

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 Mrs. Catherine Karlsen
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name St. Thomas of Villanova
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1141 E. Anderson Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Palatine IL 60074
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook State School Code Number* 14-016-164-10

Telephone (847) 358-2110 Fax (847) 776-1435

Website/URL http://www.stvschool.org E-mail Catherine.Karlsen@comcast.net

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* Mr. Nicholas Wolsonovich
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Archdiocese of Chicago Tel. (312)751-5200

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 Mrs. Donna Bunnetto
(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) Date _____

**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

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

- Number of schools in the district:
 - _____ Elementary schools
 - _____ Middle schools
 - _____ Junior high schools
 - _____ High schools
 - _____ Other
 - _____ TOTAL
- District Per Pupil Expenditure: _____
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: _____

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- 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
- 19 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 _____ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
- 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
PreK	10	16	26	7	12	10	22
K	7	5	12	8	10	15	25
1	5	9	14	9			
2	6	10	16	10			
3	10	11	21	11			
4	14	10	24	12			
5	11	17	28	Other			
6	15	12	27				
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							215

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> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>12</u>	<u>3</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>2</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>17</u>	<u>5</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 13:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy 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.

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	12%	0%	6%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

PART III - SUMMARY

When you enter St. Thomas of Villanova School, you are met with a wall-sized mural with images of happy students praying together, studying together, playing together, and helping one another. This mural, commissioned, designed, and hand-painted by each and every student at St. Thomas of Villanova School, encompasses all that the school is about: a close knit Christian educational community, dedicated to providing a high-quality academic education to all of its students. Enriched by Catholic beliefs and values, St. Thomas of Villanova School's atmosphere seeks to cultivate the students' spiritual, academic, physical, and social abilities to the fullest, thereby laying the foundation for success as life long learners.

St. Thomas of Villanova School, an integral part of the St. Thomas parish, is a community of students, parents, teachers, staff and clergy united for the purpose of creating a Christian educational community where a quality education is offered in an atmosphere enriched by Catholic values and beliefs.

The St. Thomas of Villanova School staff, in cooperation with the parents who are the primary educators of their children, have organized a total curriculum:

- To develop the student's understanding of and loyalty to the teachings and heritage of the Roman Catholic faith, help them to acquire Catholic moral and spiritual values, and provide them with opportunities for prayer and worship.
- To foster our students' understanding of human knowledge and culture, encourage their powers to reason independently, solve problems, be creative and to accept responsibility for self-evaluation and continued self-instruction as they prepare for high school and beyond.
- To help our students develop socially and acquire a sense of responsibility for their home, school, parish, community, and country.

Since 1963, St. Thomas of Villanova School has provided educational excellence to our community. The school's philosophy is to provide academic excellence, build self-esteem and confidence, and instill social values into all aspects of life, consistent with the gospel teachings of Jesus Christ. This time-honored approach to education has made Catholic Education the most highly revered educational system available.

St. Thomas of Villanova School is located in a quiet neighborhood in Palatine, Illinois. Along with classrooms and a newly built activity center/gymnasium, the school has a fully integrated electronic Library/Media Center and a state-of-the art computer network that connects all classrooms to the Internet. Its Early Childhood Education Program incorporates contemporary concepts into early childhood learning. St. Thomas of Villanova School is also proud of its music program, which provides choral instruction to all students. Additionally, music instruction extends to the children's church choir and instrumental band. Art and Spanish are other core components of the curriculum. The St. Thomas of Villanova sports program provides interscholastic competition in several team sports within the Small Schools Northwest Catholic Conference.

St. Thomas of Villanova School consistently ranks 30+ points above the national median percentile in all academic areas tested. It distinguishes itself by a low student-faculty ratio and family involvement in education. St. Thomas of Villanova School graduates consistently qualify for advanced placement and honors programs in high school.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Meaning of the school’s assessment results:

The Terra Nova standardized test is a bank of test items developed by CTB McGraw Hill which assesses students’ ability to apply knowledge and think critically. The Terra Nova test was selected as the mandated archdiocesan testing and assessment program because of its focus on national educational standards. The test includes reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The tests are administered every March to all students in grades 3, 5, and 7.

The Terra Nova Testing program provides each school with an assessment of the overall performance of the school. Each subject area is broken down into categories that align with both national and state learning standards. The summary data for St. Thomas of Villanova School is presented in Table 1 below. By definition, the national median is defined as the performance level at which 50% of the students tested across the nation are above and 50% of the students are below. A comparison between St. Thomas of Villanova School and the Archdiocese of Chicago Schools is also included in the table. In summary, St. Thomas of Villanova School continues to maintain very high academic performance in all subject areas tested.

