

# 2005-2006 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

## U.S. Department of Education

**Cover Sheet** Type of School: (Check all that apply)  Elementary  Middle  High  K-12  Charter

Name of Principal Mr. Federico Valle  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name OUR LADY OF SORROWS SCHOOL  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1100 Gumwood Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

McAllen Texas 78501-4559  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Hidalgo State School Code Number\* Not Applicable

Telephone ( 956 ) 686-3651 Fax ( 956 ) 686-1996

Website/URL www.olsschool.org E-mail fvalle@olssnet.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

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

Name of Superintendent\* Sister Marcella Ewers D.C.  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Diocese of Brownsville Tel. ( 956 ) 787-8571

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

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

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Joseph Caporusso  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

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

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

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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 grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2005-2006 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2000 and has not received the 2003, 2004, or 2005 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The 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 the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. 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.
8. 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 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:     NA Elementary schools  
   NA Middle schools  
   \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
   \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
   \_\_\_\_\_ Other
- NA TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure:     NA
- Average State Per Pupil Expenditure:     NA

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city  
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
 Suburban  
 Small city or town in a rural area  
 Rural
4. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
- 20 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>Pre-K</b>	39	46	<b>85</b>	<b>7</b>	24	27	<b>51</b>
<b>K</b>	25	33	<b>58</b>	<b>8</b>	23	28	<b>51</b>
<b>1</b>	26	29	<b>55</b>	<b>9</b>			
<b>2</b>	24	29	<b>53</b>	<b>10</b>			
<b>3</b>	27	29	<b>56</b>	<b>11</b>			
<b>4</b>	19	38	<b>57</b>	<b>12</b>			
<b>5</b>	24	32	<b>56</b>	<b>Other</b>			
<b>6</b>	15	37	<b>52</b>				
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →</b>							<b>574</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- |             |                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>12.0</u> | % White                          |
| <u>1.2</u>  | % Black or African American      |
| <u>79.8</u> | % Hispanic or Latino             |
| <u>7.0</u>  | % Asian/Pacific Islander         |
| <u>0.0</u>  | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| <b>100</b>  | <b>% Total</b>                   |

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 1.0 %

<b>(1)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	2
<b>(2)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	4
<b>(3)</b>	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
<b>(4)</b>	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	574
<b>(5)</b>	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	.0104
<b>(6)</b>	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1.04

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: NA  
NA Total Number Limited English Proficient  
 Number of languages represented: 2  
 Specify languages: Spanish and English

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 0

10. Students receiving special education services: 1 %  
NA Total Number of Students Served

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>    </u> Autism                | <u>    </u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>    </u> Deafness              | <u>    </u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>    </u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>    </u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>    </u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment            |
| <u>    </u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>    </u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>    </u> Mental Retardation    | <u>    </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>    </u> Multiple Disabilities |   |

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>	
	<b><u>Full-time</u></b>	<b><u>Part-Time</u></b>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>30</u>	<u>2</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>
Support staff	<u>13</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>57</u>	<u>8</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 19.1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancies between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.

Since OLSS is a K-8 preparatory institution, students who leave transfer to another school.

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Daily student attendance	96 %	95 %	95 %	95 %	95 %
Daily teacher attendance	94%	96%	95%	96%	95%
Teacher turnover rate	16%	17%	16%	16%	17%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Student drop-off rate (high school)	NA %	NA %	NA %	NA %	NA %

14. (**High Schools Only**) Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2004 are doing as of September 2004.

	NOT APPLICABLE
Graduating class size	<u>NA</u> %
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	_____ %
Unknown	_____ %
Total	<u>NA</u> %

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Our Lady of Sorrows School (OLSS) is located in the heart of McAllen, Texas, along the Rio Grande Valley's Texas-Mexico border. The school is a Catholic faith-based, educational preparatory school that enrolls children who are largely of Hispanic origin from nine cities in the area and Reynosa, Mexico.

