

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12PV113

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 2011-2012 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 foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
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

12PV113

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: Urban or large central city

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

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 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	16	37	53		6	0	16	16
K	2	12	14		7	0	0	0
1	0	13	13		8	0	0	0
2	0	15	15		9	0	0	0
3	0	8	8		10	0	0	0
4	0	16	16		11	0	0	0
5	0	11	11		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								146

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
11 % Asian
10 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
72 % 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 2010-2011 school year: 2%

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, 2010 until the end of the school year.	3
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	0
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	3
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	146
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: $\frac{2\%}{3}$
 Total number of students who qualify: $\frac{3}{3}$

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: $\frac{2\%}{3}$
 Total number of students served: $\frac{3}{3}$

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>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</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>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>23</u>	<u>5</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: 8:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	97%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

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

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

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 _____ %

Total _____ **0%**

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School is a PK-6th grade school located in Akron, Ohio. The school was founded in 1923 by the Sisters of Saint Dominic as a private, Catholic school, educating young girls. Today, the school remains single gender with the exception of the Pre-school and Kindergarten, which are co-educational. Our Lady of the Elms Elementary is part of the larger Our Lady of the Elms School, which includes an all-girls Middle and High School in a separate building on the same campus.

In Northeast Ohio, Our Lady of the Elms School is synonymous with excellence in education. Our Lady of the Elms Pre-school, which is now included in the Elementary School building, was the first licensed school of its kind in the area when it was founded in the 1920s. Today, it remains one of the strongest in the greater Akron area, recently winning a *Best of the Best of Akron* award by the *Akron Beacon Journal*, our local newspaper. In addition, Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School is the only single gender, Catholic elementary school in the Diocese of Cleveland and the school as a whole is the only single gender school in Akron and Summit County, the county in which our school is located. This makes us truly unique in our region.

The mission of our school is as follows: *Our Lady of the Elms School, an independent, Catholic school rooted in the Dominican tradition, educates girls and young women to listen openly, evaluate wisely, speak bravely, lead justly and serve compassionately.* Our vision statement is *Our Lady of the Elms School strives to be recognized as the center for academic excellence and women's leadership in Northeast Ohio, and to be financially accessible to all qualified girls who desire the Elms experience.* Both our mission and vision statements were recently crafted and adopted by the Board of Trustees and the Dominican Sisters of Peace during the creation of our latest strategic plan. These statements most closely describe the heart of Our Lady of the Elms School.

Blue Ribbon schools are nationally recognized as the “best of the best” in education. Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School is a prime candidate for this award because we achieve strong academic scores through teaching our students to think critically throughout every aspect of the learning process. Our students are encouraged to be creative and to use their talents to enhance their learning. In addition, leadership development and service are infused throughout the curriculum. This non-traditional method allows our students to be successful not only in the classroom, but in the real world. As a result of this multi-faceted approach and the rigor of our curriculum and instruction, our students achieve consistently high test scores ranking the school among the very best.

Our school, as compared to other Catholic schools in the Akron area, attracts students from four counties with students traveling up to 70 miles daily. This is strong evidence that the education we offer at Our Lady of the Elms is well-known throughout Northeast Ohio and families are willing to travel great lengths to assure their children receive the benefits of an Elms education. The majority of our students hail from families in which both parents hold professional occupations and place a high value on academic success for their children. Traditionally, a significant percentage of our graduates return to the Elms to enroll their children, an indication that our graduates realize the importance of giving their own children the benefits of the strong education they received as an Elms student. In short, Our Lady of the Elms School is well known for educating young girls to become future women leaders since 1923.

1. Assessment Results:

A. Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School's reported assessment results are from the norm-reference Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and reflect the students' performance in reading and mathematics for grades 3-6 over the past five years. The ITBS is a national standardized achievement test designed to measure the basic skills students are learning. The test identifies individual students' strengths and weaknesses to parents, teachers and administrators and helps to guide instruction accordingly. Additionally, educators are able to evaluate individual student performance in relation to the class, diocese and nation. While schools in the Diocese of Cleveland are only required to give the ITBS tests to students in grades 1, 3, and 5, the tests are given to students in every grade 1-6 at Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School. The tests are given each year in an effort to have the most updated information about our students for teachers to individualize and modify their instruction.

