

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12PV125

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

12PV125

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: 1
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	1	5	6		6	13	14	27
K	16	7	23		7	5	11	16
1	9	14	23		8	7	9	16
2	6	3	9		9	0	0	0
3	14	8	22		10	0	0	0
4	7	22	29		11	0	0	0
5	8	19	27		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								198

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
3 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
92 % White
3 % 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: 3%

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.	4
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	1
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	5
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	198
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.03
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	3

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: 0%
 Total number of students who qualify: 0

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

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

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>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>1</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>2</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>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total number	<u>18</u>	<u>13</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: 13:1

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	96%	97%	96%	96%	95%
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 Mercy School, once known as Our Lady of Mercy Country Day School, has weathered a plethora of change. The school was founded in 1954 as a training school for the Diocesan Teachers College. The early 1960s ushered in a new facility only to see the training school dissolve in the late 1960s. It survived and thrived as this Mercy-sponsored school stood alone as the only Catholic elementary school on the East Shoreline, a most enviable location. In 1987 Our Lady of Mercy Country Day School became incorporated and renamed Our Lady of Mercy School and a Board of Trustees replaced the Advisory Board. A notable event took place in 1992. OLM became the first private Catholic elementary school to be accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Excellence was rewarded. The Mercy Sisters owned and operated all facets of the school until 1997 when they relinquished active, daily operation of the school and chose a lay principal. By 2004 the Mercy Sisters faced severe fiscal challenges. Rather than close the school, the Archbishop of Hartford intervened and it was agreed that Our Lady of Mercy School would become an Archdiocesan school. Presently, St. Margaret Parish in Madison and St. George Parish in Guilford are fiscally responsible for the school.

As Our Lady of Mercy School approaches her 60th Anniversary in 2014, the ebb and flow of governance displays a unique response to the resilient nature and resolve of the school community. The focus of the school's *mission to educate the child to be Christ in the world*, and the focus on academic excellence has remained steadfast and a proud legacy is entrusted to the present generation.

Today there is a main campus and an Early Childhood Center in St. Margaret's Parish Center. In 2011, an Apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was appointed as principal. OLM continues to embrace the past and dream and envision a rich future. All want the best for OLM. Alumni parents serve as good and faithful stewards as they and retired teachers return to volunteer with Mock Trial, aides, and library assistants. Parents and alumni willingly serve on the School Board and entrust their children to OLM. Parents volunteer as coaches, teacher assistants, carpenters, technology gurus and lead community outreach and enrichment programs. The present faculty partner with the room parents for planning, particularly field trips as co-curricular enhancement as they continue to focus on academics to close any achievement gaps ascertained from teacher level meetings.

The faculty selects and provides a well-balanced program, nurturing and guiding the students to maintain standards of excellence as evidenced in the 2011 ITBS Grade Equivalent Scores.

This school, that almost closed her doors, boldly teaches critical thinking, creative instruction, and balances work, play/ physical education, and prayer while promoting music, art, instrumental music, Spanish, French and Technology.

Bright, motivated students, a competent faculty, interested and involved parents and dedicated leadership are the keys to Our Lady of Mercy School all under the capable direction of the pastors who serve as Chief Operating Officers of the school. Our Lady of Mercy School "prepares students to embrace leadership roles in the church and community by promoting academic excellence and Catholic values in all aspects of the educational process."

Traditions such as the Christmas Pageant, performed by Pre-K3 through Grade 8 students, is directed and staged by the faculty. There are ample opportunities for public speaking and the integration of history, literature, the arts and community outreach in Veterans Day, First Friday liturgies, weekly prayer services, and a Medieval Banquet program.

Our Lady of Mercy School remains in an enviable position of being an attractive, accessible and affordable school. The majority of students live in Madison and Guilford, but OLM presently enrolls students from about 4-6 surrounding towns even with limited or non-existent bus service.

OLM students are accepted at many competitive private high schools and are often placed in accelerated or level one honor classes. Several students have received four-year scholarships at private high schools in and out of Connecticut based on overall academic excellence.