Our Lady of Sorrows Church established the school in September of 1946. Until 1982, Holy Cross sisters with the help of a few dedicated lay teachers staffed the school. In 1983, the Sisters withdrew from the school and were replaced with a competent lay principal and all lay staff. As McAllen grew so did the demand for admission to Our Lady of Sorrows School. A new educational facility was built in 1985 to make room for increased enrollment.

Today OLSS has an enrollment of 574 students. The school provides a Montessori Program for Pre-K and Kindergarten as well as a comprehensive elementary (1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade) and junior high (6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade) program. It has a well-rounded athletic program, an after school program, and an academic support program that includes tutorials, homework help, and both one-to-one and group academic support.

Our Lady of Sorrows School has as its primary mission "to ensure a Christian environment where each child may excel spiritually, intellectually, physically, and socially." The mission statement incorporates these four areas as part of the school's "excellence in education" goals for each child. The mission also incorporates and maintains a Catholic identity. It is one that involves a commitment to inculcate and foster Catholic Christian values in each child. These values are instilled in students through religious education, prayer, Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, and service projects in the community.

A holistic approach to education is the tenet and philosophy at Our Lady of Sorrows School. Students pursue academic excellence within their individual potential and are guided to make decisions grounded in their Catholic faith. OLSS parents, students, and faculty together provide a strong Christian community as the platform from which all learning takes place. Thus, each child needs to be taught so as to empower them to become active participants in their education and inspired to take on individual challenges for personal growth. This philosophy is incorporated into high expectations for each child.

Parents are also key participants in the educational process. The school is an extension of the family, and parents are asked to be active participants in their child's education. Many parents volunteer in classrooms, help with fundraising efforts, and serve on various committees. At the school you see several generations of families who continue to send their children to OLSS. OLSS is seen as a rich heritage for the family, a tradition that must continue for years to come.

The school has become well known in the community for its excellent standard of education, a standard that other private schools want to emulate. In 2002, the school received an "excellent" accreditation rating from the Texas Catholic Conference Education Department approved by the Texas Education Agency. Currently, Our Lady of Sorrows graduates are performing in the top 10 percent in the nation in reading and math on assessments referenced against national norms. The school wishes to firmly establish its standard of "excellence in education", to continue to share its resources and expertise with other private schools in the Diocese of Brownsville, and to inspire other educators in the area towards this same excellence.

## PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

The school measures student achievement using nationally normed United States Department of Education (USDE) standards for Blue Ribbon Schools. OLSS administers the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10) to students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade and also uses it to measure outcome performance for graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The SAT-10 is a nationally normed test that measures student achievement in reading, math, science, and social studies. The Reading test measures age-appropriate vocabulary and reading comprehension, and the Mathematics test measures age-appropriate problem solving and mathematical procedures.

OLSS has clearly demonstrated educational excellence in both Reading and Mathematics. OLSS eighth grade student scores in Reading and Mathematics have steadily increased over the last three years. Eighth grade SAT scores in Reading went from 63% in 2003 to 75% in 2005 and for Mathematics from 67% to 83%. According to the USDE, a school is in the top ten percent nationally if the graduating class scores at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in Reading and Math on a nationally normed and/or state normed referenced test. Not only has academic student performance increased significantly over the past three years, but also current OLSS students are performing in the top 10% nationwide.

The chart below indicates eighth grade students' 2003-2005 performance in Reading and Mathematics. Note that the students are performing at the high school level in both areas.

YEAR	READING		MATHEMATICS	
	OLSS 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Percentile	USDE 90 <sup>th</sup> School Percentile	OLSS 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Percentile	USDE 90 <sup>th</sup> School Percentile
2003	63%	75%	67%	75%
2004	70%	72%	75%	78%
2005	75%	72%	83%	78%
2005 Median Grade Equivalent	10.9		12.5	

Eighth grade students are also performing well in other academic subjects. Student performance on the SAT-10 showed significant levels of academic achievement in the following subjects: Science – 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, Social Studies – 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile, Listening Skills – 83<sup>rd</sup> percentile, and Critical Thinking Skills – 80<sup>th</sup> percentile.

