

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12PV54

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

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

Questions 1 and 2 are for Public Schools only.

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

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	22	10	32		6	22	12	34
K	14	15	29		7	17	10	27
1	17	16	33		8	9	17	26
2	12	22	34		9	0	0	0
3	12	16	28		10	0	0	0
4	20	16	36		11	0	0	0
5	7	15	22		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								301

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
16 % Asian
4 % Black or African American
22 % Hispanic or Latino
1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
49 % White
8 % 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: 8%

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.	6
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	19
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	25
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	327
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.08
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	8

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 2%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 6

Number of non-English languages represented: 5

Specify non-English languages:

French, Italian, Korean, Russian, Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: $\frac{0\%}{0}$
 Total number of students who qualify: $\frac{0}{0}$

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: $\frac{5\%}{15}$
 Total number of students served: $\frac{15}{15}$

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>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>12</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>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>16</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Total number	<u>25</u>	<u>6</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: 18:1

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%	95%	96%	96%	96%
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? Before 2007

PART III - SUMMARY

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The family of Visitation Academy is a dedicated community of children, teachers, and parents guided by an administration committed to Catholic education. Driven by our mission, Visitation Academy educates children to become successful scholars, concerned citizens, and faithful followers of Christ.

Visitation Academy was established as a parish school in 1958. It became inter-parochial in 1991, serving Sacred Heart parish in Rochelle Park, Annunciation parish in Paramus, and Our Lady of the Visitation parish in Paramus. Students from Pre-K to grade eight come from Paramus as well as neighboring communities.

The administration, faculty, and staff are certified professional and educational leaders with common goals. They are daily role-models, counselors, and disciplinarians. Rules of conduct, procedures, and expectations are outlined in handbooks which are used to guide behavior. Discipline is enforced, but tempered with justice and mercy. Conflicts are treated as opportunities to develop empathy, integrity, and maturity.

Students of Visitation Academy are encouraged to share their gifts and talents with others. Shared lessons in the form of science experiments or puppet shows enable older students to teach younger ones. Middle school "prayer buddies" share their faith with the primary grade children. Students from grades five through eight participate in Student Council, which serves the school community, the larger community, and the global community. Traditional activities that the students look forward to include a gingerbread house display, an Easter egg hunt, and pi day. Food is collected at Thanksgiving and Christmas and delivered by students to the Helping Hands Food Ministry in Rochelle Park. The "Skip a Movie; Save a Child" program asks students to use movie ticket money to help the "Table of Hope" which provides food and medicine to poor children in the Philippines.

Students learn how to be good stewards of the earth. Student Council works with the science coordinator to promote an ongoing project to "lighten our carbon footprints one student at a time" creating an opportunity for older students to educate younger ones on the importance of conserving resources to create a greener planet.

Parental involvement has always been the backbone of Visitation Academy. The Home School Association and the Fathers' Club lead the way in organizing fundraising activities that have become traditions, such as golf outings, breakfast with Santa, and an annual gala fashion show. A sports program organized by volunteer parents runs throughout the year. Last year, the Home School Association initiated a giving campaign which realized a sizeable sum. The funds are being used for special projects that will enhance the curriculum and goals of our Middle States project.

The Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools conferred accreditation upon this school on November 1, 1999. On May 1, 2010, Visitation Academy was awarded re-accreditation based on a five-year project entitled *Multicultural Mosaic*. This project evolved from awareness that our school is a diverse collection of cultures and would benefit from increased cultural understanding, respect, and tolerance. The expressed intention of this project is to promote the principles of social justice through multicultural competence. To that end, the Mosaic project has nine desired outcomes which become an integral part of the planning process. Two examples are: "to eliminate ethnocentrism" and "to raise levels of student achievement through the alleviation of stereotype threat." With teachers of every grade and subject involved in this project, a garden of innovative lessons has flourished.

Piloted by an NYU professor, a cutting edge intervention program, referred to as Incremental Intelligence, is being implemented to raise academic motivation and reduce intelligence stereotyping. This is achieved through a brief and entertaining curriculum that enables students to learn about the amazing capacity of their brain to grow and expand in response to effort.