The students have won local and state awards in science, inventions, social studies and spelling. The eighth grade teacher trains the students for the annual State Mock Trial Competition. The state championship has been bestowed on Our Lady of Mercy students in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2nd place was awarded in 2011. As a third grader, a member of the Class of 2012 was asked to speak to appear before the U.S. Congress in DC to address "peanut allergies and peanuts on airplanes." Our Lady of Mercy students are prepared in and out of the classroom to stand and deliver. Students who begin here can go anywhere!

1. Assessment Results:

A.

The Office of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Hartford requires the administration of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in early March to assess basic knowledge of skills for students in grades three through seven. *The ITBS is a nationally-normed series of assessments for the disciplines of mathematics (concepts/estimation, problem solving and data interpretation and math computation), reading (comprehension and vocabulary), language arts (spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage and expression), sources of information (maps and diagrams, reference materials), as well as science, and social studies. In third grade, separate subtests are administered that assess students' listening skills and word analysis abilities. In fifth and seventh grade, students additionally take the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) assessing thinking skills (verbal, quantitative and nonverbal).* Students in grades three through eight have demonstrated a positive trend of improved academic performance over the past five years in curriculum areas of reading and mathematics.

The percentile rank for 2011 of the average stanine scores of the national school norms for reading was as follows: grade 3 - 94%; grade 4 - 92%; grade 5 - 97%; grade 6 - 99%; grade 7 - 97%.

The percentile rank of the average stanine scores of the national school norms for mathematics was as follows: grade 3 - 95%; grade 4 - 95%; grade 5 - 95%; grade 6 - 96%; grade 7 - 89%.

Students with 504 plans receive accommodations and modifications as identified on their educational plans. For the past five years, less than ten students have 504 Plans and therefore no subgroup scores are reported.

Over the last five years, and reviewing the percentile rankings for 2010 and 2011, the students are consistent in scoring above the 90th percentile. The faculty assesses individual student performance, uses and analyzes the data, tailoring the program to meet expectations and create an effective learning environment over time.

B.

Using the performance trends found in the data tables, the administration and faculty identified students who needed improvement in reading and mathematics. Our Lady of Mercy School students experienced excellent results as reflected in the following examples of national percentile ranking in the ITBS.

The classroom teacher assessed student needs presented at each grade level. In part, teacher collaboration, guided by data input and standardized test scores closed the achievement gap for these students. An 8th grader scored in the 34th percentile in the third grade in math. On the seventh grade test, the student scored in the 61st percentile. In language, the student jumped from the 51st percentile to the 76th percentile; and in reading, the student improved by 9 percentile points, going from the 53rd percentile to the 62nd percentile for the same years.

In another example, a 7th grader scored in the 9th percentile in math while in the third grade; in grade 6 the student scored in the 56th percentile. In reading, the same student's third grade score was in the 21st percentile; in grade 6, the student ranked in the 58th percentile. In language arts, the student scored in the 21st percentile and progressed to the 42nd percentile for the same year.

To close the gap in mathematical computation, due to proficiency in using calculators, students are encouraged to work in the school store, create games where computation was key to complete and win the game, as well as daily drills like the “mad minute”.

Students strong in language arts, particularly writing, were identified and encouraged to enter poetry and essay contests. For the last twelve years, students wrote their own poetry and their work was submitted to Creative Communications. About ten students have published in Creative Communications. One student’s work was selected as a winner in the Creative Communications essay contest. The work was chosen from several thousand essays written by students from the U.S. and Canada. The student was recognized as one of the top ten winners in the contest for the last two years. Careful examination of testing data seeks out these gifted students to excel in these areas.

As a new administrator it is a challenge to understand the gaps between the performance in contests, as noted, and the performance on some areas on standardized tests between some classes. As always there are multiple reasons to explain these discrepancies. It is an educational responsibility to fill the gaps.

