

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12PV116

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

12PV116

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: 8
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	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	87	100	187
3	0	0	0		10	92	92	184
4	0	0	0		11	67	85	152
5	0	0	0		12	87	86	173
Total in Applying School:								696

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
3 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
94 % White
0 % 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.	10
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	2
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	12
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	684
(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: 1%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 9

Number of non-English languages represented: 9

Specify non-English languages:

Chinese, Czech, Danish, Uzbek, Tajik, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Slovak

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4%
 Total number of students who qualify: 28

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.

We applied for e-rate funding last year, and their review of our financial aid applicants showed a 4% free and reduced lunch population.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 1%
 Total number of students served: 6

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>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</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>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>34</u>	<u>9</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>17</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>62</u>	<u>12</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: 15:1

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	97%	97%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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:	<u>161</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>98%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>2%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

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?

V.J. and Angela Skutt Catholic High School is located in Omaha, Nebraska and was founded in 1993 as an Archdiocesan, coeducational, college-preparatory school. The school is comprised of grades nine through twelve. Skutt Catholic was constructed to meet the needs of the growing population on the western edge of Omaha. The mission of Skutt Catholic High School is to “form and educate young men and women to become Christian leaders who empower others, promote justice, and initiate change.” We are preparing students to accept and meet the challenges of an evolving global society.

Skutt Catholic High School is not the largest private school in the state. We are also among the youngest of all schools, both public and private. To this end, we believe our strengths and accomplishments, given our size and age, are all the more impressive. Skutt Catholic High School has developed the most comprehensive college-preparatory curriculum, including more fine and performing art courses, of any private school in the state. With over 150 courses, including 14 dual-enrollment courses and 13 Advanced Placement courses, students have access to a myriad of opportunities to prepare themselves for post-secondary studies. In the past three years, 100% of graduates have pursued post-secondary education. Nearly 70% of staff has earned a Master’s degree compared to the state average of 46%. In recent years, the average composite ACT score for the top half of graduating seniors has been over a 28. The average composite score for the top quarter has been over 30. These scores rival or exceed those of the smaller private schools around us that limit enrollment to only a select group of students.

Skutt Catholic students have been recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Program every year since the school’s inception, including thirty six students in the past six years. Skutt Catholic is one of only two private schools in the state to have multiple students named to the Omaha World Herald All-Metro and All-State Academic teams in the past five years. Over 90% of our students participate in one or more extra-curricular activities. Skutt Catholic students volunteered over 14,000 hours to the community last year, and the school has earned more extracurricular state championships in the past seven years than any other high school in Nebraska, public or private. All of these accomplishments, and many more, have been achieved while offering the lowest tuition rate of all the college-preparatory accredited Catholic schools in the state.

What truly makes our school worthy of Blue Ribbon status is the fact that all of our accomplishments are done so with a more universal admissions process than most other private schools. In the past 8 years, Skutt Catholic has denied admission to less than 1% of all applicants. Our quality of education is afforded to many levels of students, not just those who score the highest on the entrance exam. As an “Archdiocesan” Catholic high school, we embrace our moral obligation and Catholic mission to provide a “Universal” educational experience for students of many ability levels. Our ACT data includes those students on Individual Education Plans, 504 Plans, and the many more that struggle with a variety of learning issues. We have an extensive program to work with these students who need extra academic support within our rigorous college-preparatory environment.

We do not have the luxury of having 100+ years of tradition like our competitors. We do not have the advantage of having a donor base that extends through generations. We do not have the benefit of enrolling children of alumni like the schools around us given the age of our alumni. We may be a young school at 19 years of age, but traditions have taken root, and our reputation in Nebraska has quickly been solidified. Our enrollment has increased 12.3% in the past decade, and our tuition increase percentage has dropped all but one year in the past seven. These are trends not common among private schools nationwide. Although we are proud of our success in educating young women and men, there is a culture in this school community to continually hold ourselves to an ever increasing standard of excellence.

1. Assessment Results:

A. Skutt Catholic utilizes the ACT battery as its primary source of standardized assessment. The PLAN is annually administered to all 9th and 10th grade students, and all students are required to take the ACT to earn graduation. Students consistently outpace state and national norms, as is the school's expectation.