The (White) subgroup eighth grade population is also performing in the top 10% nationwide in Mathematics. For 2005, the white subgroup Total Mathematics score was at the 84<sup>th</sup> percentile and the Total Reading was at the 68<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Seventh grade test data also indicate that as OLSS students get ready to graduate they are already at the top 10% of their class nationwide. Our seventh graders scored at the 77<sup>th</sup> percentile in Total Reading (USDE top 10% for 7<sup>th</sup> grade is 74%). For Mathematics, the Total Math score was at the 82<sup>nd</sup> percentile (USDE top 10% for 7<sup>th</sup> grade is 79%). Clearly, the data indicates that OLSS is preparing students to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and student academic achievement is at the top 10% nationally.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

To assess student performance, OLSS uses the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10), a research-based nationally norm-referenced achievement test developed by Harcourt Assessment, Inc. In 2004, OLSS upgraded from the SAT -9<sup>th</sup> Edition to the SAT-10<sup>th</sup> Edition (SAT-10).

OLSS uses the SAT-10 to measure individual student and class achievement, compare progress to national norms, maintain and/or improve curriculum (Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies), and monitor and report results systematically. SAT-10 test data is also used to assess curriculum program needs such as: supplemental materials, alignment of textbooks, change in scope/sequence, and modification of the curriculum. Data is disaggregated to determine subject area needs for individual children, subgroups, and whole class performance. Teachers use the test data to determine the need for tutoring, particularly for reading and mathematics in grades 1-5. They also use test data for student placement in remedial or advanced coursework, Spanish monolingual/bilingual placement, student identification for the U. S. Department of Education Title I program, and referrals for learning disabilities testing. In grades 7 and 8, SAT-10 scores in conjunction with students' grades and teachers' observations are used to place students in Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, and Geometry classes.

The Principal and each subject area teacher review test results yearly to assess that those objectives to be taught and what is actually taught are aligned. This process is done during scheduled team meetings and/or faculty meetings. Curricula are generally aligned to the Diocesan Curriculum Guide objectives and the state's TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) objectives.

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

Reporting results directly to students and parents is critical in helping them understand if students have met the requirements for promotion or graduation. Parents with children in grades 1-8 receive progress reports and report cards each nine-week term. Kinder parents receive report cards three times each year. Two formal Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled each year for grades 1-8 in an effort to give every parent the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the teacher(s). Communication with parents also takes place via assignment notebooks, telephone conferences, a monthly newsletter, and other notices. Each teacher maintains a classroom webpage that contains course information and homework or class assignments.

For the past two years the Assistant Superintendent of the Catholic Schools Office has come to OLSS to present information on reading, interpreting, and using SAT test data. Our school principal then gives a similar presentation to the parents at the first PTO meeting of the year.

The test publisher (Harcourt) provides a letter of explanation of SAT test scores to parents with each student's test results. Parents who wish further explanation contact the school and schedule a conference with the testing coordinator. The school provides a mandatory parent session at the beginning of each school year whereby parents are advised about academic expectations. Parents receive a copy of the handbook during orientation, which is discussed and reviewed at the parent session. New programs and changes to the curriculum are also discussed.

Students are recognized for academic achievement via the school newsletter, assemblies, honor roll bulletin boards, etc. Examples of recognition include: the Duke University Talent Identification Program, Student-of-the-Week certificates, Technology Fair medals, and Accelerated Reader awards. Parents receive a monthly newsletter (Cougar Express) that keeps them apprised of academic milestones, honor roll, performance at academic competitions (PSIA), and class projects and



activities. In addition, public service announcements are made in the local newspaper (The Monitor) regarding student achievement or academic performance.

#### 4. **Sharing Success:**

The Diocese of Brownsville Office of Catholic Schools facilitates monthly principal meetings that include principals from all Catholic schools in the diocese. Participants give and receive feedback regarding curriculum or program successes, share ideas or concepts that work and share general information about their school. The principal of OLSS has on several occasions made formal presentations about programs or projects implemented by the school. Recently, he made a presentation to the Diocesan School Council about the school's Development Plan and the process used by OLSS over the last five years to raise funds for the school's endowment in the amount of one million dollars.

