, Scholars Bowl, and Science Olympiad. The focal point of the campus is the church. OLV is first and foremost a Catholic school where the Gospel message is integrated throughout a well-rounded curriculum that prepares students for life in a complex and diverse society.

At OLV, the school lives its mission to encourage students to reach their full potential in a creative and nurturing environment that promotes Gospel values every day of the year. Fostering an environment that recognizes that success is defined differently for each individual student is an inherent aspect of the culture at OLV. By encouraging students to live as the individuals God created them to be, with their own aspirations and levels of achievement, OLV imparts not only an appreciation of learning but also a faith that serves as a strength guiding them throughout their lives. By providing students with a safe and stable environment where they can test their academic, social, and spiritual limits, OLV enables them to stretch their wings and broaden their horizons. OLV graduates are well prepared for high school, having learned to appreciate not only the gift of their education, but also their responsibility to use this education to enhance the world in which they live.

### 1. Assessment Results:

OLV's student performance on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) presents a remarkable trend of consistency across grade levels and disciplinary boundaries. These scores are indicative of a school community that offers solid academic programs, addresses the learning needs of individual students, and encourages high levels of achievement. The ITBS is administered yearly in spring to all students in grades 3-7. It provides an assessment of the curriculum and instructional methods, offers a comparison to other schools, and is one of many assessments in place at OLV to measure development of individual students.

ITBS national percentile rank scores demonstrate high levels of student achievement across curriculum areas and grade levels. In 2010, OLV's ITBS national percentile scores for grades 3-7 range from 75-81 in reading and 77-81 in mathematics. For example, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade percentile ranking of 78 in both reading and mathematics indicates that students scored higher than 78% of the students in the same grade in the country. The percentile scores of all students tested indicate that OLV exceeds the criteria to rank it among the top 15 percent of schools nationally.

Over the past five years, OLV student test scores consistently show high levels of achievement. In grades 3-7, ITBS national percentile reading scores range from 70-84 and mathematics scores range from 64-88. While test scores were high, performance on specific mathematics subtests indicated that mathematics should be a target area of the school's plan of improvement. In the past two years, the ITBS mathematics percentile scores for all grades reveal an upward trend, ranging from 71-87. This data confirms the effectiveness of the plan and validates that these efforts are enhancing student performance.

Another indicator of success is the high percentage of students qualifying for the Duke University Talent Identification Program. This program identifies and assesses 7<sup>th</sup> grade students with exceptional scores on specific ITBS subtests. Students performing at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on a particular subtest or composite of a national standardized test qualify for this program. Over the past five years, OLV's 7<sup>th</sup> grade students qualifying for this program range from 47%-61% of the class. Eligible students go on to take the ACT or SAT tests and frequently receive state and national recognition for their performance. The consistent high level of achievement on the ITBS and other assessments indicate that the school continuously engages and differentiates for a variety of learners.

### 2. Using Assessment Results:

OLV's approach to assessment is directly linked to the school's mission and is in alignment with its plan of improvement. Student assessment is ongoing and regularly includes traditional tests, standardized tests, and other researched-based assessments allowing for a thorough and accurate analysis of student achievement, regardless of learning style.

OLV conducts an in-depth study every five years that drives a plan of improvement which focuses on student achievement through the attainment of measurable learning goals. The assessment system provides in-depth data to evaluate the goals of the plan. This system includes, but is not limited to, *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS), easyCBM Math, ITBS, and Diocesan Writing, Religion, Technology, and Mathematics Assessments. Analysis of standardized test results is a multi-faceted process at OLV. Each teacher receives individual profile narratives, a class summary, and on-line access to class results. Teachers disaggregate results to analyze student performance on specific subtests. The faculty meets within and across grade levels to analyze data, conduct curriculum mapping, and review benchmarks. This process identifies specific strengths and areas of improvement and helps evaluate progress toward completion of the plan of improvement.