Students who are accepted into Our Lady of Mercy School are capable of being successful in the program. OLM is open to new students who have the potential to or who are readily capable of being academically prepared for all facets of the curriculum. Achievement gaps might not be so obvious in the first days but teachers and parents continue to conference about how to achieve success for the transfer student. The online features that are accessible are a tremendous help in this regard. If students can benefit from OLM’s program and wish to join the school after academic review and a brief interview, they are able to join the OLM community. These transition students can significantly add or detract from test scores. There are enrollment trends, like those that occurred in 2009-2010, that impacted the present grade 8.

2. Using Assessment Results:

More than ever this is an era of accountability. Significant student achievement is further testimony that Our Lady of Mercy’s mission to “educate the child” is followed by providing a quality Catholic education. OLM believes that proper, ongoing, timely assessment guides instructional decisions. The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is given at Our Lady of Mercy School in the spring to all students in grades three through seven, the CogAT is given to second graders in the fall. The Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test is used in both first and second grade at the end of May for reading assessment. Students in kindergarten are given regular and on-going formative and summative assessments in reading and mathematics. A portfolio for each kindergarten student contains the data that is shared bi-weekly with parents. Members of the staff use this data to better understand the individual student and assure that the student receives the best education possible.

In mathematics, OLM is guided by the Archdiocese of Hartford’s standards. In 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, the students are divided into two classes created by mathematical ability according to ITBS scores and the recommendations of previous teachers. The assessments include initial assessment and overall classroom performance creating an accelerated math class of students who are able to work more independently and at a faster pace. Since both classes are small, the teacher is able to accommodate the various learning styles of individual students assuring that struggling learners have access to manipulatives and different strategies. These are employed in the explanation and reinforcement exercises that take place through worksheets and/or oral practice. Peer teaching is allowed by those who have mastered concepts and skills. By providing a strong mathematical foundation for all students, OLM creates students into problem solvers while gaining confidence in their abilities to do so.

OLM teachers teach to the national standards delivered in the curriculum through best practice instructional methods, which support strong academic performance in the classroom and on formal assessments.

The following students were identified as strong students and monitored as candidates for the Talent Search for the John Hopkins Center for Talented Youth. Achievement at the 95th percentile or higher on one or more sub tests of a nationally-normed standardized test serves as a qualifying test score. In 2011, the number of students whose test scores identified them for the Talent Search included three students in grade 5, eight students in grade 6, nine students in grade 7 and six students in grade 8. Approximately one third of the students in grades 4-7 in 2011 were identified in this Global Talent Search.

In May of 2011, three students placed in the Invention Convention. A present eighth grade student and two members of the Class of 2011, were recognized as finalists in the CT Science Fair winning the Dominion's Millstone Power Station Award and the CT Science Fair Medallion and Acrylic Award. Two other members of the Class of 2011 placed in the Audubon CT and Arch Chemicals Environmental Awards and first in the Pfizer's Life Science Middle School Team. These students were invited to enter the Broadcom MASTERS, a national science competition.

The Our Lady of Mercy School administration and faculty recognize the importance of sharing individual student scores and profiles with parents. This is accomplished in a manner that ensures understanding of the test information and provides an opportunity for questions and discussion. Reported scores for ITBS include: Raw Scores (RS), Percent Correct (PC), Grade Equivalent (GE), Developmental Standard Score (SS), and Percentile Rank (PR). This provides the school and parents with data regarding students' relative areas of strength and weakness as well as a look into what drives the OLM's goals, objectives, and avenues for improvement. Archdiocesan policy requires that, at the end of February, a letter is sent to parents of students in grades three through seven explaining what the ITBS assessment measures and when it will be administered. When the test results arrive in late spring, the ITBS results, along with explanatory Student Profiles, are mailed home to parents. The principal sends a letter as well, explaining how the test results are used in discussion with the teachers to assure direction and academic success. In addition, parents may request a parent-conference to further discuss the test results and the student's ability to successfully respond to the OLM program.