Ninth grade PLAN result trends show our freshmen consistently average nearly 2.0 points above tenth grade national norms in Reading and Math. Annual tenth grade PLAN results speak to the value of Skutt Catholic's curriculum as our sophomore classes average 2.5 (Math) and 3.0 (Reading) points above their nationwide tenth grade peers. The school's 11th and 12th grade ACT results indicate Skutt Catholic students continue to benefit tremendously from the school's rigorous curriculum as Reading scores consistently outpace national norms by 3.5 points, while Math scores increase to 3.0 points above national marks. Data indicates Skutt Catholic students enter the school well-prepared for high school level learning, and they exit the school even more prepared for college level learning. Ensuring all students are college-ready is one of our standards of excellence as a school, and data proves Skutt Catholic students are consistently better prepared for college level learning than their peers.

B. Five year ACT data trends indicate Skutt Catholic student performance has steadily increased in both Reading and Math.

Reading scores in three of the previous five graduating classes have been in the mid-24 range, while two of the last three classes have earned a 25.0 average score. When tracking trends back another five years, student Reading scores have increased by one point, from 24.0 to 25.0. Many factors have been critical to the increase in student performance. The Language Arts curriculum has been scrutinized by local university professors, specifically the critical reading and writing components of the curriculum. The school improvement process has engaged the Language Arts Department in a thorough curriculum mapping and needs assessment process. The results of this process have included replacing low-level reading selections as well as restructuring the writing curriculum. Beyond the Language Arts Department, Skutt Catholic's curriculum requires students to engage challenging texts in all disciplines. Several departments (such as Social Studies, Theology, Fine Arts, and World Language) have included the study of novels and other great works of literature into the core curriculum. This interface with literature across the curriculum engenders a love of reading within our students and helps them develop a high aptitude for critical thought. Textbooks and other written resources are selected carefully to ensure students have access to, but are also challenged by, course materials. Capstone research projects have been developed at each grade level that lead students well beyond surface understanding of course materials into high levels of interpretation, analysis and synthesis.

The data table exhibits solid growth in Math performance as well. Although Math scores experienced a slight dip in 2010, Skutt Catholic graduates over the last five years have average Math scores of just over 23.6, a 1.0 point increase over performance averages five years prior. The class of 2011's average Math score of 24.3 was the highest in school history. Skutt Catholic looks forward to annually hitting or exceeding this new, and very high, bar of performance. A major effort to improve students' core Math skills and retention rates is the most significant factor contributing to increased performance. The Math Department developed and implemented "Skills Tests" which require each and every Skutt Catholic student to demonstrate mastery of core Math skills throughout their high school career. The Department's conjecture, that ensuring mastery of basic Math skills is critical to maximizing each student's ability to grasp high levels of Math learning, has proven to be true. With an increasingly solid foundation in core Math skills, Skutt Catholic has experienced an increase in students pursuing four or more years of Math credit. The rate of interest and participation in Math-oriented extra-curricular activities such as Engineering and Robotics has also been on the rise.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Skutt Catholic utilizes multiple assessment measures across the curriculum in order to analyze and improve student and school performance. All incoming 9th grade students take the STS High School Placement Exam during the spring of their 8th grade year. Data from this test is vital to placing students in proper course levels, as well as identifying students who are significantly behind grade level in core skills such as reading, math and critical thinking. All Skutt Catholic 9th and 10th grade students take the PLAN test. In addition, all 10th and 11th grade students take the PSAT. Composite and disaggregated data from these developmental assessments is analyzed by school leadership for significant performance trends. Individual student data is reviewed by the school's Guidance and Academic Support staff in order to further identify all students' areas of strength and need. Recent efforts have been made to place itemized data in the hands of Department Chairs in order to tie student performance back to the curriculum in a targeted fashion. All student performance measures are provided directly to students and parents. The standardized assessment program concludes with the ACT college entrance exam. All Skutt Catholic students take the exam as a graduation requirement (students choosing to take the SAT in lieu of the ACT are allowed to do so). In a similar fashion as noted above, performance data from this summative assessment is distributed to a broad base of core stakeholders.