OLSS in cooperation with the Catholic Schools Office coordinates teacher training workshops regarding teaching methods, curriculum programs, or exchange of ideas among faculty from the different schools in the Diocese. OLSS teachers and staff are often asked to act as speakers or presenters at these workshops.

At the annual diocesan in-services held in Brownsville each November, teachers from OLSS often give presentations. School personnel teach religion classes for diocesan teachers and provide technology classes and training for teachers from other schools.

OLSS plans to continue the above activities and will utilize its newly revised web site to share resources for teachers, parents, and students with all area schools.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### 1. **Curriculum:**

Our Lady of Sorrows School's curriculum is delivered through lessons designed to meet students' social, physical, emotional, and academic needs. The core curriculum meets or exceeds the standard requirements of the State of Texas - Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as well as the objectives set forth in the curriculum guides adopted by the School Department of the Diocese of Brownsville.

The **Integrated Montessori Method** develops the kindergarten child in six areas: Practical Life (necessary every day tasks), Sensorial (understanding abstract concepts through the senses), Mathematics (basic operations), Language (phonetics, spelling, reading, and sight words), Science (life, earth, and physical sciences), and Culture Studies (geography, history, and cultural awareness). The Montessori curriculum provides the foundation for the students' further formal education.

**Language Arts** develops students into self-confident and effective communicators. The curriculum consists of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Blends of literature-based and pure vocabulary-spelling-grammar-based strategies are utilized to develop higher order thinking skills. Students apply these skills in the classroom setting and in competitive events such as Oral Spelling Bee, Story Telling, Creative Writing, and Prose Interpretation.

**Mathematics** prepares the students with the math foundation necessary for higher-level mathematics coursework in high school. Mathematics instruction using the Saxon Math program utilizes a

spiraling curriculum that allows the student to progress to upper level Pre-Algebra, Algebra, and Geometry. OLSS offers in school and after-school tutoring to enhance the curriculum and meet students' needs. Most students graduate with high school credit in Algebra I and/or Geometry. Students apply critical thinking skills to the real world through the mathematics and science curriculum.

**Science** integrates earth, space, physical, and life sciences at all grade levels. Courses focus on science process skills through hands-on, inquiry-based investigations. Students ask questions, make observations, formulate hypotheses, measure, collect, and analyze data, and communicate results of investigations. Science fairs, educational trips, and technology extend and reinforce student learning. Junior high students demonstrate theoretical concepts introduced in the textbook by conducting experiments in a well-equipped lab.

**Social Studies** in the elementary grades include geography, history, citizenship, government, culture, and economics. Junior high students progress to Texas, United States, and World History. In addition, students analyze the role of the Catholic Church and economic systems in the growth and development of society. Students are challenged to become critical thinkers and decision-makers, productive citizens, effective leaders, and defenders of democracy.

**Foreign Language** (Spanish), beginning in first grade as a quarter year course, develops the child's progressive language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In junior high, students develop and master these skills. Spanish is taught as a whole-year subject in grades 7 and 8, preparing students to function effectively in our bilingual/bicultural environment. Most students graduate with high school credit for Spanish.

**Religion** is a comprehensive program that includes: Catholic faith (doctrine and creed), living the message (morality), celebrating the message (sacraments), and personal prayer life. Faith formation permeates daily activities and instills a faith approach to life and studies. Upper level students complete community service hours as a requirement for promotion and to apply the concept of "giving unto others."

**Art, Drama, and Music** allows students to express themselves creatively and artistically through classroom project mastery. The school provides opportunities for violin and voice lessons after school. Students demonstrate competency through concerts, recitals, drama presentations, and art competitions.

**Technology** includes computer literacy, computer applications, integrated technology, and keyboarding - skills the students use in other courses. All classrooms have computers and access to a stationary and mobile computer lab.

**Physical Education/Health/Athletics** in the primary grades is based on motor skill development and improvement in strength, endurance, flexibility, and agility. Refinement of these skills in games, sports, and higher-level physical fitness is provided to students in the upper grades. Student athletes have opportunities to develop skills and practice Christian values in the competitive settings of cross-country, volleyball, basketball, track and field, tennis, and soccer.