These results are shared with the Our Lady of Mercy School Board. A summary of the achievement testing results are published in the Parish bulletins at neighboring St. Margaret Church and St. George Church. Results are also placed in the marketing packet for prospective students.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

As members of New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the faculty has served on accrediting teams for schools throughout New England. As part of these teams, they share their expertise in curricular areas to assist in school improvement while seeking accreditation and meeting/sharing with other teacher professionals.

Similarly, faculty members have served on executive boards such as: the Kindergarten Association of Connecticut (KAC) and the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Council. These organizations work diligently with the State of Connecticut in forming policy for educational standards and benchmarks that impact early learners.

A member of the school faculty serves on the Archdiocese Curriculum Commission working closely with teachers of the Archdiocese to develop the standards-based curriculum and benchmarks for grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12 in the Archdiocese of Hartford.

Faculty members have presented workshops at the National Catholic Education Conference to teachers throughout the United States on the following topics: *Integrating Catholic Social Teachings into the Curriculum*; *Great Masterpieces* inviting the teacher to look at the great masters of art and implementing Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences in the areas of social studies, science, literature, and art. In addition, faculty members present locally to Archdiocesan teachers in areas of effective teaching

strategies and assessment practices. OLM teachers have provided workshops for teachers new to the Archdiocese to acquaint them with standard-based curricula and lesson planning on the following topics: *Reaching Standards and Beyond: Nurturing the Child's sense of Wonder using Gardner's Multiple Intelligence and Bloom's Taxonomy; and Assessment the Italian Way- Using Art as a Way of Assessing the Child in Language Arts, Science, and Math.*

The OLM Early Childhood Center has become a model for other pre-kindergarten to kindergarten programs in the Archdiocese. Teachers from other Catholic schools and public schools have visited the Center to view first hand a balance of the play, the arts, and cognitive development.

The principal has served as a Steering Committee member for the South St. Louis City Collaborative. This initiative complemented the initiatives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. The main focus was on keeping schools open as affordable, available and accessible. It minimized competition and maximized collaborative efforts to maintain healthy enrollments in all schools.

Within OLM, teachers share their particular areas of expertise. For example, a faculty member, earning a Masters degree in curriculum and instruction shares differentiated instruction, math websites, assessment, and curriculum design with other teachers.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

As ambassadors of “*educating the child to be Christ in the world*” sharing good news about student achievements remains a high priority for Our Lady of Mercy School. OLM recognizes that frequent communication between parents and the school community contributes to the integrity and accountability of the high standards of the school. Communicating the good news also motivates and sheds a positive light on performance. Parents too encourage their child to do their best and participate fully in activities. Effective partnerships encourage better grades, attendance and cooperation.

OLM uses an effective school-to-home communications system through the weekly newsletter. This e-mail communication system is produced every Monday, Wednesday and Friday by our Director of Communications. It contains a directory of teachers and staff; the Parent/Student Handbook; monthly calendar; Mercy Matters-Alumni Newsletter; admission forms; advancement news; Home School Association and Athletics Information. The OLM website and both parish bulletins, keep the larger community informed of the accolades and accomplishments of the students. Equally important are the parent login rights that allow sole access to daily homework assignments, weekly electronic grades and quarterly report cards.

School Reach and Educonnect are additional communication tools employed by OLM to connect with parents. These are instant phone messaging and e-mail messaging systems, respectively, connecting the school community to OLM.

However, nothing replaces the face-to-face meetings that engage teachers and parents. One such scheduled meeting is held in the fall. Student progress, promise and goals are discussed. This is an effective means to connect with parents.

Parents volunteer as coaches, and assist teachers with plays, run the daily lunch program, attend classroom presentations, serve as “mystery” readers, attend prayer services, liturgies, and chaperone school-related field trips. Annually, the Chamber of Commerce members also come and read to the students in each grade and students assist with the community outreach programs established by the parents.

The parents readily accept roles in the school as members of School Board, Home School Association, the athletic program and lead in advancement, fundraising, enrichment, and strategic planning. They support

their children by their presence and want this school to be the best. Strong parental involvement and ownership of the School Board and Home School Association have provided ongoing leadership and vigilance in sustaining a strong academic environment. Parents are knowledgeable, interested, and committed to putting time and energy into the partnership. Our Lady of Mercy School is family centered and student focused.