The source of assessment data is not limited to national standardized tests. The Archdiocese of Omaha provides all schools under its supervision with curriculum requirements and accompanying criterion-based assessments. Such assessments are annually reviewed by classroom teachers, Department Chairs, school leadership and Archdiocesan supervisors in order to guarantee all students are achieving adequate proficiency levels. Skutt Catholic students regularly exhibit mastery levels of performance. At the classroom level, the school has developed a number of capstone assessments tied directly to the school's Mission and Vision which serve as significant markers of student achievement and school performance. Additionally, the school's veteran and highly trained faculty provides students with a broad array of formative and summative assessments to measure student performance and provide targeted instruction.

Although data consistently proves Skutt Catholic students perform at the highest levels in the State of Nebraska and are among the top nationally, the many layers of the school's system of assessment continue to push the school toward specific improvement efforts. Entrance exam and PLAN data, coupled with GPA and course grades prompted the school to revise its Academic Support program, including a total restructuring of the guided study hall program and the addition of a full-time support instructor to coordinate efforts to enhance student performance. ACT scores that were not mirroring Reading levels led to minor restructuring of both entry-level and advanced Math offerings. As noted earlier within this application, a series of tests to measure students' understanding and retention of core math skills was also implemented to ensure high quality performance. Lower than expected ACT Writing scores motivated the development of a school-wide writing rubric. Additionally, alignment of writing standards across the curriculum is currently being scrutinized for possible revision.

Skutt Catholic communicates student performance achievements and awards (National Merit Scholar, Nebraska All-Academic Honors, college/university scholarships, school Honor Roll) to the wider community through a variety of mediums including local advertisements, the school website, the annual report, the monthly newsletter, global emails and signage throughout the school's building and grounds. As a private school, Skutt Catholic realizes the vital importance of sharing the school's many academic successes with the school family and the community at large. If the school cannot annually prove its ability to advance all students academically then it will soon cease to exist. The community thrives on this moral imperative to advance student learning, which all schools should hold, and works diligently to ensure ongoing progress and success.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Skutt Catholic High School has a strong relationship with Creighton University in Omaha. Creighton offers many programs, including a solid teacher preparation program, that are geared towards sharing

strategies to improve upon the quality of elementary and secondary education. Two administrators from Skutt Catholic have served on Creighton's Secondary Education Advisory Board over the past five years offering input on the programs that Creighton disseminates to schools. One administrator teaches a post-graduate level course at Creighton on best practices for student discipline in a secondary school setting. Various Skutt Catholic teachers and administrators have presented at Creighton University events regarding best practices in the classroom and school.

Beyond the healthy connection to the collegiate level, regularly scheduled all-school administrator meetings, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Omaha, bring all Catholic school principals together to share lessons learned in our schools. Skutt Catholic is a regular participant in these meetings. Teachers and staff have also visited other area schools to discuss practices and train educators in other buildings on methods successfully employed in our school. Over the past decade, Skutt Catholic High School has served as the host school for the Archdiocese's annual educator Fall Conference more than any other school in the state. The Fall Conference at Skutt Catholic brings more than a 1000 educators who participate in a great variety of school related workshops. The annual conference allows educators to share the lessons they have learned in their schools, brainstorm new ideas, and make new connections. Our commitment to hosting this major educational conference more than any other school is evidence of our firm dedication to share lessons learned with other educators.

Throughout most years, we have had staff members present at state and national conventions as well. Everything from technology, to Catholic Identity, to Development and Enrollment have been topics of conversation that our staff members have presented to fellow educators. As was previously shared, our staff is well educated with nearly 70% having already attained a master's degree. There is a culture within the school that encourages professional growth. This translates into a dedicated and talented staff that is prepared to help share what they know with other educators and schools.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Skutt Catholic believes it is a model school regarding its consistent ability to positively engage a broad base of families and the community at large. School and student performance improvement efforts are guided by the three-year Strategic Plan. The development of each Strategic Plan begins with the collection of feedback from a large sample of community stakeholders. Working in an advisory role to the President of the School, the Board of Directors, comprised of parents, alumni, staff and key community leaders, shapes the development of each Strategic Plan and guarantees its implementation. Parent advocacy groups in the areas of academics, the arts, and extra-curricular activities provide insight and guidance to school improvement efforts and are critical to the school maintaining proper balance in allocating resources necessary to educate the whole person. Individual meetings with stakeholders critical to targeted giving efforts motivate additional support and community partnerships. Multiple school publications, such as local advertisements, the school website, targeted mailings and global emails, serve to inform and mobilize the wider population of Skutt Catholic families and the community at large.