For the 2011 test results, Our Lady of the Elms students scored at or above the published 85th percentile equivalents in all grade levels in both reading and mathematics and have made significant improvements, particularly in mathematics over the past five years. The scores represent the percentile rank of Average Standard Scores and are called National Student Norms. Given that our students achieved above the standard 85th percentile in their scores, it is evident that Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School exceeds "meeting the standard" in all grade levels.

B. The performance trends in the reading results from the ITBS assessment at Our Lady of the Elms are such that our students consistently achieve scores ranked at or above the published 85th percentile. Several factors account for the high achievement consistently over the past five years in this subject area. First, we have had no teacher turn-over in the intermediate grades and low teacher turn-over in the lower grades. This fact positively impacts student achievement because the teachers are true masters in their grade level and subject areas. Also, the same teacher teaches reading and language arts to students in grades 4-6. This is strategically planned so that little time is lost learning about new students each year. The teacher knows the exact level for each student and can progress with them through the intermediate years.

With low teacher turn-over, our teachers have been trained and are skilled at differentiating reading instruction to challenge each student at their own, unique instructional levels throughout their elementary years. To allow this type of teaching to occur, the schedule for the school day has been strategically created to allow for a larger block of time for reading and language arts instruction. In the primary grades, teachers have a block of time equal to one and a half to two hours dedicated to reading instruction. In the intermediate grades, students have an hour block of time for reading instruction, as well. These longer class periods, free from distraction or interruption, allow teachers to accomplish the difficult task of differentiating their instruction.

As is evident from the test results, great improvement has occurred in mathematics over the past five years at Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School. This improvement is due to several factors. First, our continuous school improvement plan goal has been focused on improving problem-solving and critical thinking in mathematics. A concerted effort has been made across grade levels to give our students more opportunities to work with problem-solving both in math and the other content areas. Secondly, the introduction of a new textbook series, Everyday Mathematics, has helped strengthen the daily mathematics instruction by going from a series that spirals yearly to one that spirals weekly. Students now review and revisit concepts previously taught multiple times throughout a unit, rather than once a year.

In addition, as it is with Reading, the same teacher teaches Mathematics to students in grades 4-6. Again, this is strategically planned so that little time is lost in assessing the levels of new students each year. The intermediate grade math teacher knows exactly what level her students are at and can quickly progress with them through grades 4-6. Also, longer blocks of time have been created for mathematics instruction to strengthen the program here at Our Lady of the Elms. Collectively, the above-mentioned strategies and changes to the math curriculum and schedule have helped increase test scores in grades 3-6 over the past five years. Our continuous improvement plan for the next four years continues to have a goal dedicated to mathematics, specifically improving math computation scores. These efforts are in place to continue to raise our test scores and keep them consistently high in the next five years.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The IOWA Tests of Basic Skills are administered in late February or early March each year and the results typically are not returned to the school until late April or early May. For this reason, teachers focus mainly on improving instruction and student achievement for the following grade level. This requires a great deal of communication between teachers about the standardized test results.

Each year when the IOWA assessment scores are mailed to Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School, the school goes through a series of systematic steps to analyze the results. First, the principal reviews the scores looking for trends, high and low scores, and areas of strength and weakness. Secondly, the teachers are given their individual results to analyze their students' growth and progress. The teachers also review the scores looking for areas of strength and weakness of individual students, as well as the class as a whole. Next, the teachers meet in grade level teams to discuss the score reports. The teachers in grades 1-3 and grades 4-6 meet to share the findings that have surfaced and discuss trends across the grade levels. At this point, discussions focus on the topic of strengths and weaknesses in the overall program and curriculum we offer at Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School. Finally, the results are sent home to the parents at which point the teachers are able to meet individually with parents to answer specific questions about their daughter.

Since the results are returned prior to summer vacation, the teachers include a list of intervention materials for families to use during the summer months to prevent the summer lag in knowledge and help students achieve success at the start of the next school year. If a student is below grade level in a given area, they receive a list of suggested materials targeted at their area of weakness. This communication helps parents, students and teachers focus on improving the areas to assure student progress in the coming school year.

When the results for the Diocese of Cleveland and the Southern region of the Diocese are communicated to the principals of the Diocesan schools, the principal at Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School also analyzes the school's results compared to the region and the entire Diocese. Scores are also evaluated in comparison to the results from the five previous school years. In addition, results from the sixth grade tests are shared with the principal and assistant principal of Our Lady of the Elms High School and Middle School in an effort to create a smooth transition for these students from one school to the next.