## 2. **Reading:**

The core reading program for 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade uses Hartcourt *Collections* basal series, a research-based, developmental program. It provides explicit phonics instruction, direct and guided reading strategies, phonemic awareness, and systematic intervention strategies, integrated language arts

components, and assessments to ensure that every student successfully learns to read. Reading skills are developed in four areas: decoding, comprehension, reference study, and literary skills. The basic components of these skills are introduced at the lower elementary and developed through the upper elementary grades utilizing a flexible, balanced bi-modal approach to phonics and whole language to ensure the mastery of reading skills at every level.

In junior high, a whole language approach is utilized extensively. Vocabulary, language usage, and written and oral communication skills are developed in tandem with reading comprehension. Higher order thinking skills are developed and applied throughout the curriculum. Cross-curricular content (including natural and social sciences and history) offers abundant practice in applying reading skills. Junior high students are exposed to a variety of literary genres in fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama. Students study traditional and contemporary works at each grade level, thereby developing a deep appreciation for literature, understanding its personal and historical significance, and learning how to analyze its meaning and relevance. In addition, they are taught to write and publish their own literary pieces.

To supplement the core reading program, the *Accelerated Reader* program (Renaissance Learning), *SuccessMaker* program (Pearson Digital Learning), and DEAR program (Drop Everything And Read) have been recently incorporated. *Accelerated Reader*, used by all students in grades 1-8, helps improve critical thinking skills and builds an intrinsic love of reading. *SuccessMaker* is a powerful results-driven system that reinforces the individual reading needs of students. Teachers use both the core reading (Harcourt) program and the *SuccessMaker* program assessments to provide ongoing screening, diagnosis, and monitoring of student progress. The DEAR program provides 15 minutes of sustained reading daily. The benchmark of success of the OLSS reading program is the SAT-10 scores of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Student scores have increased dramatically from the 63<sup>rd</sup> percentile (2003) to the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (2005).

### 3. **Other Curriculum:**

The **Religion** curriculum is based on the school's mission statement goal "to empower each child to become a living testimony of God's word through prayer, the study of scripture, and the authentic teachings of the Church." To fulfill this goal, the school employs a full time Campus Minister who develops and maintains this Catholic identity in collaboration with the administration and entire staff. The Campus Minister implements the religion curriculum, coordinates and provides spiritual growth activities/opportunities for students, staff, and parents.

The curriculum fosters and promotes a Catholic identity that includes daily religious instruction, student religious formation, sacramental preparation, daily character development, community service projects, and program evaluation. Religious instruction is provided daily according to diocesan curriculum guidelines.

Religious formation is provided to each child utilizing traditional Catholic liturgical prayers, Catholic doctrine, and religious growth opportunities. Students in every grade level have opportunities to serve as altar servers, lectors, ushers, and gift bearers at weekly Mass and receive liturgical formation to fulfill these roles. Students in grades 2-8 receive one spiritual retreat per year.

Sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist is provided to children (and their parents). Daily character development is provided through Project Wisdom reflections designed to help each student reflect on what it means to be a follower of Christ. These are generally student-led and focus on monthly themes.

In accordance with the school's Mission, the curriculum incorporates community service that includes local/parish, community, state, national, and international projects such as: collecting food/blankets for the poor, items for a local hospice, care packages for service men/women, money to help our sister parish in Mexico, etc. Junior high students are required to complete, with parental support and guidance, sixteen hours of service per year.

The ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education) test administered at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels is used to evaluate the curriculum. Based on the test findings, strengths and weaknesses of the program are analyzed and curriculum adjustments are made. Religion teachers are observed twice a year according to diocesan guidelines. Teachers also receive guidelines on setting up a classroom altar, following the liturgical calendar, and developing prayer services with their students. Other supportive features include ongoing communication with parents through a monthly newsletter and religion teacher formation.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

OLSS maintains a climate of high expectations in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can obtain mastery of the school's essential curriculum. The staff is confident in its ability to help all children obtain mastery and maintains high behavioral and ethical standards for students. These expectations are an important part of the instructional program and undergird instructional methods used by teachers.