At the local level, the school has established an "open door" policy of communication. Parent and student portals into the JMC student/course management system allow these key stakeholders to regularly track course progress and student performance. Parents and students are encouraged to communicate directly and regularly with teachers, counselors, and coaches in order to provide each student with the most productive and positive learning experience possible. It is a school-wide expectation that all parent and student communications will be replied to within 24 hours. Annual grade-level parent meetings provide further communication and support as families manage realities from transitioning into high school, to personal-social issues such as bullying and substance abuse, to the college application process. Highly attended bi-annual Parent-Teacher conferences cement the strong partnerships between home and school in working toward student success.

Success in all areas of learning is truly core to the Skutt Catholic climate and culture. School and community stakeholders actively partner with the school to advance this tradition of excellence. The community expects the school will exhibit even stronger stakeholder bonds and higher levels of student achievement in the next 5-10 years.

1. Curriculum:

Skutt Catholic is a college preparatory high school and is accredited as such by the international school accreditation agency, AdvancED. However, as part of the Mission of the school and the Archdiocese of Omaha, Skutt Catholic does all it can to provide its high level education to students with a wide range of academic abilities. The school's established curriculum is therefore structured to provide comprehensive college preparation to students with varying interests and abilities.

As clearly defined in Skutt Catholic's annual Program of Studies, minimum graduation requirements go well beyond those of local school districts. Skutt Catholic requires many additional credits of study than state operated schools, but with the most extensive course offerings of any private school in the state, students have little difficulty pursuing credits/courses of interest. An additional year of study for all students in core subjects such as math and science advance student achievement and have helped lead many graduates into fields such as architecture, engineering, medicine and scientific research. Skutt Catholic students are also required to complete two full years of study in a single foreign language (French, Spanish, or German), and the vast majority of our students complete a full four years of coursework in this discipline. V.J. and Angela Skutt Catholic High School is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements. Although fine arts, language arts, physical education/health, social studies and technology requirements mirror those of state schools, Skutt Catholic's requirement of 10 semesters of elective study leads students back to these core disciplines to deepen knowledge and appreciation of each subject matter. This broad elective requirement also allows students to explore their own gifts and interests by taking courses such as Computer Aided Drafting, Guitar, Piano, TV and Film Production, Philosophy, Competitive Speech and Show Choir.

Four full years of required Theology studies to advance the Mission of the school compliment the strong core curriculum engaged by all students. In addition, Skutt Catholic is unique in its belief that attributes of personal character and citizenship are skills that can be learned and mastered. In response to this belief, the school established the Character Skills program, and each Skutt Catholic student must complete one full year of Character Skills prior to graduation.

In order to meet students' academic needs the school offers both a College Preparatory and Honors/AP program. Although most students take courses within both levels, a growing number of Skutt Catholic students complete their coursework entirely within the Honors/AP curriculum, including Dual Enrollment classes. Skutt Catholic students can enter their next level of study with nearly two full years of college credit. The College Preparatory program consistently produces 100% graduation rates and 98%-99% post-secondary enrollment rates, the majority being in four-year colleges/universities. Such data confirms the academic program is accessible to all students. Yet, the school understands many students will need additional support in order to succeed at Skutt Catholic. Guidance and Academic Support services provide identified students with individualized learning plans, guided-study opportunities, and peer and professional tutoring, among many other modifications and supports.

Skutt Catholic also prepares students for life beyond the books. Career planning has been embedded into the core curriculum. Guidance services provide all students with comprehensive career planning via the Nebraska Career Connections program. The EQUIP internship program partners students with experts in their areas of interest. Job-seeking skills such as resume building are taught to all students. In addition, several core courses require all students to explore their career interests and abilities and to network with established professionals within the community. These experiences, when coupled with the rigorous yet accessible academic program, exhibits Skutt Catholic's curriculum supports college and career readiness to a very high degree.