OLV's teaching framework is based upon Wiggins and McTighe's *Understanding by Design (UbD)*, a backward design focusing on enduring understandings. The assessment is determined prior to designing a learning unit, resulting in varied assessment opportunities for students to exhibit their understanding. OLV's philosophy is based upon the belief that assessment is much more than assigning grades. Meaningful assessments give students the opportunity to think, produce, present, and evaluate. In order to measure the progress of individual students, OLV uses a variety of assessment tools including problem based learning activities, oral testing, portfolios, journals, performance assessments, observations, and investigations. In addition, the DIBELS reading assessment and easyCBM evaluation for mathematics are used to identify individual areas of needed improvement and allow teachers to monitor students' progress in grades K-3. Across all grade levels, assessment results are used to differentiate instruction, identify cooperative and ability groups, and guide faculty in designing necessary strategies for remediation and enrichment of mastered skills and concepts.

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

Assessment is a very thorough and inclusive process at OLV and the results are reported to stakeholders regularly. The effective communication of assessment results to parents is accomplished through meetings, progress reports, weekly communication folders, conferences, and report cards. ITBS results are communicated to parents in late spring via the profile narrative, a detailed report of student performance. Parents are encouraged to meet with their child's teacher and/or counselor for clarification of results. DIBELS and easyCBM results are distributed to parents of students in grades K-3 three times a year after each assessment. Mid-term progress reports and quarterly report cards are sent to parents to communicate student performance. Parent-teacher conferences are another means of communicating assessment results. Conferences give parents and teachers an opportunity to work together as partners to ensure the student's academic success.

Communication of assessment results between teachers and students is a continuous process. Frequent and varied assessments provide opportunities for immediate feedback. Areas of strength and areas needing improvement are identified immediately; consequently, re-teaching, enrichment, or progression to the next skill is ongoing. Teachers meet individually with students to review assessment results and discuss a plan of action to assist them in attaining their highest level of achievement.

Additionally, performance trends are reviewed with the school's plan of improvement committees. These committees include a steering committee charged with overseeing implementation of the plan and a community stakeholder group which reviews the progress of the plan. In addition, the progress of the plan is reviewed with the School Advisory Council and the Parent Teacher Organization.

Communication to the community highlights the school's progress and achievements. This is accomplished through a twice-monthly school newsletter, school web site, church bulletin, Twitter, local newspapers, and school open houses. The school utilizes both traditional print media and electronic media to convey information to stakeholder groups.

### **4. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

OLV believes, that as a high achieving school, it has the responsibility to support other schools by sharing its experiences. OLV faculty and administration serve as mentors to other educators, present at workshops, participate on committees, share lesson plans, and open its doors to other schools. It is the school's belief that through an active exchange of experiences and knowledge, student learning and teacher effectiveness are positively impacted for all involved.

Accredited since 1986, OLV shares its experience with diocesan schools. OLV administrators mentor other diocesan schools seeking accreditation by assisting them in the development of accreditation documents and guiding them through the process. OLV participates in a quality assurance review with other schools in the diocese. In addition, the school's five-year plan of improvement is used as a model

for other schools. This active support helps the Diocese of Birmingham achieve and continue system-wide accreditation.

OLV's commitment to continuous improvement extends beyond its campus to the entire diocese. Faculty members serve on diocesan committees to plan curriculum, evaluate textbooks, develop benchmarks, design assessments, create and review UbD units, and assess and draft policy. Teachers share their expertise by evaluating Diocesan Mathematics, Religion, and Writing Assessments. The school conducts cross-grade level meetings with area Catholic high schools. In addition, OLV serves as the annual host school for the Diocesan Religion Scholars Bowl. All diocesan schools are invited to attend this yearly event and parents and faculty in attendance have the opportunity to tour the school. OLV faculty members mentor schools in establishing Science Olympiad programs and serve on the Diocesan Strategic Planning Committee. Furthermore, faculty present at diocesan workshops and share best practices. Topics presented by OLV faculty include parental involvement in schools, classroom management and organizational skills for the first-year teacher, using literature to teach character education, and designing and implementing a school-wide learning unit.

OLV shares its lessons with schools beyond the diocese through local, state, and national workshops. Faculty share lesson plans with teachers throughout the state via the Alabama Learning Exchange, participate in Shelby County-sponsored workshops such as the Tech Fest, and discuss best practices with teachers at the Samford Summer Institute for Teaching Excellence. Faculty share OLV's cross-curricular Holocaust learning unit at local and national meetings and exchange best practices in other curriculum-specific workshops.