It is clearly evident that Visitation Academy is innovative and looking toward the future, striving to create an environment where, through a variety of modalities, each child can reach his/her full potential academically, and be empowered to succeed in a world where understanding of cultural differences is vital. Visitation Academy is a school of the future and meets the criteria that make it worthy of Blue Ribbon status.

1. Assessment Results:

In compliance with the Archdiocese of Newark, the TerraNova Third Edition is administered annually in early March to grades one through seven. TerraNova is a nationally norm-referenced test. The reading section measures a variety of objectives including word meaning, comprehension, analysis, extended meaning, and reading and writing strategies. The mathematics section includes number relations, computation and estimation, algebra, geometry, and problem solving.

Student scores are generally expected to fall in the high end of the average range (50th – 75th national percentile) or the above average range (75th – 99th national percentile). These performance expectations are based on an analysis of students' cognitive skills index as measured by the InView test. The InView test is an aptitude test that projects performance on the TerraNova test. Students are expected to score within a range that is consistent with their cognitive skills index. Although acceptable performance levels vary from student to student, mean scores for each grade should fall between the 65th and 99th percentile.

When struggling students are identified, immediate intervention plans are put in place. Parents are called in to discuss the observation, and remedial strategies are planned. Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers at any time to maximize their child's progress.

Administration, faculty, and a professional consultant study the performance trends in reading and mathematics each year. Based on the data, improvement strategies are implemented.

The performance trends that are found in the five year data table for reading indicate a continual growth pattern with one exception. In reading, grade three shows a ten point decrease from March 2010 to March 2011. There was a temporary teacher change for this class midyear that could have caused this anomaly. At the fall professional improvement meeting, where tests are analyzed and strengths and weaknesses are identified, the third and fourth grade teachers reviewed the subtests and found weaknesses to be in "analyzing text." With the assistance of the educational consultant, strategies to improve in this area became part of the Instructional Improvement Plan.

All the other grades indicate a trend well above the cut score criteria for Blue Ribbon candidacy in reading. In fact, most of the scores in both reading and math exceed the Blue Ribbon cut score by ten or more points. Further analysis of the TerraNova results shows that the majority of students demonstrate high mastery of specific objectives.

Mathematics scores indicate achievement in the high average and above average range across the grades. Grade four scores improved from 2009 to 2011 from the 71st percentile to the 81st percentile. Grade six increased achievement from the 69th percentile to the 77th percentile. The five year data table indicates that scores in mathematics drop in grade six and rebound in grade seven. This is due, in part, to the transition from intermediate to middle school. Working collaboratively, teachers of mathematics are fine tuning the curriculum to address this transitional period.

The analysis of the achievement scores and the preparation of Instructional Improvement Plans play a significant role in the increase of scores both in reading and mathematics. Teachers collaborate on plans to address specific objectives as measured by the TerraNova test results. Mastery of those objectives is the ultimate goal.

Teachers avail themselves of in-service workshops in reading and mathematics on line, on site, and at various other institutes. This year the Archdiocese of Newark conducted a professional development

program for teachers of mathematics in which each teacher participated in a grade specific workshop for the implementation of revised Mathematics Curriculum Guidelines and the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. Teachers immediately employed many of the strategies learned.

Other factors that may have contributed to test performance include grade level and content area faculty meetings at which teachers share successful strategies with each other. Periodically, competitions are arranged to motivate the students. Technology, games, use of manipulatives, and the regrouping of students as they progress or maintain mastery are some of the means that have proven to be successful in facilitating student achievement.

The New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards are referenced by each faculty member, and professional development goals are made reflecting the standards. These standards are noted in the teachers' planning to assure implementation of the lessons in conjunction with the standard.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Standardized test assessment results are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in core content areas of reading, mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies at all grade levels. Areas of focus are identified and improvement plans are formed and implemented. Results are also used to map individual student progress. Individual and group results are shared with parents annually.

In this vital endeavor, Visitation Academy employs a professional consultant to aid the principal and faculty. This consultant meets first with the principal and then with the teachers to facilitate analysis of the results from different perspectives. Cognitive skills index scores, which are age-dependent standardized scores based on an individual's performance on the InView section of the TerraNova, are used to form ability charts. These charts are prepared by the consultant and studied by the faculty. They allow teachers the opportunity to identify underachievers. Time is provided for faculty to share successful strategies for motivating the underachiever in their classrooms. This same data enables faculty to identify areas where students have achieved mastery, thereby requiring challenging activities to further develop higher order critical thinking skills.