Finally, test results are communicated to the school community in three ways. First, the school newsletter reports the school norms and student norms for the current school year with a description of their importance. All parents receive this newsletter and it is available to the public via the school's website. This data is also shared with prospective families in the information packets distributed upon request during individual tours. Secondly, at the annual report to the school community, the scores from the previous five years are analyzed and trends are discussed and expressed to the parents and school stakeholders. Finally, the members of the Elms Board of Trustees are given a formal report of the test scores, a comparison over the past five years, and a report on the projected growth anticipated in the coming year. Through these methods, all key stakeholders of Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School, including parents, prospective families, community members, teachers, students and board members, are informed of our success and areas of continuous growth.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The faculty and staff at Our Lady of the Elms School has employed various strategies to share our successful programs with other schools both in the Akron area and throughout Ohio. Most recently, we shared the success of one of our literacy programs at the Ohio Catholic Education Association's (OCEA) biannual conference and we presented on the success of one of our science and ecological programs termed "Fields of Plenty" at a local foundation's grant conference in Akron.

Our first grade teacher and principal shared a program called Literacy Night at the OCEA Conference this past fall. This program was created to bridge the summer months between Kindergarten and first grade and to equip parents with strategies to help their students learn in a fun, family-friendly manner. This program helped increase students' reading levels over the summer months, and enabled our school community to come together to celebrate literacy. Teachers and administrators from Catholic schools throughout the State of Ohio were in attendance as we shared the success of our Literacy Night program.

Our third grade teacher presented a life science program termed "Fields of Plenty" at a recent grant writing workshop at the Akron Summit County Public Library. This program stems from a successful grant written by our third grade teacher in collaboration with a local farm, Crown Point Ecology Center. The program created a school garden, tended to by our students, and included opportunities for our student body to learn life science standards in a hands-on, enriched environment. This program, and its success over the past three years, was shared with Akron area principals, curriculum directors and teachers from both private and public schools.

We have found that both of these presentations reached a large number of teachers and schools in a brief amount of time, helping us share our success in an effective way. Our faculty and staff members have learned a great deal through listening to other schools share their success and feel it is important to return the service and share the lessons we learned to help other schools achieve success as well.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School has implemented several methods to communicate with parents in an effort to strengthen student success. The strongest method we have used is the conference, whether it is parent-student, teacher-parent, or all three stakeholders parent-student-teacher. Throughout the course of the year, families have three opportunities to come to the school to discuss their child's progress and set goals for further success. One of these opportunities is a mandatory conference between parent and teacher and another is a mandatory conference between student and parent. We are fortunate at Our Lady of the Elms to have maintained 100% attendance throughout both of these events. Teachers also make it a priority to meet with any parent at the parents' request to help a child achieve success. We have found that this is the best way to communicate individual progress and achievement.

Secondly, we use communication tools such as newsletters and emails to keep parents informed of our continuous school improvement goals, as well as our specific grade and school achievements. Through these communications, parents understand the progress our school has made and our vision for future years. In addition, teachers use an online tool called Faculty Access to upload information to the parent online portal called NetClassroom to communicate grades, assignments and announcements to parents and students. These tools inform parents and students of daily progress and allow for open communication.

Finally, the Chief Administrators Council of the school, consisting of the Pre-school and Elementary School Principal, the High School and Middle School Principal, and the Executive Director of Operations, give an Annual Report presentation each fall to the entire Pre-school through twelfth grade parent population. During this report, the school's strategic plan and continuous improvement plans are reviewed, test scores are disseminated and analyzed, and families are informed of the service and professional development plans of the school. All parents are invited and encouraged to attend and ask questions of all three chief administrators. Therefore, we utilize a variety of approaches to effectively communicate high expectations and engage our parents and school community.

1. Curriculum:

Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School offers a challenging curriculum, differentiated such that all students are able to build a solid foundation for educational success.

In the reading and language arts program, the focus is on fluency and comprehension at the students' instructional level. Students are engaged in the writing process not only in language arts, but throughout the curricular areas of social studies and science to strengthen the student's ability to write in the content areas. In this way, the reading and writing curriculum are not taught in isolation, but rather they are integrated throughout the content subject areas.

In mathematics, instruction is focused on the core concepts of patterns and numerical operations, geometry, measurement, data collection and analysis, and probability and statistics. Students are actively engaged in learning activities that take them from concrete to more abstract levels of understanding, and allow them to apply classroom learning to real-life mathematical problem-solving and critical thinking experiences.