## 1. Curriculum:

OLV's success-oriented curriculum fosters spiritual growth, academic excellence, and positive moral development. It uses research-based teaching methods to actively engage students in the learning process to foster enduring understandings.

**Religion** – Faith development serves as the cornerstone of curriculum planning. At all grade levels, students develop knowledge of sacred scripture, sacraments, Catholic doctrine, Catholic social teachings, liturgy, and worship. The Gospel message of Jesus Christ is infused throughout the curriculum and into all aspects of student life. This is accomplished through daily prayer, Holy Heroes Program, and liturgical celebrations (weekly grades K-2 and twice weekly grades 3-8). At Mass, students serve as lectors, instrumentalists, cantors, and gospel play presenters. Middle school (grades 6-8) students write gospel plays, Communion meditations, and general intercessions. Just as Jesus served among the people, students serve the community through class and school-wide service projects.

**Mathematics** – The mathematics curriculum is designed to develop fundamental computation skills, critical thinking skills, and problem solving skills. Students calculate multi-step operations, draw conclusions to make predictions, and interpret data. They use mathematical operations, measurements, statistics, geometry, and algebra to represent and solve problems.

**Language Arts** – Students develop reading and fluency skills through a curriculum that focuses on a combination of phonemic awareness and whole language. Through varied literature genres, vocabulary development and reading comprehension are emphasized. Writing is integral to the language arts curriculum with students developing appropriate use of grammatical and mechanical conventions within the writing process. Enhancing listening and speaking skills is also a vital part of the program.

**Social Studies** – As recommended by the National Council for Social Studies, students are progressively introduced to social studies concepts. In early grades, social studies emphasizes student understanding of communities and provides them with a foundation for becoming responsible citizens. Students in grades 4 and 5 increase their knowledge in geography, Alabama history, and the development of the United States. Middle school students continue the study of American history, then progress to government and world history. OLV students are encouraged to become active citizens who appreciate diversity and understand their connection to the world.

**Science** – OLV students analyze, observe, explore, and discover with hands-on and inquiry-based labs to gain a broad appreciation for life, environmental, earth, and physical science. The scientific method is used to design and conduct scientific investigations. Students apply the Catholic Church's teachings as they relate to concepts in science. Critical thinking skills are emphasized along with written and verbal communication of scientific information.

**Foreign Language** – Recognizing that students will live in a multi-cultural society and compete in a global economy, OLV is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements. Spanish is taught to all students in grades 1-8. In grades 1-5 there is an emphasis on vocabulary, basic reading, and conversational skills. In grades 6-8, the focus is on achieving basic fluency based upon individual capability.

**Fine Arts** – Numerous opportunities abound for exposure to and participation in the fine arts. The curriculum includes visual and performing arts, and a theater exploratory class. Student creativity is showcased through prominent displays of artwork. Field trips are selected to create an appreciation for music, ballet, and theater. Students may participate in band, choir, and drama. The drama department

produces two productions annually, each with an average participation of 90 students. OLV is one of only 5 schools in Alabama to be chartered as a Junior Troupe in the International Thespian Society.

**Technology** – OLV provides a variety of technological resources which are incorporated across the curriculum. Teachers coordinate lessons with the computer teacher to effectively integrate technology with thematic units. Weekly classes in technology instruct grade K-8 students in a wide variety of software applications with an emphasis on the ethical and appropriate use of technology. Classrooms are equipped with student computers. In addition, OLV's two computer labs accommodate 55 students, engaging them in learning experiences that incorporate technology.

**Physical Education** – OLV offers age-appropriate activities in physical education and promotes the importance of exercise, health, sportsmanship, and conflict resolution. Students in grades K-5 participate in physical education five days a week, and students in grades 6-8 participate four days a week. Students learn team sports and enjoy sport challenges providing the opportunity to apply the rules and skills of specific sports. Health topics are also taught in other curriculum areas including science and counseling classes.