Using the results of classes as a group, the consultant and the teachers identify areas of focus for instructional improvement in an effort to maximize student achievement. These areas usually vary by age group. The faculty works with the consultant to write improvement plans which are approved by the principal. These plans address the area or areas that will be the focus of targeted intervention. Although a collaborative effort is made to set goals and objectives that are specific, measurable, and attainable, each teacher is responsible for implementing the plan in the classroom. For example, editing skills were the focus of a recent improvement plan. Subsequently, more time was allotted for editing during language arts class. Following implementation of the improvement plan, subsequent scores were examined to judge the effectiveness of the process. Since the editing scores showed improvement, the area for focus of instructional improvement was updated and changed the following year. The standard assessment scores at Visitation Academy are consistently high due, in part, to the focus and follow through of administration and faculty.

Teachers use the results of standardized testing as one criterion in writing their own Professional Development Plans. Each faculty member is responsible for identifying her own professional development goals, and suggesting activities to accomplish those goals. They are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities which would support them in their efforts to attain desired improvements leading students to grade appropriate performance levels. After review, the principal approves these plans and monitors their implementation. In this way, assessment results direct the selection of off-site professional development opportunities for faculty. It also guides the principal in arranging for on-site workshops.

The principal uses these assessment results to choose on-site professional development offerings. Differentiated instruction and cooperative learning are examples of the workshops selected. Teachers work collaboratively as “professional learning communities” assisting each other in their efforts to improve student learning by sharing experiences pertaining to best practices for intervention, what works and what doesn’t work in the classroom.

Assessment results are shared with parents at a Home School Board meeting in the spring of each year. A chart showing the percentile ranks for each grade is prepared and presented at that meeting. Copies of these charts are available to parents as well as to prospective registrants. At that meeting, teachers distribute to parents their child’s individual assessment result. The Home Report presents test results in a meaningful and easy-to-understand way to help parents see the student’s achievement in content area tests. Parents are afforded the opportunity to meet with individual teachers for clarification of score interpretation and to address any concerns they may have.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The Archdiocese is organized into small groups of schools and parishes that are in close proximity to each other. These groupings are referred to as deanery. Deaneries are comprised of schools and parishes and are regionally grouped within the counties of New Jersey. Successful strategies are shared with other schools through deanery meetings. Principal meetings allow for the general sharing of successful strategies and programs among administrators. Use of technology for multicultural research and the Zippy program for the Early Childhood classes prompted the adoption of both programs in other schools. The Zippy program is one that assists the kindergarten children to develop an awareness of their feelings through a series of interactive lessons of life experiences.

Teachers also meet at deanery meetings and move into grade level or subject area groups to share successes. Mapping, cooperative learning, and web-based streaming programs are shared among colleagues. Often such sharing answers questions or resolves a problem that a colleague may bring to the table.

High school articulation meetings are another opportunity for sharing successes. In small groups, the high school teachers explain their expectations of students coming to their freshman classes. In turn, elementary teachers share what their planning and strategies have been to prepare the students. Mathematics, reading, and literature have been the three foci to date.

The Archdiocese of Newark conducted a 2011-2012 professional development program for teachers of mathematics. Teachers from a variety of schools and regions met at the Archdiocesan center in grade levels for a formal presentation of the new math curriculum. Opportunity was provided for the teachers to share their successes in the teaching of math and the development of the curriculum.

A series of mock trials are prepared and presented by eighth grade students. Local professionals who attend the trials include lawyers, professional associates of colleges and universities, and regional business people.

Weekly press releases, which include pictures of the students in action, inform members of local communities about projects, activities and shared learning in all curriculum areas. Several teachers wrote articles for *Today’s Catholic Teacher*, and some are in process of writing articles for the NCEA periodical. These articles reflect the activities, practices, and rituals that create Catholic identity.

One of the local high schools included a profile of Visitation Academy in their annual review booklet which is disseminated to students and alumni throughout several states.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Visitation Academy understands that it takes a village to educate a child. The involvement of family and community is crucial to the health of a school and the achievement of students. At Visitation Academy, open lines of communication with parents and outreach to the local community are the cornerstones of success.