2. Reading/English:

The English curriculum consists of eleven courses with much emphasis on reading a variety of literary pieces, particularly within the four core courses students are required to take. Students of all abilities will read selections from ancient, classic, medieval, Renaissance, romantic, modern, and contemporary writers. In addition, students will devote considerable time to the critical evaluation of primary and secondary sources as well as important works of literature. Special emphasis is given to develop students' historical and analytical essay writing skills along with rigorous reading and note taking skills.

In addition to the core courses, students often actively pursue one of the many elective courses including coursework in AP Literature and Composition or AP Language and Composition. The AP coursework engages students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of rhetorical contexts and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. Students above grade level in reading and language are placed within the honors curriculum, are held to a more rigorous standard, and often elect additional elective courses in English to round out their course of study.

At Skutt Catholic, students who are emerging readers have a variety of resources to assist them in improving their vocabulary and comprehension skills. Our greatest strength in addressing this issue is the willingness of teachers to provide the following essentials on a daily basis: guided oral reading, fluency development, comprehension skills, vocabulary work and sharing of the love of reading. As well, SC faculty offer one-on-one assistance outside of class providing the opportunity for privacy while a student accepts immediate correction while reading aloud, working on phonics and comprehension strategies. We also provide a multitude of hands-on experiences that tap into a variety of learning modalities/multiple intelligences that assist students in the oral processing of language. These experiences often assist in the connection between the hearing of sounds and the reading of sounds (phonological processing). Peer tutoring is also available through current members of The National Honor Society. These peer tutors assist fellow classmates in reading aloud and working through vocabulary usage.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics department aspires for all students to analyze situations, formulate logical solutions, appreciate the power of mathematics, and demonstrate confidence in the use of mathematics. The staff encourages students to meet the expectations set by the individual teachers to create an effective learning environment.

Students of all grade levels have access to 14 different mathematics courses within the department. For students above grade level, a more rigorous course curriculum, including AP coursework, is frequently encouraged. Skutt Catholic offers two levels of AP Calculus. In AP Calculus I, students cover all of the college board's AB curriculum and some parts of the BC curriculum. Seniors that have taken AP Calculus I as juniors usually take AP Calculus II, which covers the remaining topics from the BC curriculum and some topics usually found in a third semester college calculus course. Since the spring of 2000, 84% of students taking the AP Calculus exam (AB or BC) have earned a score of 3, 4, or 5. We also note that our breakdown of male/female participation in AP classes and corresponding test scores is very well balanced.

Implemented in the fall of 2008, our school's uniquely created "Skills Tests" are required of all students, but they certainly aid those students who perform below grade level. These tests provide each student with the opportunity to review material covered in previous math courses. Each student is required to pass a series of Skills Test every semester, with 80% competency, before receiving credit for their current class. Based on internal data, teachers believe that these Skills Tests better prepare students for new material, help students with the retention of material from previous courses, and assist students in their preparation for future standardized tests (i.e. ACT, PSAT, SAT). With most students having experienced three years of these review oriented tests, we note the 1.2 point improvement in our average ACT math

scores last year. We give due credit to these “Skill Tests” and the instructional methods teachers employ to review material from earlier years of a student’s math curriculum.

In addition to peer tutoring in all subjects and help from the classroom teacher, we also have a near-full time math tutor on campus at no charge to families. The tutor volunteers 30-40 hours a week and has been doing so for the past seven years.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Skutt Catholic High School offers a unique freshman entry level course that is directly related to the mission of the school. The purposes and content of this course form much of the philosophical background of the official Mission Statement for the school. Known as ***Character Skills***, the year-long course provides students with a direct teaching experience in three sets of skills, namely, 1) critical thinking, 2) self discipline and 3) religious practice. The decision to offer this course was one of the first made as Catholic educators began formulating the curriculum offerings and focus of the new school which would open in 1993.