1. Curriculum:

Our Lady of Mercy School promotes a love for reading as a major building block upon which is woven an interdisciplinary approach to all subjects. The curriculum at OLM is regulated by the Archdiocese of Hartford. It is standards-based and well structured as to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades in all subject areas. Students advancing through the grades are expected to meet each year's grade-specific standards and retain or further develop skills performed in preceding grades. Students at OLM acquire the habits of reading independently and attentively, essentially complementing their intellectual capacity and curiosity, thus assuring success in all academic areas.

OLM's mission "to educate the child to be Christ in the world" is understood by the students and religion is taught to all students regardless of personal beliefs. The students are created and gifted by God to live the gospel message as leaders and serve in their school, church, and community. In the spirit of the Mercy and Sacred Heart sisters, the students participate in liturgies; prayer services and community outreach programs demonstrating the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. OLM's mission motivates the child to be respectful, responsible, and reverent creating an environment where bullying is not tolerated.

Social Studies are the integrated study of the social sciences and the humanities to promote civic competence.

The study of mathematics is the study of relationships, structure and problem solving. The science curriculum promotes curiosity and a respect for life. Perseverance in research, data collection, and collaboration promote studies in earth, life, and physical science. Students in preschool to grade 5 develop critical thinking skills enabling experimentation with hands-on-materials, problem-solving and data recording. Students in grade 6, 7, and 8 write formal lab reports. Experimentation and techniques for measurement and recording data are part of the upper school curriculum as well as participation in a yearly science fair/invention convention. In March of 2011, seven students placed in the Connecticut Science Fair Convention.

OLM is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements, including forty-five minute classes four days a week for 6-8 grade students. However, all students, from Pre-K to grade 8, are invited to study either Spanish or French. In the early grades, songs, poetry, activities and art provide the building of vocabulary and culture from teachers native to those countries. The upper school schedule prepares students for the possibility of level two classes in either French or Spanish on the secondary level.

Visual arts are offered to all grades. Through discussion and hands-on guided projects, students are taught about significant historical art movements and the corresponding master artists that brought these to light. An interdisciplinary approach to art is intertwined with all subject areas.

Music instruction is a part of the curriculum for all students grades Pre-K through 8 as a means of exploration and self-expression. Music appreciation is enhanced through singing, listening, and creative exercises. Instrumental band is available to fourth through eighth grade students. Class instruction is offered for all woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. The band program excels in technical and music skills. Students often continue in concert band or jazz ensemble on the secondary level.

Physical education is offered to all students twice a week. All participate in the President's Physical Fitness Program. Grades 5 through 8 offerings include playing soccer, basketball, baseball, and softball on both junior varsity and varsity levels in the Greater New Haven Parochial Athletic League. These

teams have a no-cut policy, guaranteeing that everyone who wants to play may participate. Younger children have the opportunity to play in after-school clinic programs in basketball and soccer.

2. Reading/English:

The reading program selected for students in kindergarten through grade five provides a broad range of high quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts for students. The series includes leveled reading encouraging all students to read and progress at their own pace. In kindergarten through grade three students learn letter sounds, phonemic awareness, decoding and encoding. The series provides leveled assignments for students to work in teacher directed groups and at their own pace. Differentiated lessons are provided by the series developed specifically for a child's need. Teachers use charts, small grouping, and an interactive board to support the lesson. Students are encouraged to read wide-ranging stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods independently and or attentively with buddies. Students from kindergarten to grade five develop writing skills to communicate and support opinions, demonstrate understanding, and convey real and imagined experiences and events. In 2008, the kindergarten class studied "Shakespeare for Kids" and rewrote the ending for *Romeo and Juliet*. In 2009, the children put to music Shakespeare's, *Twelfth Night*. Computers, technology and digital resources are the instruments often used in developing writing skills.