At the beginning of the year, an open house is conducted whereby parents visit classrooms to learn the goals and objectives for the school year. Grades four through eight have the parents follow their children's schedule as they change classes. Opportunity for discussion is limited, but parents can make appointments for private conversations.

Community involvement enriches a school, and it is often a community member who engages the interest of a student. For that reason, Visitation Academy reaches out to the community in a variety of ways. During Catholic Schools Week, local organizations are invited to give a talk or presentation. In recent years, several poets as well as a sports writer from *The Bergen Record* have met with classes. A local prosecutor helped our eighth graders with their mock trials by advising on how and when to make objections. Dentists instruct young children about oral hygiene while a physician works with middle school students. Representatives from Hudson City Savings Bank conduct a mini-course on personal banking for eighth graders.

Our Middle States project, entitled Multicultural Mosaic, piqued the interest of three Kean University professors who devised a survey designed to measure attitudinal and behavioral changes regarding perceptions of the cultures studied. This enables our staff to assess the impact this project is having on the entire school population.

A unique endeavor on the part of Visitation Academy is a collaborative effort with the Educational Partnership for Instructing Children (EPIC). EPIC provides education services for children with autism and pervasive developmental disorder. Children who are ready to enter a homogeneous setting, come with their shadows to join primary grade students for music, art, or playtime activities. This program helps our students develop empathy and acceptance of all people. That is the truest measure of student success.

1. Curriculum:

Visitation Academy accepts the challenge to creatively educate the whole child. The visiting team for the Middle States re-accreditation process commended the faculty and staff for their adherence to curriculum development, expressing high regard for the creative and collaborative interdisciplinary projects.

The faculty work collaboratively to guide the students from Pre-K through middle school. Regular faculty meetings and shared workshops encourage involvement of every faculty member in each level of education. The curriculum guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese of Newark, which mirror the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, are used as guides for each teacher, thus ensuring a continuum of education. The myriad teaching styles of the faculty respond to the needs of each class creating a student body that thrives and excels.

The curriculum provides a spiraling framework from Pre K to grade eight. Previous skills and knowledge are reinforced to ensure mastery learning. In compliance with our Middle States project to promote cultural understanding, culturally diverse lessons are incorporated at all levels and in every area. The academic programs in all grades include the core content areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and religion.

Religious instruction and faith formation are integral parts of the curriculum. Christian values are practiced in everyday activities. Morning prayer sets the tone for the day. Weekday liturgies are attended, and seasonal services are planned and implemented by students.

The language arts curriculum includes reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing and media literacy. This begins in the early childhood program with Pre K children using reading and writing handbooks. Emphasis on writing and public speaking begins early and continues through middle school, culminating in student-written and performed mock-trials.

The mathematics program is a standard-based curriculum. It begins with a foundation in numerical operations. When students have achieved mastery of basic skills, they move to areas of problem solving and critical thinking. Accelerated classes are offered beginning at grade five, and specialized instruction is available for struggling learners.

The science curriculum connects textbook content with technology and hands-on learning. Students develop interest and enthusiasm for areas of science such as chemistry and biology by applying lessons in a lab setting.

The social studies program has been enriched by the recently revised Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines. This document encourages the development of concepts and skills that are necessary for an understanding of the interaction of historical, economic, cultural, religious, geographic, and political factors that shape the story of human existence.

Classes are offered once weekly in art, music, physical education, technology, and foreign language. The art program exposes students to a variety of media enabling them to engage their own creativity. The music program introduces students to the various elements: theory, appreciation, and instruments. A Christmas concert and spring musical are performed annually. After school programs in music and drama are provided. The physical education program extends from Pre K to grade eight. The focus is on teaching life skills including team work, cooperation, tolerance, fitness, and nutrition. Students in grades K through eight receive technology instruction on computer usage, keyboarding, word processing,

graphics, multi-media presentations, spreadsheets, and Internet. Visitation Academy is in compliance with the program's foreign language requirements.

Instruction in the curriculum includes the use of textbooks, hands-on activities, technology, team-teaching, group projects, student presentations, and educational field trips. Teachers of different subjects cooperate on integrated lessons that teach the whole child. For example, eighth graders who studied World War II in social studies and finished *Night* in reading class, visited the Holocaust Museum during their trip to Washington, DC.