The science curriculum enables students to experience the scientific method through a series of hands-on, experimental labs. Each concept taught includes an experiential element, either in the classroom or one of the two outdoor learning labs on campus, the school garden and school pond. This environment allows students to be actively involved in the science concepts taught and to build a stronger comprehension of the science standards. Participation in Science Fair in grades 4-6 also develops students' understanding of the scientific method and critical thinking skills.

The social studies curriculum includes history, culture, geography, economics and politics. The social studies curriculum comes alive in the classroom as students are often encouraged to learn about history and different cultures through creative, interactive approaches throughout all the grade levels.

Students at Our Lady of the Elms take part in art, music and dance classes on a regular basis as part of the Fine and Performing Arts curriculum. The art curriculum is focused on giving students the opportunity to work with a variety of mediums to creatively display their artistic talents. Students also learn about the historical and cultural aspects of art. During music classes, students sing, play instruments, learn the historical aspect of classical musicians and genres, and create their own music. In addition, students in grades 4-6 are offered the opportunity to learn an instrument and participate in beginning and advanced band.

Physical education and health are taught regularly and core curricular concepts include strength, healthy habits, anatomy and the body, and fitness. Students learn lifelong skills that will help them remain healthy, successful individuals.

Technology is integrated into all the curricular areas rather than in isolation in an effort to strengthen the students' technology skills in the content areas. The school utilizes Easy Tech's Learning.com technology curriculum, a series of mini-lessons and activities that complements the curriculum in the key content areas of reading, mathematics, science, social studies and language arts and is implemented in grades K-6.

While not state mandated, Spanish foreign language classes are offered at Our Lady of the Elms School to students in grades 1-6. Spanish classes provide the language foundation for students to advance to a

higher level in the middle and high school grades. Vocabulary, sentence structure, verb conjugation and ethnic heritage are the key components to the Spanish curriculum.

As a Catholic school, students participate in a daily religion class. The religion curriculum teaches students to put their faith into action through service learning and social justice experiences. Students participate in daily prayer, monthly mass, prayer services and service learning projects.

As is evident, high quality curriculum is offered throughout the subject areas at Our Lady of the Elms School, giving our students a comprehensive, faith-centered, quality education.

2. Reading/English:

The reading curriculum used at Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School could be described as a modified version of the Four Blocks method of teaching reading and writing. During a scheduled block of reading and language arts time, students in Kindergarten through third grade participate in word study or spelling, individualized reading groups, whole-class reading groups, and journaling and grammar practice. In fourth through sixth grade, the students continue with individualized and whole-class reading and transition into spelling and vocabulary practice, as well as essay writing. The reading material in the intermediate grades is focused on the genres found in literature. Our goal in reading and writing is to optimize the individual attention we give our students.

Individualized reading groupings allow the teachers to meet the individual reading needs of their students by targeting the books they read at their appropriate instructional level. This creates an environment where all the students are being challenged, despite their ability levels. Teachers conference individually with students, assess their reading and comprehension levels monthly, and adjust their reading levels as needed throughout the school year. Teachers meet more frequently with individual learners and additional assistance from the intervention specialist is available when needed. Whole-class reading sessions enable the teacher to teach the concepts of print, such as plot, sequence of events, character development, and more.

The reading process is complemented by the teaching and learning that occurs in language arts and writing. Students learn vocabulary words that accompany their reading books and do word study activities with the words that occur in their whole-class readings. Likewise, each week the students write from journal prompts and complete creative writing activities that stem from the reading material they are currently using in the classroom. The writing and reading block is seamlessly interwoven to give students the highest level of individualized attention possible.

3. Mathematics:

In the fall of 2009 the Elementary School switched textbooks from Math Central to the Everyday Mathematics series to teach the curriculum at Our Lady of the Elms. The Everyday Mathematics series requires large blocks of time for mathematics each day to accomplish daily lessons. One of the many highlights of this series is that through the course of a daily math class, up to six mathematical concepts will be touched on or taught in some fashion. This allows students to have constant practice and repetition of the skills taught until they have acquired mastery. It also shows how interconnected the different math concepts are when they are practiced often, rather than once per year. In addition, we have designed our teaching schedules to optimize teaching time in mathematics by blocking out an hour to an hour and a half of uninterrupted math instruction in all grade levels.