Table 1
2005 St. Thomas of Villanova Achievement Test Scores

Subject	Grade 3		Grade 5		Grade 7	
	STV	Archdiocese	STV	Archdiocese	STV	Archdiocese
Reading	75	63	89	70	89	70
Language Arts	81	68	89	73	94	78
Math	80	65	84	64	90	68
Science	79	60	82	64	83	64
Social Studies	84	68	84	67	90	73
Composite Score	80	65	86	68	90	71

Publishers of the Terra Nova test provide “cutoff scores” that define schools that rank in the top 10 percent nationally in both reading and mathematics. These scores are the minimum score a school needs to be considered as a top 10 percent school. As evidenced in Table 2 below, each of the St. Thomas of Villanova School grade levels tested exceeded the School Mean NCE at 90th Percentile of National School Norms and the Student Percentile Equivalent for the 90th School Percentile scores in reading and mathematics, qualifying St. Thomas of Villanova School as one of the top 10 percent of all schools nationally.

Table 2
How STV Compares to NCE and Student Percentiles

Subject	Grade 3			Grade 5			Grade 7		
	STV	NCE	Student Percentile	STV	NCE	Student Percentile	STV	NCE	Student Percentile
Reading	75	64.1	75	89	64.1	75	89	65.8	77
Math	80	64.5	75	84	63.8	74	90	64.1	75

2. How St. Thomas of Villanova School uses assessment data:

The Terra Nova test scores allow teachers at St. Thomas of Villanova School to evaluate each student's knowledge and application of skills in the core academic subject areas tested. When the Terra Nova Assessment results are received, individual performance information is reviewed by the teachers and the principal to track student performance, particularly those exhibiting academic deficiencies, and to monitor all students in the grades tested. Especially useful is the Cognitive Skills Index, which roughly assesses individual student ability, and the anticipated achievement scores against which actual achievement scores are compared. This allows each teacher to determine if students are performing at or above expected levels of achievement. In cases where students may be performing at lower than anticipated levels, further study of the student's progress is initiated to determine if that student is in need of special learning accommodations. Some students may require remediation, reteaching, tutorial services, or, if necessary, referral to the local public school district or private testing for a full case study.

The Terra Nova tests and its results are also used to chart the abilities of the children and to allow for flexible groupings in tracking grades 4, 6, and 8. The principal prepares class lists for teachers to indicate Mastery, Partial Mastery, or No Mastery for every student in each subject area tested. Teachers then use this information to determine teaching strategies and groupings for the next school year.

3. How St. Thomas of Villanova communicates student performance:

Three times per school year, parents receive progress reports and report cards that include achievement, effort, and behavior marks. In addition, teachers develop and disseminate assignment rubrics for all cross-curriculum and larger class projects that include a written discussion of expectations and scoring for each component of the project. Formal parent/teacher conferences are held two times each school year to discuss student progress and achievements. The principal distributes report cards to students in a brief conference at which progress marks are explained and discussed. Open communication is encouraged and reinforced between school parents and teachers through such means as written notes, comments in student assignment books, email, and voice mail.

Individual Terra Nova score reports are provided to parents in late spring for all third, fifth and seventh grade students, along with a summary of school and class averages and national benchmarks. Those special needs students with Individual Education Plans may receive testing accommodations (extended time, assisted reading of the test questions, etc.) as required by their IEP. While eighth grade students are not included in the Terra Nova testing, Explore testing is provided to them by the local high school district for placement purposes.

Information about the accomplishments of St. Thomas of Villanova students are shared with the parish at large via the school website, through monthly articles in the church bulletin, and in a week-long celebration of the school during Catholic Schools Week every February. In addition, at every opportunity, the St. Thomas of Villanova School Board and the marketing/publicity committee provide local media with information about the school and students' accomplishments. St. Thomas of Villanova School also maintains a presence at various community events such as the Palatine Street Fest, Palatine Forth of July Parade, Arlington Park Frontier Days, as well as through other outreach events such as door to door tagging, window displays at the local library, and an annual Fun Fair held in our Rowley Activity Center.

4. How St. Thomas of Villanova shares its success with other schools and the community:

St. Thomas of Villanova principal, Catherine Karlsen serves as the Secretary of the Archdiocesan Principal's Association. In that capacity, she attends Council I-2 monthly principal meetings at which she is able to share school achievements and best practices with principals from across the diocese. She is also an instructor at Olivet Nazarene University where she leads a master's level course for other teachers. Finally, as a result of teaching and leading Catholic schools for over 20 years, Mrs. Karlsen has many additional opportunities for informal networking among administrators and teachers throughout the archdiocese.