Students from grades six to eight follow the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Hartford encouraging all students to love literature and read all genres—the novel, short stories, drama, poetry, myths, and essays. Students are encouraged to make personal connections to their reading and interpret different themes the genres provide. As part of the program, students write character sketches, poetry, book reviews, and other creative pieces inspired by the stories they read. Vocabulary is taught as part of the reading process as well as separately with the use of another text. Formal essay writing includes the following forms: expository, persuasive, creative, compare and contrast, and the personal narrative. Discussion of literary works is an integral part of assessing student progress as is developing fluency, comprehension, and interpretation of a story. Dramatization and recitation are also assessment tools used to measure progress.

For those students who are not meeting OLM's assessment standards, (5-10 percent), assistance is provided by teaching comprehension strategies such as using books on tape to help students focus attention on the reading materials. Reading aloud, question and answer sessions, guided reading and writing are used in place of independent work. Partner reading, word lists, and student interest are the tools teachers use to direct student learning and academic success.

3. Mathematics:

In mathematics, students in all grades come to know that math is a language. They see the interconnections in mathematics and this enables them to deal flexibly with mathematical ideas and concepts. Following the Archdiocesan standards, and aligned with the Common Core State Standards, the math program includes benchmarks of learning that support a strong, cohesive, and coherent curriculum. Benchmarks at each grade level in the curriculum are organized in five content strands: numbers and operations, measurement, geometry, algebra, and data analysis and probability. There is an emphasis at each grade level for problem solving, reasoning, and applying mathematical problems to everyday life, society, and work.

Students in kindergarten through grade five are actively engaged in developing their mathematical understanding. The teachers employ more visuals and use a greater number of manipulatives, or ways to describe and use hands-on opportunities to bring the abstract lessons "home" to the younger students. Therefore, a variety of differentiated skills and strategies are employed in the classroom. Students work independently and cooperatively to solve problems, estimate, compute efficiently, and conduct investigations and record findings.

Initially, students understand the patterns of mathematics through use of concrete, hands-on materials, math games, and the use of interactive technology. The intermediate school students comprehend mental math, computation, multiplication, and division. Upper school students are introduced to and challenged to investigate geometry and algebra as part of the program. The upper school program, grades 6, 7, and 8, are grouped according to ability. Groups are determined and selected by comparing student ITBS scores, math grades in grades 4 and 5, class participation and study skills. Accelerated instruction is provided for selected students in a Pre-Algebra class in grade seven and subsequently Algebra I class in grade eight.

Students who perform above grade level are encouraged to work independently and creatively on mathematical problems with real life situations. Small group instruction in math classes and parallel teaching in grades one, four, five and in the upper school provides tutorial instruction for students below grade level. Differentiated instruction makes the lesson come alive. It enhances the lesson, the content, processes, and outcomes of instruction. Teachers include manipulatives, math games, interactive board activities, buddy teaching, and one-on-one reinforcement. Math websites used consistently in grades one to three include academicskillbuilders.com; gameaquarium.com; and fun4thebrain.com.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Social Studies is a core curriculum subject and plays a significant role “in educating the child to be Christ in the world.” The seven principals of Catholic social teaching are taught beginning in kindergarten. All students are ambassadors of the Good News promoting positive societal change. Global issues and geography cover human relations and environment. They understand that to be a contributing member to the community, it is important to know and study ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic society. The Archdiocesan, National, and Core Connecticut Standards in Social Studies are woven into the program in all grades. All students study civic ideals and practices through the following activities: creating classroom expectations, examining moral principles through prayer services, operating the school store, recycling, and participating in the student council. Numerous out-reach programs give the students opportunities to be involved with basic issues and concerns such as: entertaining at local convalescent homes, serving at a local soup kitchen, providing Christmas packages for the needy, collecting erasers for the imprisoned, and donating can goods to the food pantry.

Students understand that the past influences future thinking. Skills such as locating, researching, analyzing, and interpreting primary and secondary sources are aids in understanding relationships among events. Whether students in grade two research American inventors or kindergartners explore space, or grade five studies Mayan and Aztec cultures or medieval studies are investigated in grade seven, the integration of music, dance, theatre, and the visual arts are used as an instructional strategy and unique method of differentiating instruction. Simultaneously, students expand their knowledge in science, language arts, and technology as well as the social sciences.

