



# **Executive Summary**

**Saint Joseph School**

**Diocese of Shreveport**

Dr. Judith McGimsey, Principal  
1210 Anniston Avenue  
Shreveport, LA 71105

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Description of the School.....	2
School's Purpose.....	3
Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement.....	5
Additional Information .....	7

## **Introduction**

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School**

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

St. Joseph Catholic School (SJS) is a Catholic school that serves students in grades PreK3 to grade 8. The school opened in September, 1951, with 102 students and four teachers in grades K5-3. Today, there are 375 students enrolled at SJS with 50 faculty/staff members; current enrollment shows a decline of 92 students across the last three years. Student/teacher ratio is approximately 13:1. Currently, SJS maintains two classrooms for each grade level in grades PreK3 - 5, with the exception of 4th grade, which only has one class. In grades 6-8, there are two homerooms for each grade level and students follow a seven-period day.

The current student population is comprised of 177 females and 198 males; 76% of the students are Catholic. 83% of students identify as Caucasian, 2% identify as two or more race categories, 5% Hispanic, and 3% African American. Although SJS is affiliated with the Catholic Diocese of Shreveport, the school has students and teachers from other religious backgrounds.

SJS is located in the Broadmoor neighborhood in the southeastern quadrant of Shreveport, Louisiana. It is the largest of five Catholic elementary and middle schools located in the Diocese of Shreveport, which stretches across all of northern Louisiana. Shreveport/Bossier is a commercial and cultural center where three states (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas) converge. Barksdale Air Force Base is located in the Shreveport/Bossier area and is one of the area's largest employers. In 2011, the Shreveport population was reported at approximately 200,000 residents. Shreveport and Bossier combined have approximately 325,000 residents.

Students at SJS come from Shreveport, Bossier City, East Texas, and other surrounding rural communities. Families provide all transportation for students. Students are diverse in academic ability, financial standing, and cultural background. In the current school year, 27 students participate in the free lunch program, and 8 students participate in the reduced lunch program; these programs were inaugurated by the Shreveport Diocese in 2002.

A challenge SJS faces is low enrollment, especially in our upper elementary and middle school grade levels. Caddo and Bossier Parish schools offer magnet programs and have many new schools where families have the option of sending their children as they enter into upper elementary grades and the middle school level. Schools in Caddo and Bossier parishes also provide transportation for students. In addition, a small population of our students are part of military families and these students are usually with us for a short time, with the military member being transferred after two to three years.

## **School's Purpose**

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

Vision Statement:

"The Vision of St. Joseph Catholic School is to prepare me through a religious and academic education to become a responsible member of my family, church, and community."

The Vision Statement is recited by all students and faculty every morning along with the school prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Belief Statement:

- Jesus is the model for our faculty and our students.
- Teachers, parents, and the church community share the responsibility for the support of the school's mission.
- An instructional environment is provided that will include academic, religious, and social skills to enable students to successfully become responsible adults.
- Successful students demonstrate positive attitudes toward themselves, as well as toward others.
- An effective classroom is structured, nurturing, and safe, creating an environment where learning is maximized.
- Competent teachers exhibit professionalism in all aspects of their duties, utilize effective communication skills, impart knowledge in their content areas, and stay abreast of current educational trends.
- A challenging instructional program includes a variety of strategies to meet individual needs. Such strategies enable the school to do the following:
  - o Foster creativity and innovation
  - o Integrate technology across the curriculum
  - o Offer a varied selection of activities, projects, and electives
  - o Develop higher-order thinking skills
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative, so that our school will always enable students to become confident, self-motivated, lifelong learners and Catholic citizens.
- Each person is a unique gift of God with personality, talents, and abilities waiting to be developed. Students are taught compassion, understanding, and respect for others. Learning is a lifelong task that prepares them to be the leaders of today and tomorrow.