More importantly, students at St. Thomas of Villanova, through their example, are the best communicators of our school's success. St. Thomas of Villanova School has a strong tradition of community service and students are very much involved and enthusiastic about their volunteer work. Activities occur throughout the school year and allow students to show their support of the St. Thomas of Villanova School community and beyond. Examples include an annual school supply drive and Christmas "Gift of Love" drive for the children in our sister parish St. Angela's in Chicago; working with children with special needs from Kirk School in Palatine, Illinois; fund-raising and donation collection for victims of Hurricane Katrina; participation in faith building activities such as working as families to make bread wreaths for Advent, Last Supper dinner play put on by second graders preparing for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion, as well as various community service projects done by our eighth graders as they prepare for Confirmation.

People have said they can always tell a St. Thomas of Villanova student by the smile on their faces and their willingness to help. This is by far the best and most effective way to show the success of our school.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Description of the St. Thomas of Villanova School curriculum:

Religious Education: Religion is taught daily to all students and includes daily prayer, instruction in Old and New Testament Scripture, Church history, and sacramental preparation. Monthly school Masses are prepared and presented by the students.

Language Arts: Phonics and writing skills are emphasized using excerpts from the classics. Daily oral language activities are used to introduce and reinforce grammar. Phonics and Vocabulary are core subject areas for all students.

Mathematics: Subjects include arithmetic, quantity and measurement, shapes, numerical relationships and operations, and statistics. Algebra is introduced in all grades and progresses to advanced Algebra in grade eight. Manipulatives are used to reinforce mathematical concepts. In addition, students compete in math contests at local and state levels.

Social Studies: Topics include communities, geography, map skills, U.S. government, and world history. Student-developed projects such as interpretive replicas of the American Flag and preparation of a Roman Feast, as well as field trips to the state and nation's Capitals, help bring core concepts to life.

Science: Topics include life, earth, physical and environmental sciences. Experimentation and scientific method are emphasized. Students participate in a science fair in which they demonstrate and display projects for parents and the student body.

Art: Art classes provide a wide range of activities geared to developing a sense of appreciation for creativity and aesthetic values. Students have the opportunity to actually work and experiment with a variety of media.

Music: Topics include singing, reading, rhythm, instruments, sound and mood, and composers. The St. Thomas of Villanova School Band is available to any interested student in grades four through eight. It consists of both beginning and advanced levels.

Computer: Skills addressed include keyboarding, word processing (MS Word), use of the Internet, scanning, spreadsheets, and database. In addition, upper grade students participate in cross-curriculum multi-media presentation projects that utilize and enhance their knowledge of PowerPoint.

Health: Topics include healthy habits, wellness, nutrition, safety, relationships, peer pressure, personal and interpersonal development, family life, conflict resolution, and the environment.

Physical Education: Physical fitness is stressed and students are challenged in a national fitness test. Many out-of-classroom experiences are offered to enhance core concepts. Basketball, cross country, track and field, volleyball, and cheerleading are offered for boys and girls in upper grades.

Spanish: This comprehensive and interactive training for grades four through eight includes an introduction to Spanish culture, and progressive exposure to the language and cultures of Spanish speaking countries.

Library: Well equipped and staffed, the Library allows for research and appreciation of reading.

2. The St. Thomas of Villanova School Reading Curriculum:

St. Thomas of Villanova School recently adopted the Lexile Framework for Reading program and the Scholastic Reading Inventory to enhance reading skills as well as foster and encourage independent reading at appropriate reading levels. The Lexile Framework for Reading is a method by which a student's ability to read and the difficulty of his or her assigned texts are carefully matched. A key part of this program is the Lexile measure, a scaled "score" that reflects the difficulty of a text and helps identify a student's reading ability. All books within the program are assigned a Lexile number, corresponding to the level of difficulty of the reading material. These numbers are easily matched to the Lexile test scores that the individual students attained thus, greatly simplifying the process of determining appropriately challenging materials for their use. The program allows for individualized monitoring of each student's reading progress throughout the course of the school year.

To implement this program, every St. Thomas of Villanova School student is assessed using computer based reading tests and given a Lexile range. The goal is to identify students' reading ability levels so they can be encouraged to read books that match their reading ability. A reader's recommended Lexile range is 50 above and 100 below their Lexile measure. Reading at this targeted level gives readers an appropriate level of challenge with out creating frustration.

In addition, all books in the St. Thomas of Villanova Library as well as books in each classroom now have Lexile measures noted on them. Students are encouraged to read books within their Lexile ranges. Parents received reading lists along with their children's assessed Lexile ranges to help guide them toward appropriately challenging texts.

The Lexile Framework is just one of the latest tools and technology that are integrated into the St. Thomas of Villanova School curriculum. For parents, it is encouraging to know that the specific needs of our individual children are being addressed through the Lexile Framework and that their progress can be demonstrated through the attainment of higher Lexile reading comprehension test scores.