The educators of V.J. and Angela Skutt Catholic High School believe that the school has the unique power to strengthen and teach those fundamental character traits which form the basis of a strong Christian identity. They believe that the school must identify, teach, and model these skills in order that students can learn them, practice them, and make them their own. These skills and patterns of behavior enable individuals to govern their lives with dignity, purpose, and a reasonable chance of success. They empower individuals to show responsibility and accept accountability for their actions, and to live according to the values of a religious heritage. The ***Character Skills*** course integrates select features of two specific programs in character development: the *Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment Program* by the Israeli cognitive psychologist Reuven Feuerstein (for critical thinking skills) and the *Discipline With Purpose Program* by Barbara Vasiloff and Paula Lenz (for self-discipline skills). Religious practice skills, as articulated by Michael Carotta and others, are interspersed throughout the year of studies. This ***Character Skills*** course represents a very significant investment of time and resources in order to ensure that Skutt Catholic High School graduates fulfill the school’s mission to “empower others, promote justice and initiate change.”

5. Instructional Methods:

Skutt Catholic teachers utilize a wide array of instructional best practices such as: whole group instruction, small group instruction, one on one instruction, cooperative learning , and student-directed learning. Our faculty members seek opportunities to bring outside perspectives into the classroom and extend learning through multi-media resources, guest presentations and field trips, which compliment traditional methods of instruction.

Our school has a rich tradition of providing students with opportunities to engage higher order thinking skills. Embedded into the curriculum are many capstone projects and learning opportunities which require students to synthesize and apply their learning. From the 9th grade Hero's project, to the 10th grade Greek/Roman Festival, to the 11th grade American Frontier Rendezvous experience and Optics project, to the 12th grade Mock Congressional Hearings and Sr. Studies Social Justice project, Skutt Catholic students are blessed with diverse opportunities to personally engage higher order thinking skills.

Skutt Catholic stakeholders consistently report great satisfaction with the school's learning resources, as both a comprehensive media collection and up to date computer technologies are available to students and teachers on a daily basis. The school’s student/course management system is accessible to individual students and families via student and parent online portals. The daily flow of information through this channel tremendously supports student learning and establishes high levels of accountability. Efforts to provide SMART Board and Notebook technologies within classrooms have been well-received and have

aided teacher's abilities to engage students' multiple learning styles. The school is also preparing itself for the integration of personal wireless devices into the classroom. The school's developing Technology Plan will ensure Skutt Catholic's educational technology resources remain at the cutting edge for many years to come.

Skutt Catholic provides high levels of support for students with needs, especially when considering its college preparatory status. Although limited in its ability to educate students with severe special needs, the school annually enrolls students with mild learning disabilities and health issues, below grade-level performance, and behavioral issues, something that does set us apart from many other private schools. The school's Guidance counselors provide direct attention to identify students who need modifications and provide families with deep levels of support from the 9th grade registration process through graduation. Working closely with students, parents and teachers; school Guidance counselors ensure proper course placement and learning modifications, from preferential seating, to additional learning resources, to extended testing and other forms of modified assessment. Counselors also help place students into the Academic Support and/or Tutoring programs. The Academic Support program aids students through guided Success Study Halls. The Academic Support instructor also serves as a regular conduit of information between teachers - students - and parents to support student learning and to provide daily accountability. The tutoring program provides an additional level of guided study via peer tutoring and a professional math tutor who volunteers his services to the school annually. Additionally, Administration, Guidance and Academic Support staff meet several times each semester as a Student Assistance Team in order to further identify and support students with special needs. Through this pyramid of support, Skutt Catholic is fully committed, as a moral imperative, to support students with special needs in order to ensure their full participation in all aspects of the school's educational program. Our 100% annual graduation rate is a testament to this commitment.

6. Professional Development:

Skutt Catholic High School sets a high priority on teacher professional development. We believe it is the key to improving student instruction and maintaining a professional learning community. The professional development program is based on accomplishing our mission, increasing expertise in individual subject areas, and keeping abreast of technological advancement. Teachers are provided encouragement and financial support in order to take advantage of available opportunities for growth and enrichment. Contract days are set aside annually for professional development including the extensive Professional Learning Community [PLC] structure that has been implemented at the school. All employees, from the President to the maintenance staff, are included within the PLC process for school improvement and staff development.