OLM 7th and 8th grade students experience the study of ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship when they participate in the Mock Trial Program to gain a practical understanding of the way in which the American legal system functions. This program promotes academic excellence and critical thinking with one of the most effective educational approaches for meeting the needs of all students. It serves as an example of cooperative learning, par excellence. Lifetime skills are developed in critical analysis, reasoning, listening, oral presentation and extemporaneous argument. With support teams that include local attorneys, teachers, and a drama coach, the students explore and identify key ideals of the democratic form of government, such as human dignity, justice, equality, and most importantly the rights and responsibilities of citizens.

5. Instructional Methods:

Our Lady of Mercy School teachers know the students. Individual needs and unique learning styles challenges the faculty to employ best practices and a myriad of strategies to ensure that each child reaches their full potential, achieving academic success. The teachers choose from a wide-range of instructional

formats such as: interdisciplinary or thematic, self-directed study, inquiry based-learning, learning by discovery, centers or stations, computer-based learning, student conferencing, games, role playing, activity-based experiences, or community-referenced learning, integrated cross-curricular thematic units, hands-on-methods, lessons on the web, community based projects and teacher sharing. Because the instructional formats listed above naturally allow for multi-sensory experiences and are more active and interactive, students who aren't learners in a "traditional" sense have more options for success.

Most of the students are intellectually and socially capable of learning in a "standard" classroom environment. However, interventions such as being seated in the front of the classroom, and accommodations such as longer test time, fewer questions on tests or reduced work is strongly encouraged for some. Repetition, patience and academic success demands a variety of strategies for some students while other students need to be released from the traditional setting in order to fly. OLM teachers accept the responsibility as educators to find the formula to know the students, provide a nurturing environment where the student learns and is successful. This is the challenge for the teacher in the 21st century.

Faculty discussion, analysis of ITBS or standardized testing scores, teacher collaboration and student learning assessments are all part of creating an optimum learning environment. Under the leadership of the new administrator, such an environment is being developed. In light of this, a decision was made to create a new environmental design to change the physical arrangement of the 8th grade room with hexagon shaped desks allowing flexibility to work in groups or pairs and to collaborate freely. Using the iPad 2, in the future, will provide engaging and transformative learning opportunities.

Differentiation is facilitated by using Bloom's taxonomies, graphic organizers, multiple intelligences, and technology. Best practices using Bloom's taxonomies are designed to develop lessons and in units of study that are thematically planned and helpful with individualized programs. Graphic organizers are used for visual learners alerting students to content discovery and ease with summarizing information. The integration of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences offer opportunities to display material learned through raps, poems, constructing models, illustrations, or journal writing.

6. Professional Development:

The Archdiocese of Hartford is committed to providing a rigorous curriculum based on the teachings of the Catholic Church, infused with social teachings, and rooted in basic skills and coupled with innovative programs that prepare our students for the 21st century skills. To accomplish this goal the Office of Catholic Schools provides workshops and materials that deal with educational programs. Recently each principal in the Archdiocese was given an iPad 2 and an afternoon of instruction. Teachers too benefit from Hartford sponsored workshops. They earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by their attendance. Several recent topics have included: Technology Competencies and New Math Standards, Informative Assessment, Differentiated Instruction, Motivation for Students to Learn Math and a Two Day Seminar at Sacred Heart University on-Differentiated Learning: Teach the Teacher.