2. Reading/English:

The curriculum includes reading, writing, and oral expression. This program incorporates in-class, as well as at-home reading. Shared reading, frequent book reports, and required summer reading develop comprehension skills at all levels and encourage a love of literature in an effort to form life-long readers. Supplemental instruction is available for students at-risk, and challenging projects are assigned to higher achievers.

Scott Foresman's Reading Street program is used in Kindergarten through grade five. Students acquire foundation reading skills through classroom activities such as using skill builder kits, creating folders, employing graphic organizers, and participating in reading games. Elementary students focus on decoding, phonics, word recognition, vocabulary/concept development, and independent reading. Students in intermediate grades build upon skills previously learned while transitioning to higher levels of understanding. Emphasis is placed on sequencing, drawing conclusions, and identifying author's purpose. Students analyze elements of literature, use context clues, separate fact from opinion, and locate answers in a text. Students work in leveled groups, and all students receive individual instruction from teachers. Homework assignments and guided reading reinforce and maximize learned reading skills.

The middle school curriculum moves from a textbook-based program to selected reading in a variety of genres including essays, articles, novels, short stories, poetry, and drama. Reading independently, and as a class, students are immersed in a variety of both classical and contemporary literature by culturally diverse authors. Students learn to read literally, inferentially, and critically through a myriad of activities designed to build reading skills including: oral reading, journal writing, summarizing, role-playing, discussing and answering open-ended questions. From great writers, students learn to recognize, interpret, and use figurative language. Finally, middle school classes use the Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary Workbooks to expand students' vocabulary skills and to utilize these skills and words in daily speech and writing.

Students are assigned and encouraged to participate in oratorical experiences ranging from debate, mock-trials, declamation, dramatic interpretation, and original speeches to recitation of poetry, famous as well as original. These experiences build confidence and self-esteem while enhancing public speaking skills.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics program, a standards-based curriculum in line with the requirements of the state of New Jersey, is a comprehensive program which encourages students to learn mathematics by doing mathematics, using and connecting ideas, and communicating about mathematics through writing and discussion. The continuity of the math program affords a spiraling of skills with mastery as the ultimate goal.

In the primary grades, the emphasis is on establishing a solid foundation in numerical operations, place value concepts, estimation, operations and computations. Geometry and measurement are described in terms of properties of geometric figures and their relationships.

The focus of the intermediate grades is reinforcement and mastery of the basic skills and the introduction and application of concepts pertaining to decimals and fractions. Students read, write, and talk about math to discover the value of math in their lives. Real life problem-solving activities that help strengthen students' mathematical reasoning skills are an important part of the intermediate grade curriculum.

Collaboration between the intermediate and middle school math instructors allows for a continuum of instruction enabling students to practice and extend their skills in order to promote confidence and mastery. Emphasis is placed upon the development of critical thinking through various problem solving strategies. In grade seven, the students delve into the concepts of pre-algebra developing logical algebraic thinking and an understanding of mathematical symbolism. This is the bridge to algebra in grade eight. Upon successful completion of Algebra I, many students are accepted into advanced math programs in high school.

Although the overall program is challenging and expectations are high, the instructional strategies used by the teachers accommodate the varied ability levels of the students so that every child may reach his learning potential. Accelerated classes are offered beginning in grade five. Areas of concern, identified by analyzing standardized test data, are addressed by establishing improvement goals to close the achievement gaps. Efforts to improve the skills of students who are performing below grade level are enhanced by in-class support and after-school and summer classes. Activities are adapted to target struggling students or to encourage the high achiever to excel. Whole class instruction, cooperative learning, math centers, and the use of technology, manipulatives, and games are some of the ways teachers ensure that all students gain self-confidence, proficiency, and perhaps, even a love of mathematics.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Science is an area of study that begins in-depth in the early grades and continues through grade eight with a strong collaborative approach among science teachers. The science coordinator assists the teachers in selecting texts and supplemental activities as well as identifying websites for specific needs.

In kindergarten through grade two, the use of Discovery Education videos makes scientific concepts come alive. Watching a farmer discuss how different plants grow introduces students to biology. Visually pleasing graphics teach, not only about the parts of plants, but also about the variety of plant life. Students explore the solar system and learn about space exploration through the voice of a real scientist. These resources supplement instruction provided by the teacher.