Creighton University and Skutt Catholic have entered into an agreement that provides an opportunity for teachers to pursue Master's Degrees at little to no cost in their subject area or in an area that will provide them with a better understanding of diverse cultures and teaching methods. As a result, nearly 70% of Skutt's educators hold a Masters degree. The state average for educators with a Masters degree is 46%. Teachers have attended National Conferences in Mathematics, Foreign Language, Science, Art, History, English, Theology, Technology, and Guidance. Faculty members and administrators have traveled all over the country and to Canada in an effort to attend the best workshops/conferences available. Participating faculty members return from these trips and share their experience and knowledge with the entire staff at faculty meetings. A healthy professional development budget is provided each year to help support such learning experiences for faculty.

To support our Catholic mission, teachers annually attend sessions provided by the Omaha Archdiocese, entitled Foundations of Faith. These sessions provide information to keep teachers abreast of current Catholic teachings, to better understand and respond to the inquiries of their students, and to nurture their own individual faith journey. While it is difficult to measure the exact impact each opportunity has had on student achievement, we know that our students leave Skutt Catholic with a knowledge and application of life skills that will benefit, not only themselves, but all those with whom they live and work.

7. School Leadership:

Skutt Catholic High School has been operating with a typical “Head of School” model the past six years despite the title of the current leader being President/Principal. In 2006, the Archbishop of Omaha promoted the Principal to the President role. Given the administrative support already present on staff, the President decided not to hire a Principal and instead serve in both capacities. Currently, the President/Principal operates with two Assistant Principals and one Activities Director. The school’s Admissions Director, VP of Finance, VP of Advancement, Campus Minister, Chaplain, and Guidance Director round out the administrative team. The President/Principal spends a good portion of his time on the fundraising, vision/mission, and business operation of the school. One assistant principal is responsible for all “Dean of Student” issues and a second is responsible for much of the academic program.

The administrative team makes it a point to empower the faculty and staff such that they have a clear leadership role in much of the decision making process. The frequent all-staff PLC meetings and department head meetings, along with a PLC steering committee, comprised of one assistant principal and eleven teachers, allow staff to advance ideas to improve the school’s curriculum/program. In recent years, the staff has been involved with many changes, both small and large. Examples include the re-branding of the school image/look, creation of new student awards, implementation of a revised faculty evaluation process, restructuring of the student advisory board, creation of course curriculum mapping and scope & sequence, creating an academic department “needs assessment,” and the creation of a longitudinal database tracking development and performance indicators for each student from entrance exams through graduation.

Most of the aforementioned activities directly relate to ensuring that resources focus on student achievement. In addition to recently hiring a full-time resource teacher to assist students who struggle, all of our combined efforts are showing extremely positive results in student performance. At the end of the most recent quarter, we noted 80 students who were earning significantly higher GPA’s versus their most recent cumulative average. We also note that last year’s graduates earned the highest composite ACT average in the school’s history. We firmly believe all of the curricular and programmatic changes made in recent years, in unison with solid teaching, are at the root of increased student performance on both internal assessments as well as national standardized testing.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

12PV116

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>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$8025</u>	<u>\$8125</u>	<u>\$8225</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$8335</u>	<u>\$</u>				
12th	Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$9458

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$3285

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? 27%

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 12

Test: ACT

Edition/Publication Year: 2011 Publisher: ACT Scores reported as: Scaled scores

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	24	23	24	23	24
Number of students tested	165	166	183	192	173
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
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:					
Spoke with Joe McTighe and John Parsons about the fact that the software program is rounding the scores above. Scores are as follows: 10/11 - 24.3, 09/10 - 23.1, 08/09 - 23.6, 07/08 - 23.2, 06/07 - 23.9 All subgroups are less than 10 for this class. The school does not participate in state testing.					

12PV116

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 12

Test: ACT

Edition/Publication Year: 2011 Publisher: ACT Scores reported as: Scaled scores

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun	Jun
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	25	24	25	24	25
Number of students tested	165	166	183	192	173
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
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:					
Spoke with Joe McTighe and John Parsons about the fact that the software program is rounding scores versus keeping the actual scores as they are shown on the verification report. Scores are as follows: 10/11 - 25.0, 09/10 - 24.2, 08/09 - 25.0, 07/08 - 24.4, and 06/07 - 24.8 All subgroups are less than 10 for this class. The school does not participate in state testing.					

12PV116