Instructional methods include learner-centered teaching, didactic/kinesthetic, project learning, and cooperative learning strategies.

Teachers use presentation software, streaming video, Internet research, and instructional equipment (digital cameras, scanners, mobile and stationery computer labs). These allow students to use technology daily for learning and assignments. Technology is also used for collaborative learning through networked computers, off-campus access to each teacher's home page for daily homework assignments and for the use of other learning resources available to students through the OLSS website.

Learner-centered teaching strategies target the various learning styles such as tactile (use of manipulatives – base-10 counters in mathematics; microscopes in science), auditory (use of tapes and CDs, reading aloud, guest speakers), and visual (use of word walls, graphs, and charts).

Didactic/kinesthetic instructional methods include lectures, note taking, modeling, and role-playing.

Project learning strategies allow students to learn by constructing models to study concepts or themes. Projects include creating models of Spanish missions, church models, science projects, or works of art for the annual PTO Gala. Students showcase what they have learned through oral and written reports, presentations, and project displays.

Cooperative learning methods allow students to incorporate what they have learned, develop organizational and critical thinking skills, and be active learners through small group interaction. Cooperative learning experiences include the technology fair, science fair, and educational field experiences.

## 5. **Professional Development:**

Professional Development and teachers' annual goals are based on review of standardized test results, teaching performance, and student achievement. These goals are developed in collaboration with the Principal.

The professional development program is planned yearly based on teacher surveys conducted both at the school and the diocesan or regional level. Outstanding staff members provide workshops at the annual diocesan in-services. All staff members are encouraged to share strengths and instructional successes at weekly staff or team meetings.

All three aspects of our mission statement and philosophy are reflected in our staff development plan.

In order to address the spiritual needs of staff, yearly retreats are scheduled, religion courses for religion certification are offered, and diocesan in-services addressing specific spiritual development needs of staff are offered.

The intellectual needs of staff are addressed through local workshops, diocesan workshops, Region I ESC (Educational Service Center) offerings, and conventions that deal with specific staff needs. Support staff members are encouraged to pursue college courses.

The physical and emotional needs of staff are addressed through workshops dealing with stress relief and physical relaxation. The daily schedule provides two planning periods for faculty. This allows ample time for planning, conferencing, and implementing of onsite technology updating sessions.

The school emphasizes teacher excellence, collaboration, and mentoring so that each teacher is seen as a valuable contributor with unique strengths and with an impressive potential to learn, and grow. Professional development is need-based and research driven. It utilizes existing professional partnerships in the development of training, celebrates the diversity of individual strengths, and promotes mutual respect and support.

OLSS utilizes its partnership with Region I ESC to remain current in developments for integration of new technologies in the classroom. For example, OLSS teachers participate in the Region One ESC TARGET Project, a No Child Left Behind initiative. This project provides a teacher pre-survey to determine teacher needs, best practice training, and a post-survey to determine progress and final outcomes. This includes ongoing training, collaboration among teachers from OLSS and regional public schools, and continuous technical support.

This year teachers will attend training on curriculum alignment in math provided by a McAllen Independent School District grant – *Improving Student Achievement in Mathematics through Professional Development Partnerships*. OLSS also participates in the Reading 1<sup>st</sup> Initiative with McAllen ISD and teachers will be attending best practice reading workshops this spring and summer. In April teachers will attend subject area and general interest workshops conducted by the National Catholic Education Association.