SJS is committed to creating an environment that will educate the whole child, helping to mold students into respectable and responsible citizens of the world. In order to achieve what is set out in our Vision and Belief Statements, SJS has implemented grade-level collaboration meetings once a month to discuss the instructional programs used in the classrooms. The teachers work together to ensure curriculum is covered based on a developed pacing guide that includes hands-on and exploring activities for students. The world is changing rapidly, making technology a necessary component of instruction at every level. Middle School has a 1:1 iPad program; grades 3-5 have iPads assigned but not to take home; grades K-2 have small group sets of iPads in each classroom. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate all types of technology into their daily lessons. Responsibility is a core skill that is reiterated at all times. All teachers expect responsible behavior in the classrooms; students are responsible for their work output and daily conduct and are reminded of their responsibilities when necessary. In middle school, students are expected to monitor their own learning through Edline, an online grading, assignments, and communication tool for students and parents.

## Executive Summary

Saint Joseph School

---

As noted by our Belief Statement and the results of our Student Survey, students are aware of the high expectations the staff and faculty have for them at SJS. SJS teachers know the potential of each child and every teacher is committed to providing students with the religious and academic education that will make them the responsible members of their family, church, and community that they are meant to be.

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

Within the last five years, St. Joseph Catholic School has experienced many transitions. An Interim Principal was assigned to SJS at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. An Assistant Principal was in place at the time, but he was removed from his position in September 2014. The Interim Principal was hired as the permanent Principal in August 2014.

In December, 2014, the Principal was removed, and a new Interim Principal was assigned to the school. The Interim Principal was at SJS from December 2014 to December 2015, when the current principal was hired. In addition, in July 2014, a new pastor, Father Mark E. Franklin, was appointed to St. Joseph Parish Church and School.

In the 2015-2016 school year, an Instructional Coordinator was added to the administrative staff. The Instructional Coordinator oversees the instruction within the classrooms and is implementing vertical and horizontal teaming across the school. The administration works together and with teachers to ensure rigorous and differentiated instruction is utilized at all grade levels.

Enrollment has declined over the last five years, from 467 to 375, which was a contributing factor to the administration changes. The school is working with the Church to include our monthly newsletter in the church bulletin to increase our exposure. Campus tours are available at all times throughout the school year. Our registration process was updated to increase outreach. Postcard reminders were sent to potential families who toured the school or who turned in registration paperwork showing an interest in the school.

As outlined by the previous Accreditation report, SJS has been focusing on three required actions:

1. Improve student performance in mathematical problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
2. Advance the integration of instructional technology, and develop long-range plans to fund the purchase and maintenance of that technology.
3. Gain the support to improve the Kindergarten Village (hereinafter "K-Village") and the Middle School building.

SJS has worked toward these required actions in the following ways:

1. New math textbooks (grades 3-8) purchased in August 2014 - these focus on constructive responses; Mathletics (grades 3-8) August 2012-August 2015; Math iXL August 2015; Math Lab (grades 1-5) was implemented, however, the lab is no longer in use and has been converted to a STREAM Lab (grades K4-5th).
2. Our school currently has a 1:1 iPad program for grades 6-8 (purchased new iPads August 2015); grades 3-5 utilize iPad2s in their classrooms; and we have a small group set of iPads in grades K3 - 2. An IT manager is on-site to oversee and maintain all technology on campus.
3. An ongoing strategic plan is being developed by the school and Church for the upgrade of the K-Village and the Middle School building. In the interim, the K-Village has received many updates that include a new fence, upgraded playground equipment, new wood chips, air conditioning units, some window replacements, etc. In the middle school, new lockers were installed for grades 6-8 and bulletin boards have been installed to display student work.

The school has improved communication with stakeholders by installing bulletin boards and cork strips around the school to showcase student work and show projects and activities in which our students participate. The Falcon Forum, a newsletter that highlights student

## Executive Summary

Saint Joseph School

---

achievement and increases outreach, is included in the church bulletin monthly. Signs are posted along the streets leading to SJS and billboards have been procured around Shreveport and Bossier to show support of SJS students and include the community in school and student accomplishments. The daily "Falcon News" is an electronic message to all stakeholders that provides information on upcoming events and accolades to students and families.

Identified areas for improvement across the next three years include:

- 1) Increase enrollment by continuing to work with families who want their child/children to receive an education based on their faith; 2) Increase the academic achievement of all students through the use of data driven instruction that includes rigorous, differentiated activities;
- 3) Continue working on community projects that benefit others in our community; and
- 4) Continue to work toward upgrading the K-Village, Middle school building, and other areas around the campus as needed.



## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

As a private school, tuition is the major source of income that funds the school's daily activities and maintenance. As a ministry of St. Joseph Catholic Church, the school also relies on the church for spiritual and material support. The school fundraisers supplement tuition and assist in maintaining a quality educational and religious program. The SJS Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) pledges to raise and contribute over \$25,000 to the school's annual budget.

The faculty and administrative staff meet monthly for a faculty meeting, and each month, grade-level and cross-curriculum meetings are held. Teachers submit a professional growth plan each year and administration conduct formal and informal observations throughout the school year. A copy of each plan and formal observations are filed in each teacher's personnel file.

The school has a Pre-kindergarten program that serves two classes each of K3 and K4. The classrooms are located in the K-Village. In the K-village, each class has a separate house that was donated to SJS. This allows the students in PreK to more easily transition from a home atmosphere to learn procedures while learning and playing. The PreK program includes early learning skills, physical education, music, library, and in the afternoon, nap time. The kindergarten program is housed in the K-Village as well, and is a full-day program with a structured curriculum to prepare the students for first grade.

The kindergarten and first grade students are self-contained. In grades 2-8, the classrooms are departmentalized with teachers instructing in areas of expertise.

Students with speech or hearing challenges are served by a speech therapist from Caddo Parish Schools. SJS also provides services or programs to meet the needs of students such as individual tutoring, small group tutoring (to include after-school tutoring by Loyola College Prep students), counseling, and, in the middle school, an advisory program called Tri-A.

The Discoveries program is designed to challenge gifted and talented students in grades 3-5. Students in K4 - 5th grades visit the STREAM lab weekly. The STREAM curriculum integrates Science, Technology, Religion, Engineering, Arts, and Math to enhance and reinforce the content taught in the classroom. The STREAM lab gives students the opportunity to engage in real-world application of the engineering design process.

SJS offers an After-School Program which is staffed by community adults. The program serves approximately 75 students per day. In addition, the school provides a location for students to participate in after school activities such as violin, drama, cheer, pompom, basketball, and tutoring through private instructors. Students participate in the After-School Academy program to receive instruction in guitar and/or piano.

SJS provides instruction that is aligned with the Louisiana State Curriculum Standards. Teachers work with our Instructional Coordinator to develop curriculum maps and pacing guides to ensure students are covering the necessary standards at each grade level. Lesson plans are developed weekly that include interactive, hands-on activities for students to obtain the knowledge to become critical thinkers and possess a solid, moral, and spiritual foundation.

## Executive Summary

Saint Joseph School

---

As a Catholic school, a comprehensive religion curriculum is a priority. The current curriculum covers Christian living, self-worth, and the Catholic doctrine. Through their religion classes, second grade students who are Catholic are prepared for their First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Students in 8th grade are prepared for Confirmation that is completed at the end of the students' 8th grade year at SJS.

In addition to the core subjects and religion, students participate in enrichments including music, art, physical education, Spanish, and library/media.

SJS has a 1:1 iPad program for students in grades 6-8. Electronic textbooks are provided as well as access to our online communication tool, Edline, which allows students and parents to see homework assignments, grades, and communicate with teachers. Students in grades K-2 have a class set of iPads for instructional use; students in grades 3-5 have individual iPads for use in the classroom only.

Extracurricular activities at SJS encourage our students to develop talents and to learn how to live and work cooperatively with others. All clubs, groups, and activities have a faculty sponsor who is responsible for the supervision of the students and the coordination of their activities. Students participate in the National Junior Honor Society, Student Council, KJOE, Science Fair, Social Studies Fair, The Times Annual Spelling Bee, Loyola Middle School Academic Rally, Destination Imagination, Yearbook, Choir, Altar Servers, Artbreak, Quiz Bowl, and Math Counts. Athletic activities include tennis, basketball, golf, cheerleading, swimming, football, running club, and cross country.

Students participate in school and community sponsored civic affairs through such programs as collecting food and clothing for Christian Services, visiting nursing homes, Operation Love, Operation Gratitude, and participating in fundraising events for charities in the community.