The science curriculum for grades three through five covers the four main branches of science. Students learn about the structure and behavior of matter. They are introduced to the laws of nature as they apply to motion, force, and energy transformation. They study human biology and investigate the diversity of life. Finally, they gain an understanding of the geophysical system of earth and the structure of the universe.

In middle school, students build on prior knowledge through various instructional strategies including hands-on activities, technology integration, and cooperative learning. The middle school houses a science lab as well as a science classroom. Weekly laboratory experiments and projects complement classroom lessons and help students develop problem-solving, decision-making, and inquiry skills. Hypotheses are tested through experiment and observation. Later, data is analyzed, conclusions are drawn, and results are communicated. For example, students studying the laws of motion build and race macaroni cars. The cars are then evaluated based on distance, velocity, and symmetry. While studying biology, students dissect a fish, a frog, and a fetal pig.

The science coordinator, working with student council members, facilitates the school's multi-year project to "lighten the school's carbon footprints one student at a time." Students have hung "lightened"

footprints around the school, distributed reusable shopping bags, and contributed artwork for a "green" calendar. This project, largely funded by grants, calls upon the whole Visitation family to become better stewards of the earth.

5. Instructional Methods:

At Visitation Academy, academic diversity is rapidly increasing, and the school is addressing and adjusting to the population's needs in accordance with our curriculum guidelines.

The Pre-K and kindergarten curricula identify baseline knowledge while diverse styles and abilities are noted by the teachers. In order to accommodate the individual student's academic abilities and learning styles, lessons are developed by using a combination of whole class, group, and individualized instruction.

Primary level differentiation is addressed in the areas of math and reading. Above, on, and below level activities and instruction incorporate hands-on assignments that cover the skill areas to be addressed. Computer programs, listening centers, writing centers, manipulatives, file folder games and board games are incorporated as methods which respond to the needs of each student. Students are also held accountable for their assignments while working independently or in a group.

In the intermediate classrooms, working in group settings, independent assignments, flexible grouping, peer teaching and enrichment activities are some of the accommodations necessary in addressing the various learning needs of the population. Video and internet instruction are also used in conjunction with hands-on and reinforcement aids to accompany text instruction. Recommended modifications, such as extended testing-time for classified students are incorporated into instruction.

Middle school differentiation relies upon the previous year's standardized test results for placement of students in appropriate achievement areas. Sixth grade math is grouped in high to moderate and lower skills' areas. Fundamental concepts are reinforced to attain mastery. The curriculum in the seventh and eighth grades focuses on pre-algebra and algebra. Students who need enrichment and those requiring individualized instruction are accommodated using a variety of challenging and/or intervention activities. Middle school diversified reading instruction is achieved through grouping of students by ability. Diverse genres of literature are explored and student comprehension is tested in a variety of ways including written assignments, tests, and group projects.

There has been a definite advance in achievement since the incorporation of these techniques into the curriculum. The goal is to educate each child at his/her level using a variety of instructional modalities so that he/she may attain a level of achievement that would enable him/her to be successful in high school.

6. Professional Development:

One of the qualities that makes Visitation Academy special is that it is as concerned with character building as it is with teaching subject content. This philosophy is mirrored, not only in lesson plans, but also in professional development. To become more knowledgeable and empathetic, teachers attend workshops, deanery meetings, and on-site seminars.

A caring and enthusiastic group of educators are anxious to expand their knowledge and sharpen their skills at off-site workshops. Teachers are encouraged and enabled to attend frequent workshops, and to share what they have learned at faculty meetings. Teachers attend classes in their subject areas as well as workshops on such topics as "Motivating Your Underachieving Learners."

Teacher curriculum and technology workshops are offered by the Archdiocesan School Office. Deanery meetings offer teachers the chance to meet and exchange ideas and strategies with teachers from other

schools. At these meetings, presenters instruct on the latest educational research or focus on subject areas. Recent workshops made available through the deanery are “Different Learning Styles” and “Brain Compatible Learning.”

On-site training is the most significant and relevant area of professional training at Visitation Academy. Areas of need are assessed by the principal, and consultants are brought in to address those areas. Teachers attend these workshops during early dismissal and professional days, allowing the entire faculty to be on the same page in areas of innovation and development. Workshops are regularly provided on analyzing and using results of standardized tests.