Each lesson in the Everyday Mathematics series has an enrichment lesson and a remedial lesson option to use when teaching and reinforcing a new concept. Teachers can tailor their instruction to meet the needs of each unique student, including those below and above grade level, in their classrooms. In addition, teachers use math centers occasionally to group students by ability level to give additional targeted

lessons at their specific level of instruction. It is important to note that ability groupings are fluid and change depending on the mathematical concept taught and the unique ability levels of the students regarding each concept.

Finally, we have added a component to our math program where students now must practice math computation in a timed setting. This has increased their math computation test scores by giving them daily and weekly practice in answering computation questions for a sustained period of time (one to five minutes). Therefore, the combination of the focus on math computation and a stronger textbook series taught in large blocks of time daily has helped increase our school's math scores to the Blue Ribbon level over the past five years.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The curricular area of science is of particular importance at Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School. For many years, much research has been done regarding the lack of interest in math and science fields by young women. As an all-girl school, Our Lady of the Elms emphasizes both math and science as important subject areas in which our young girls can and do experience success.

Science, in particular, is a subject area where we teach our students to strengthen their critical thinking, research and problem-solving skills, all of which will help make them strong women leaders in their chosen career fields. At Our Lady of the Elms school, we use a hands-on approach to teaching the state standards and science curriculum. We encourage our students to explore, investigate and experience the science concepts that are being taught. This lab work gives the students a concrete experience with the information they are learning in their content reading and allows the students to gain a better understanding of the concepts and curriculum. Additionally, we are fortunate to have an outdoor learning lab on our school campus which includes a large pond and a school garden both of which enable our students to observe concepts taught in the life science strand of the science curriculum.

Finally, students in fourth through sixth grade are asked to do additional work in the field of science by way of an annual science fair or invention convention. Students are asked to identify a problem, create a hypothesis, and perform experiments until their project is seen through to completion. Students are then asked to present their work in front of their peers, as well as local experts in science-related fields. This multi-faceted process strengthens our students' leadership skills, speaking abilities, and achievement in the area of science and beyond.

Interestingly, 33 percent of Our Lady of the Elms School graduates choose math or science-related fields for their careers. The national average for female graduates who chose a math or science major is three percent.

5. Instructional Methods:

As a small school serving all girls, the faculty at Our Lady of the Elms School has the ability to truly differentiate the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the learners in their classrooms. We know that girls learn best when they are able to be creative, use their interpersonal skills and take a leadership role in their learning. The teachers use this information when planning their lessons and tailor their teaching to the unique ability levels and intelligences in their classrooms. While the majority of students at Our Lady of the Elms School would be considered gifted by the most current definition, we do not have a gifted program at our school. In turn, we choose to adapt and differentiate our in-class curriculum to meet high, middle and low achieving students. Optimally, students are working at their own instructional level throughout their classes.

While this differentiation is most easily seen in reading, language arts and mathematics, the teachers across all subject and grade levels are able to give individual attention to students due to the small class

sizes found within our school. Cross-grade level reading groups formed by Kindergarten through third grade teachers are an excellent example of differentiation. In years past, students who were reading at a third grade level in Kindergarten were grouped with higher grade students and vice versa so that all the groupings were targeted at the instructional level of the child. This school year, the reading groups were not created in this way since our primary grade classes are reading at their grade levels. As a small school, we are able to make these types of decisions as a team to best serve the individual needs of our students.

Technology plays an important role in differentiation as the teachers are able to use the technological tools at their disposal to help modify and extend the learning in the classroom. Students often use the computers and Smart Boards in their classroom to express their creativity through the medium of technology. When researching, students use the tools available to them to share what they have learned with their classmates. Technology allows the gifted student the avenue to take their learning to the next level while at the same time helps a struggling student master the basics. Overall, differentiating the instruction has been the key to helping our school rise to the caliber of a Blue Ribbon school.

6. Professional Development:

The professional development provided for the whole faculty at Our Lady of the Elms Elementary School is focused on achieving the goals listed in our school's continuous improvement plan. As an accredited school through the Ohio Catholic School Accreditation Association, we are required to have a Catholic Identity goal and a Student Performance goal. Most recently, our Catholic Identity goal concentrated on strengthening our identity as a Dominican school. The Student Performance goal was centered on increasing student critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Therefore, professional development opportunities for our whole faculty pertained to understanding our Dominican heritage and the mission and vision of our school, as well as strengthening our ability to teach our students to think critically and solve problems.