To reinforce this focus on reading, students enjoyed some informal competition by displaying their reading progress around the school building. Each grade was given a cutout of an animal to represent their class. Every time students finished reading a book, they marked their accomplishment by adding another cutout of their grade animal to a chain that stretched from one end of the school to the other. The students worked hard to ensure their animals were frequently spotted in the hallway.

3. Description of another curriculum area (Mathematics):

Mathematics is more than a collection of concepts and skills – it is a way of approaching new challenges through investigating, reasoning, visualizing, and problem solving. Knowledge of mathematics and the ability to apply mathematics skills to solve problems is an empowering force for all students, not only while in school, but later in life as well.

To better accomplish these goals, St. Thomas of Villanova School recently adopted the Backward Design Curriculum Model for mathematics. In this model, teachers plan instruction by repeatedly asking and answering three questions in this order: 1) What is the intended learning? 2) What will count as evidence that students can do it? and 3) What will I do to help them be ready to show me the evidence of their learning? Teachers develop mastery objectives and matching assessments as they teach specific knowledge and skills through the year. Instead of following through the textbook chapter by chapter, teachers plan mathematics instruction around topics, pulling information and

activities from multiple chapters in a single “unit.”

Several members of the St. Thomas of Villanova School faculty attended workshops and conferences to help with the implementation of this new curriculum. Students are already showing progress in their mastery of core mathematical concepts. This curriculum and teaching method will be implemented into other core subject areas in the future.

4. Instructional Methods:

St. Thomas of Villanova School teachers utilize a variety of teaching methods including direct instruction, dialog and discussion, reteaching of concepts as needed, individual and varied assessments, and computer software tutorials. In addition, questioning skills and class discussion opportunities are used to stimulate critical thinking and higher order thinking. Written reports, graphic and visual art work, PowerPoint computer-based presentations, speeches and oral presentation, dramatizations and video production are just some of the methods offered to students to help them explore and develop their own learning content. Project based learning and cooperative group work along with differentiated instruction are also utilized to serve the varied needs of students.

In addition to instruction, teachers are committed to helping students complete all the required assignments and homework. A number of strategies are used to accomplish this goal including giving each student a common, consistently used assignment book, as well as dedicating a portion of the school website as a homework area where students can get access to information on past and pending assignments.

5. Professional Development:

The faculty of St. Thomas of Villanova School are strongly encouraged to pursue and participate in professional development activities to enhance and further their skills as educators. With an annual allotment of \$1,100 for each teacher’s professional development, they have been able to participate in numerous courses, institutes, workshops, and conventions as well as maintain memberships in various professional organizations (such as NCEA, ASCD, NCTM, NCSS). This past year alone, St. Thomas of Villanova School faculty attended meetings and workshops conducted by nationally recognized educational organizations on such topics as best practices in reading, agriculture in the classroom, differentiated students, and outdoor education. They have also attended conferences conducted by the Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Rhythm and Dance; the Illinois Technology Conference; the Illinois Art Educators Conference; the George Williams Northern Educators Conference; and the Williamsburg Society, just to name a few. In addition, two faculty members are currently enrolled in Master’s degree programs to further enhance their skills and will join the four other faculty members who currently have advanced degrees.

Together these varied staff development activities have enabled the faculty of St. Thomas of Villanova School to continue their focus on updating methods and materials and firmly reflects the school’s commitment to providing a first-class, faith-based educational opportunity.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

The purpose of this addendum is to obtain additional information from private schools as noted below. Attach the completed addendum to the end of the application, before the assessment data tables.

1. Private school association(s): National Catholic Educational Association
(Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. List the primary association first.)

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No _____

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

\$ 3240 \$ 3240 \$ 3240 \$ 3240 \$ 3240 \$ 3240
K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th

\$ 3240 \$ 3240 \$ 3240 \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th

\$ _____ \$ 1148/1536
12th Other (pre-school)

4. What is the educational cost per student? \$ 4641
(School budget divided by enrollment)

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$ 1620

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 2 %

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

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Assessment Data Referenced Against National Norms Without Subgroups St. Thomas of Villanova School

Terra Nova Second Edition Multiple Assessment
2001
CTB McGraw Hill

Scores are reported as percentiles
No students are excluded from the test

Scores are reported here as (check one): NCEs Scaled scores Percentiles

	2004- 2005	2003- 2004	2002- 2003	2001- 2002	2000- 2001
Testing month	March	March	March	March	March
Grade 3					
Reading	75	81	82	74	80
Math	80	82	84	87	80
Number of students tested	18	27	28	27	31
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
Grade 5					
Reading	89	81	87	80	86
Math	84	82	92	78	80
Number of students tested	25	25	26	27	26
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
Grade 7					
Reading	89	80	81	82	83
Math	90	76	77	80	77
Number of students tested	26	26	20	23	27
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