Before embarking on the five-year multicultural project, faculty and staff were educated in cultural competency. They attended a series of workshops on culturally relevant classroom management and multicultural competence. These were followed up by workshops presented on strategies to incorporate the multicultural project into classroom learning.

Finally, Visitation Academy has a unique relationship with Kean University in three areas. A group of professors has worked with the staff to build cultural competency. They have assessed the faculty as well as the students before and after each year of the project. Those results are shown, analyzed, and discussed with staff. The same professors are working with the staff on developing an anti-bullying curriculum. Most recently, they have invited Dr. Joshua Aronson of New York University to work with our Middle School on an incremental intelligence project. Students and faculty are learning that intelligence is not static, but grows with hard work.

7. School Leadership:

In our competitive society, with Catholic schools closing due to dwindling enrollment, the leadership of Visitation Academy is well aware that we must offer excellence in order to keep our academy viable. We are committed to do so. To that end, leadership is structured to facilitate open lines of communication and quick responses to potential improvements.

The pastor of Our Lady of the Visitation parish is the chief administrative officer of the entire parish educational program. Since Visitation Academy is an inter-parochial school, pastors from Sacred Heart and Annunciation parishes are also involved in the school leadership. These two pastors meet regularly with the on-site pastor and school principal for planning and updating.

The school financial accountant and lay leaders from the three parishes serve as the Finance Council. They oversee and approve the budget and monitor the distribution of funds from the Tuition Angel Account. This account aids families who are experiencing temporary financial difficulties. This body also serves as advisors and support group for the welfare of the school.

The principal and staff are dedicated professionals committed to Catholic ideals and education who strive to make Visitation Academy outstanding. The assistant principal is a full-time teacher who serves as faculty advisor as well as consultant to the principal. A leadership team of teachers representing grade levels meets with the principal and assistant principal weekly or bi-monthly. This keeps the lines of communication open and allows for immediate attention to problems or potential improvements. The grade level coordinators then meet with the faculty they represent; thus, clear, prompt and two-way communication is afforded.

The Home School Board, consisting of parents, principal, and a faculty representative, functions as fundraisers, advisors, and facilitators. Fundraising activities help the school meet its budget. Equally important, these activities, such as the gala fashion show, also serve as opportunities for the school community to bond and to enjoy each others' company.

Visitation Academy retains a healthy enrollment largely because the leadership is dedicated and enthusiastic about keeping this academy on the cutting edge of education.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

1. Private school association: Catholic

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

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

<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$6250</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$6250</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>				
12th	Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$6335

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$1200

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?
1%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 5%

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	74	78	75	75
Number of students tested	34	19	31	19	25
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The Archdiocese of Newark began administering Terra Nova, Third Edition in March 2009. The 2nd edition was administered in the preceding years.					

12PV54

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	65	75	79	72	75
Number of students tested	34	31	31	19	25
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The Archdiocese of Newark began administering Terra Nova, third edition in March 2009. The second edition was administered in the preceding years.					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	71	75	80	74
Number of students tested	15	32	19	21	36
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The Archdiocese of Newark began administering Terra Nova, Third Edition in March 2009. The second edition was administered in the preceding years.					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	73	75	80	72
Number of students tested	15	32	19	21	36
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The Archdiocese of Newark began administering Terra Nova, third edition in March 2009. The second edition was administered in the preceding year.					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	83	81	82	77	71
Number of students tested	30	22	25	36	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The Archdiocese of Newark began administering Terra Nova, third edition in March 2009. The second edition was administered in the preceding years.					

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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	78	77	75	76
Number of students tested	30	22	25	36	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6

Test: Terr Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	77	69	70	69	68
Number of students tested	21	20	37	35	28
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
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12PV54

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill Scores reported as: Percentiles

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	78	79	74	75	66
Number of students tested	21	20	37	35	28
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
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NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	84	75	83	82
Number of students tested	22	35	35	27	21
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The Archdiocese of Newark began administering Terra Nova, third edition in March 2009. The second edition was administered in the preceding years.					

12PV54

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7

Test: Terra Nova

Edition/Publication Year: 3rd/2008 Publisher: CTB McGraw Hill 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	77	71	77	77
Number of students tested	22	35	35	27	21
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
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