**Counseling** – Counseling classes are taught to students in grades K-8 by a full-time, licensed professional counselor. The curriculum is in alignment with Alabama State Standards and includes various psycho-educational topics such as bullying, drug awareness, study skills, career exploration, character education, health, and internet safety. In addition, the school counselor is available to meet with students in individual and group settings.

## **2. Reading/English:**

Our Lady of the Valley provides a language-rich environment for its students. The school implements a standards and research-based language arts program which incorporates the UbD approach. The program integrates reading, writing, spelling, phonics, grammar, listening, and speaking skills.

In grades K-6, Scott Foresman's *Reading Street* is the principal component of the language arts program and offers differentiated instruction options as well as a variety of assessment tools. In addition to the main reading selections, the program provides leveled readers in various genres which correlate with the main selections. The *Reading Street* companion program is utilized to provide remediation for students performing below grade level. Benchmark tests and comprehension assessments are ongoing, and the DIBELS assessment identifies students who need strategic intervention or enrichment in literacy skills.

In grades 7 and 8, the McDougal-Littell Literature program uses the UbD framework to present contemporary and classic literature within a variety of genres. Beginning with essential questions, students explore theme, plot, and character development, and discover connections with their own experiences. In addition, cross-curricular studies of literature promote enduring understandings. For example, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum integrates social studies, character education, and literature in an in-depth study of the Holocaust using the play "The Diary of Anne Frank." The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade literature program provides a variety of assessments and teaching tools in order to differentiate instruction.

OLV enhances its language arts curriculum through many other resources and approaches. The on-line resource, *A-Z Reading*, provides multi-leveled, content reading books. This allows for flexible reading groups as well as reading instruction in the content areas. The Daily Oral Language Review and the Mountain Language programs are used to strengthen language skills. In-depth research projects offer opportunities for students to uncover essential questions while delving into history, science, and social issues within the framework of the research process. Technology tools, web quests, and the Alabama Virtual Library provide opportunities to actively engage students in the language arts curriculum. Written and verbal communication skills are nurtured across all curriculum areas. Persuasive, expository, narrative, and descriptive writing, along with numerous opportunities for creative writing, are components of the language arts curriculum. Students are given the opportunity to improve oral communication skills through reports, formal speeches, debates, Mass participation, and extracurricular activities. Finally,

author visits, guest readers, and exposure to fine arts supplement the language arts curriculum to foster a life-long love for reading.

### **3. Mathematics:**

The mathematics curriculum at OLV is aligned with the standards of the state of Alabama, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and the diocesan curriculum and benchmarks. The school recognizes the importance of curriculum mapping and uses this in the planning process. Teachers implement individual systems to ensure that all applicable standards are met using UbD and differentiated instruction.

The curriculum for grades K-5 is based on an investigative approach. The Pearson *Investigations* curriculum allows students to construct mathematical ideas, achieve computational fluency, and focus on building strong conceptual foundations using various manipulatives. Once this groundwork is laid, students use higher order thinking skills and mathematical reasoning to solve problems using numerous strategies. The *Investigations* program is supported with on-line testing, games, and activities.

The middle school mathematics curriculum presents concepts concerning the basic properties of numbers, progressing through geometry, fractions, and decimals and culminating in algebra in grade 8. On-line textbooks, video tutorials, tests, and interactive activities are available to students. This provides immediate feedback and enables them to revisit areas of concern.

OLV has a student population of diverse learners with varying achievement levels in mathematics. A variety of assessments including the ITBS are analyzed to design remediation and to enrich mastered skills and concepts. This is accomplished using various mathematical activities including World Math Day, Morning Math Review, the American Math Challenge, Mountain Math, Math Minutes, Math Club, and the Catholic Math League.

Problem based and project based learning are integral aspects of the curriculum. In grades K-5, students learn about mathematics by buying and selling items in student-created stores, plotting and graphing the migration of the whooping crane, and placing virtual catalog orders. Middle school students participate in a checking account simulation program, construct bird houses using measurements and geometry, and conduct parent interviews on the use of mathematics in their occupations.

### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The science program at OLV excites learning among students at all grade levels. A constructivist approach to science allows students to discover fundamental concepts through hands-on exploration and advances critical thinking and problem solving skills.