Teachers attend workshops and summer seminars in their field of expertise where they are able to network with teachers from around the state and the country about a wide range of instructional ideas. These selections are based on the areas that best increase student achievement and meet the needs of students. Seminars have included: ENT Motivating Students to Learn Math; Teaching Through Games – Math & Reading; Summer Energy (E-Smarts) a one week Science Seminar; NCEA Conventions in California, Minnesota, and New Orleans; Effective Teaching Strategies; Data Team; Brain Based Differentiation; Yale University Teacher Preparation & Education Studies Program Biodiversity & Global Change; Project Learn –Effective Teaching Strategies I & II; Lesley College -The Basic Principles and Practices of the Reggio Emilia Approach; National Science Association Regional Conference and Catapult Learning – What Every Teacher Should Know: Evidence- Based Teaching Practices for the 21st Century Learners. Teachers belong to professional organizations to improve best practices.

Our Lady of Mercy School provides and encourages teacher workshops on the use of interactive white boards, grading and online courses in faith formation programs. The principal and a staff member also took part in a communication webinar. This webinar promoted a tool to communicate more efficiently and effectively to parents and the greater community and was prompted by hurricane Irene, a recent natural disaster.

Recently formed professional learning communities, according to grade levels, provide opportunities for analyzing and monitoring student work; discussion/ collaboration on effective teaching strategies; textbook/material rotation and needs, cooperative teacher work and the use of technology.

7. School Leadership:

Following the principle of subsidiarity, which means decisions are made at the local level, leadership in Our Lady of Mercy School, as a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Hartford, follows this principle. OLM recognizes the authority of the Archbishop, the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, the Office of Catholic Schools professional staff personnel, and the pastors of the parishes that are responsible for the school. All are key players in the careful planning and direction provided for the OLM school community.

The principal is chosen and approved by many who serve in that hierarchical structure along with members of the local School Board. The daily operation of the school, its standards of excellence and adherence to performance are entrusted to the principal. Therefore, the personal attributes and capabilities/skills of the principal articulates, models and inspires the faculty and staff to be held to a higher standard. Earning the trust of the parents and the students is most important in the overall success and impact of the school in the community. All are entrusted with the nurturing of the students, a program of excellence and the creation of an attractive, academic environment. The principal is rooted in faith and is passionate about the people and the OLM mission. This passion, rooted in Catholic values and directed by goodness, unites the faculty, staff, students and the school community. It invites involvement and cooperation. The natural goodness of the faculty and staff exudes a spirit that displays their personal level of commitment and dedication to performance. Accountability is best achieved when all those involved strive for excellence, respect, and the promotion of the overall success of the school program.

The administrator is visible and available to the teachers and the school community. As a servant leader, responsibility lies in building trust, community and a sense of belonging. All other instructional guidance, collaboration and best practices will flow. The curriculum is driven by innovation, creativity and technology.

The principal models and places an importance on the entire school community displaying willingness to cooperate and build morale. Interacting, communicating and being part of the team is part of the principal's daily "lesson plan". The world is a better place because the teachers and staff see, interact and desire growth for the young hearts and minds of Our Lady of Mercy students.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

12PV125

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>\$5000</u>	<u>\$5000</u>	<u>\$5000</u>	<u>\$5000</u>	<u>\$5000</u>	<u>\$5000</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$5000</u>	<u>\$5000</u>	<u>\$5000</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$</u>	<u>\$3175</u>				
12th	Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$6881

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1435

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?
4%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 20%

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	80	75	83	83	78
Number of students tested	28	21	21	22	27
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	78	78	84	81	75
Number of students tested	28	21	21	22	27
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	77	78	84	78	78
Number of students tested	23	24	19	29	22
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	75	80	84	75	86
Number of students tested	23	24	19	29	22
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	78	77	70	77	85
Number of students tested	26	21	30	21	18
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	81	88	78	79	88
Number of students tested	26	21	30	21	18
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	77	73	75	82	81
Number of students tested	18	29	20	17	17
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	87	80	85	87	76
Number of students tested	18	29	20	17	17
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	71	77	76	78	70
Number of students tested	16	18	14	16	22
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed	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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7

Test: ITBS

Edition/Publication Year: 2001/2008 Publisher: Riverside Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	82	84	85	83	77
Number of students tested	16	18	14	16	22
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:					
The Iowa Test of Basic Skills changed with the new normed group in 2009, the test itself did not change.					

12PV125