The professional development offerings for these areas of focus helped support and enhance student learning. Specifically, the professional development sessions focused on the tenants of the Dominican tradition which focused on learning the four Dominican pillars: study, prayer, preaching, and community. Teachers learned to teach according to these pillars to help students enhance their study skills as a community of learners. In addition, learning about teaching critical thinking is directly aligned to the Ohio academic content standards not only in mathematics, but science, social studies and reading as well. While our focus was math, the teachers learned how to develop strong critical thinking skills in their students across the curriculum. Both of these goals and their subsequent professional development inservices helped elevate our students' standardized test scores to the Blue Ribbon level.

In addition to the all-faculty offerings, teachers at Our Lady of the Elms are also encouraged to seek individual professional development opportunities to help them achieve the individual goals that they listed on their most current Individual Professional Development plans. Teachers develop their goals to complement the school goals listed in our continuous school improvement plan. Once approved by the principal and local professional development committee, teachers are encouraged to attend more than 15 hours of professional development above and beyond the opportunities offered to the entire faculty.

7. School Leadership:

Our Lady of the Elms School uses a women's collaborative leadership model. Our Lady of the Elms School is a Pre-school through twelfth grade campus with two schools: Our Lady of the Elms Elementary and Pre-school and Our Lady of the Elms Middle and High School. Unlike other traditional Catholic schools with a President-Principal leadership model, the school's leadership structure is unique because it is run by a Chief Administrator's Council. There are three Chief Administrators: the Executive Director of Operations, the High School and Middle School Principal and the Pre-school and Elementary School Principal. Collectively, the chief administrators run the daily operations of the school. In addition, Our Lady of the Elms School has a Board of Trustees, consisting of 12-20 individuals, which sets the policies

and procedures of the school, as well as evaluates the chief administrators. As an all-girls school, it is important that our students have a strong example of women's leadership. The school's leadership model exemplifies the way women leaders interact and collaborate to make the best decisions for the entire organization.

Every three years, a strategic plan is developed in conjunction with key stakeholders for the purpose of ensuring improved student achievement and continued Dominican tradition. Both Board members and Chief Administrators are responsible for the oversight and implementation of the strategic plan.

In particular, the role of the principal, in addition to the responsibilities as a chief administrator, is to be the educational and spiritual leader for the building. The principal evaluates staff members, ensures that curriculum is current and properly taught, and maintains the licensed and accredited status of the school.

Likewise, the principal is a key communicator between parents, students, teachers, board members and community members.

The roles and responsibilities of the chief administrators, including the principal, and the members of the Board of Trustees are focused on maintaining high levels of student achievement as all decisions are made in light of the mission of our school to *educate girls and young women to listen openly, evaluate wisely, speak bravely, lead justly and serve compassionately.*

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

1. Private school association: Catholic

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3) status? Yes

3. What are the 2011-2012 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<u>\$7000</u>	<u>\$7000</u>	<u>\$7000</u>	<u>\$7000</u>	<u>\$7000</u>	<u>\$7000</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$7000</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</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) \$10000

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1406

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?
2%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 24%

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: Iowa Tests of
Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-
2002/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing
Company

Scores reported as:
Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	81	70	75	70	74
Number of students tested	18	16	22	14	20
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

12PV113

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: Iowa Tests of
Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-
2001/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing
Company

Scores reported as:
Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	92	80	79	76	79
Number of students tested	18	16	22	14	20
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: Iowa Tests of
Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-
2002/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing
Company

Scores reported as:
Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	80	85	69	73	80
Number of students tested	10	14	13	26	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: Iowa Tests of
Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-
2002/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing
Company

Scores reported as:
Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	80	86	83	79	88
Number of students tested	10	14	13	26	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: Iowa Tests of
Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-
2002/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing
Company

Scores reported as:
Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	89	76	69	83	75
Number of students tested	14	13	25	18	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

12PV113

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: Iowa Tests of
Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-
2002/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing
Company

Scores reported as:
Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	90	83	80	87	78
Number of students tested	14	13	25	18	17
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: Iowa Tests of
Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-
2001/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing
Company

Scores reported as:
Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	71	71	72	70	68
Number of students tested	13	23	19	20	14
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

12PV113

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/2001-2002/Form C/2008

Publisher: Riverside Publishing Company

Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Feb	Mar	Mar	Feb	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	88	83	88	84	81
Number of students tested	13	23	19	20	14
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
Test switched from Form A/2001-2002 copyright to Form C/2008 copyright in testing beginning in February 2008					

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