The science curriculum in grades K-5 incorporates hands-on activities to allow students to learn important scientific concepts while developing solid inquiry skills. For example, students study the growth and development of plant life when they plant seeds, chart growth, illustrate and record observations, pollinate flowers, and harvest new seeds. In physical science, students build their own flashlight as they learn the properties of electricity. They explore the physics of motion when they design, test, and build a prototype of a car. In earth science, students conduct tests of rock and minerals, observe properties, and classify samples. At all grade levels, this inquiry-oriented investigation of scientific principles encourages students to share ideas through writing and discussion with peers. Students' experiences in science progress so that by fifth grade they are actively using the scientific method.

The use of the investigative approach to learning expands in middle school with a science curriculum that sequences content from all four science disciplines: chemistry, physics, biology, and earth science. An outdoor classroom, which includes natural gardens and a stream, is used to study environmental science and to foster awareness of our social responsibility to safeguard the environment. The expansive science

lab provides an opportunity to study and care for animals and to conduct earth, life, and physical science investigations. Students perform multiple dissections including a worm, grasshopper, squid, clam, frog, and fetal pig (using the autopsy method) with an emphasis on understanding the interdependence of each system. The study of science expands beyond our campus with students studying the aquatic ecosystem and marine biology on a barrier island in the Gulf of Mexico.

The excitement for learning science is evident in the school. Students in grades 5-8 showcase their experiments in the annual Science Exhibition with many of their projects winning regional and state honors. The Science Olympiad program has grown from 1 team of 15 students in grades 6-8, to 5 teams of 70 students in grades 5-8. In the last 8 years, the teams have consistently placed in the top three in Alabama and have advanced four times to national competition.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

The faculty recognizes the necessity of having brain compatible classrooms and those students must have meaningful content, an enriched environment, and a sense of collaboration. These teaching practices are appropriate because the teachers embrace the belief that each child is unique; therefore, the needs of the individual are met through a variety of teaching methods and learning experiences.

Within the framework of UbD, the faculty employs a variety of instructional methods. Differentiated instruction is instrumental in meeting varying academic needs. Project based and problem based assignments help students of different ability levels work collaboratively to learn and explore. Students assume ownership of the topic by determining their role in the project, choosing a method of presentation, and using a rubric to guide their progress. This method is utilized at all grade levels and incorporates principles of Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* to accommodate a large range of learning styles.

Cross-curricular instruction unites all disciplines and enables students to see the connection between what they are learning and everyday life. The reading curriculum presents students with stories about cultures, mathematics, art, history, and science. Students broaden their horizons in other academic areas as they strengthen reading skills. They forge enduring understandings and make real world connections with information taught through activities such as cooking with math, researching current events, and spending an afternoon with a Holocaust survivor.

Additionally, teachers utilize tiered assignments to supplement struggling learners and challenge the advanced learners. Assignments are level-blind so students do not perceive themselves as belonging to a particular ability group.

OLV provides different levels of accommodations to students with special learning needs. In all subject areas and across grade levels, modified assignments are utilized for students with learning disabilities. Alpha Smart keyboards are available for students experiencing fine motor skill issues as an alternative to handwritten assignments. A variety of assessments are used to accommodate varying learning styles. The counselor tests students orally and provides more time on task as needed. Peer grouping allows for higher performing students to model good academic habits and assist struggling students.

## **6. Professional Development:**

Since OLV opened in 1984, its professional learning communities have been a key to the school's success. Professional development ensures the effective implementation of the curriculum and is aligned with the school's plan of improvement. This is accomplished through the allocation of resources from the school's operating budget and the Parent Teacher Organization.