## **PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM**

1. Private school association(s): National Catholic Education Association & National Middle School Association, South Texas Junior High League

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes ✓ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are the 2005-2006 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

\$ 3,780   \$ 3,480   \$ 3,480   \$ 3,480   \$ 3,480   \$ 3,480  
 K   1<sup>st</sup>   2<sup>nd</sup>   3<sup>rd</sup>   4<sup>th</sup>   5<sup>th</sup>

\$ 3,480   \$ 3,480   \$ 3,480   \$ NA   \$ NA   \$ NA  
 6<sup>th</sup>   7<sup>th</sup>   8<sup>th</sup>   9<sup>th</sup>   10<sup>th</sup>   11<sup>th</sup>

\$ NA   \$ NA  
 12<sup>th</sup>   Other

4. What is the educational cost per student? \$ 4,619  
 (School budget divided by enrollment)

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$ 388

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 10 %

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 100 %

# **PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

## **OUR LADY OF SORROWS SCHOOL ASSESSMENT DATA REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS**

**Stanford Achievement Test  
10<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Harcourt Publishing  
Scores are reported as Percentile Rank**

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing month</b>	April	March	April
<b>SAT Edition/Form</b>	10/A	10/A	9/S
<b>GRADE 8</b>			
<b>READING</b>	75%	70%	63%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	83%	75%	67%
Number of students tested	45	46	47
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	68%	82%	74%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	84%	88%	73%
Number of students tested	5	13	9
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>GRADE 7</b>			
<b>READING</b>	77%	71%	65%
Number of students tested	50*	53	52
Percent of total students tested	98%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	82%	83%	66%
Number of students tested	51*	53	52
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	82%	68%	82%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	78%	87%	80%
Number of students tested	12	6	14
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0

\* The difference in number of students testing for Mathematics and Reading is a result of absences

# OUR LADY OF SORROWS SCHOOL

## ASSESSMENT DATA REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Stanford Achievement Test  
10<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Harcourt Publishing  
Scores are reported as Percentile Rank

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
<b>Testing Month</b>	April	March	April
<b>SAT Edition/Form</b>	10/A	10/A	9/S
<b>GRADE 6</b>			
<b>READING</b>	66%	77%	74%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	74%	75%	78%
Number of students tested	59	54	58
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	67%	79%	70%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	76%	74%	84%
Number of students tested	6	13	7
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>GRADE 5</b>			
<b>READING</b>	74%	65%	73%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	83%	73%	71%
Number of students tested	45	52	58
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	83%	71%	84%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	91%	70%	75%
Number of students tested	7	5	11
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0



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<b>GRADE 4</b>			
<b>READING</b>	69%	67%	51%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	76%	81%	54%
Number of students tested	53	44	54
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	75%	71%	62%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	74%	88%	58%
Number of students tested	6	6	7
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>GRADE 3</b>			
<b>READING</b>	59%	70%	65%
Number of students tested	54*	54	54
Percent of total students tested	98%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	54%	63%	60%
Number of students tested	55*	54	54
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	69%	88%	70%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	71%	74%	73%
Number of students tested	5	5	8
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0

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# OUR LADY OF SORROWS SCHOOL

## ASSESSMENT DATA REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

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10<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> Edition  
Harcourt Publishing  
Scores are reported as Percentile Rank

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003
<b>Testing Month</b>	April	March	April
<b>SAT Edition/Form</b>	10/A	10/A	9/S
<b>GRADE 2</b>			
<b>READING</b>	75%	81%	67%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	86%	89%	72%
Number of students tested	57	55	56
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	86%	77%	79%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	83%	83%	80%
Number of students tested	4	6	6
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>GRADE 1</b>			
<b>READING</b>	62%	57%	67%
Number of students tested	57*	57*	55
Percent of total students tested	98%	98%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	74%	71%	64%
Number of students tested	58*	58*	55
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	60%	55%	75%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	75%	66%	74%
Number of students tested	8	4	5
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	100%
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0

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Scores are reported as Percentile Rank**

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing Month</b>	April	March	NA
<b>SAT Edition/Form</b>	10/A	10/A	NA
<b>GRADE KINDERGARTEN</b>			
<b>READING</b>	81%	73%	NA
Number of students tested	53*	45*	NA
Percent of total students tested	95%	83%	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	76%	68%	NA
Number of students tested	56*	54*	NA
Percent of total students tested	100%	100%	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>			
<b>WHITE</b>			
<b>READING</b>	91%	69%	NA
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	84%	79%	NA
Number of students tested	4	8	NA

\* The difference in number of students testing for Mathematics and Reading is a result of absences