Professional development needs are determined by faculty surveys, the school's plan of improvement, and individual professional growth plans. The principal and faculty select conferences that support school and individual goals while advancing teaching strategies. The majority of faculty attends the Samford

Summer Institute for Teaching Excellence to stay abreast of current educational research. Many teachers attend the University of Alabama at Birmingham Reading and Writing Conference and the ALAHASP Elementary Science Workshops. Several members of the faculty participate in the Alabama Educational Technology Conference to explore the latest technology practices in classroom instruction. Faculty attends the Voices of the Past Holocaust Conference and the Belfer Conference at the USHMM. The faculty participates in National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) Conventions. The principal attends the Law Symposium, NCEA Principals' Forum, regional ASCD conferences, and the annual NCEA Convention. Additional curriculum-specific workshops that faculty take part in are the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Convention and the National Science Olympiad Summer Institute. The entire faculty participates in professional development programs related to teaching methodology, psychosocial issues, and spiritual growth.

Professional development strengthens professional learning communities in which members work collectively to support student achievement. Weekly faculty meetings encourage the exchange of professional information. Faculty review UbD units, present best practices in education, and share the use of technology across the curriculum. These meetings provide additional training in teaching methodology and curriculum areas that are the focus of the school's plan of improvement.

## **7. School Leadership:**

The leadership philosophy of OLV emphasizes a collaborative effort. This multi-tiered system includes the bishop, the superintendent, the Diocesan School Board, OLV's pastor, principal, faculty, staff, and the School Advisory Council. The primary focus of OLV's leadership team is to fulfill the mission statement and meet the academic, social, and spiritual needs of its students.

Daily operation of the school is the responsibility of the principal, who has a vision for the future which clearly articulates the mission of the school. The principal is an active participant in many classroom activities and is both approachable and visible to parents, students, and faculty alike. She visits all classrooms regularly in order to observe instruction and to form personal relationships with students.

The faculty and staff are encouraged to chair committees such as curriculum evaluation, school-wide units, and technology. In an effort to ensure student improvement, the faculty meets weekly and works collaboratively to design and implement curriculum plans. The principal also allocates funding and joins staff for professional development.

Parents are afforded many opportunities to lead and to become involved in the OLV school community. The Parent Teacher Organization, School Advisory Council, School Improvement Committee, Technology Committee, and the Uniform Committee provide parents with leadership roles. Parents are also invited to volunteer in classrooms and to help organize on-site activities including drama productions, Science Olympiad, physical education challenges, school-wide units, Career Week, and much more.

Students assume leadership roles as mentors, reading buddies, ambassadors for school tours, and Guardian Angels (safety patrol). They hold offices in Science Olympiad, Student Council, and Drama Club. In addition, middle school students help organize activities and mentor younger students for school-wide units and liturgical celebrations. Students define their roles in these activities, allowing for participation of all, regardless of individual ability levels.

The school culture at OLV is a result of the collaborative efforts of administration, church, faculty, staff, parents, and students. All have input with regard to goal setting and decision making. The OLV community shares a common vision that God's children will be self-directed, life-long learners, and become contributing members of society empowered by a personal value system based upon the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

## PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

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1. Private school association: Catholic
2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3) status? Yes
3. What are the 2009-2010 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<u>\$3940</u>	<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$4360</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$4360</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>				
12th	Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$4761
5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$400
6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?  
10%
7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 21%



# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	81	81	78	85	79
Number of students tested	37	52	41	48	51
Percent of total students tested	100	96	98	100	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	75	72	74	76	74
Number of students tested	35	53	41	48	52
Percent of total students tested	95	98	98	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	77	72	81	80	68
Number of students tested	49	44	52	41	59
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	98	94
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	76	76	79	76	70
Number of students tested	47	43	52	41	61
Percent of total students tested	94	98	100	98	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	78	87	88	77	69
Number of students tested	43	51	41	47	48
Percent of total students tested	98	96	98	98	96
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	79	84	78	79	79
Number of students tested	42	52	41	47	49
Percent of total students tested	95	98	98	98	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	79	76	64	73	74
Number of students tested	52	41	56	37	42
Percent of total students tested	98	98	97	100	89
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	81	77	71	75	75
Number of students tested	51	42	56	35	43
Percent of total students tested	96	100	97	95	91
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	78	71	73	76	72
Number of students tested	42	48	31	38	46
Percent of total students tested	95	94	97	93	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: Form A 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	78	75	80	80	78
Number of students tested	42	50	31	40	47
Percent of total students tested	95	98	97	98	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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