



SMCS AQUINAS PROGRAM

The SMCS Aquinas Program, located within St. Mary Elementary Campus of St. Mary Catholic Schools, is designed to meet the educational aspirations of students in grade 3-5 who will thrive in an environment with a self-directed and inter-disciplinary model of instruction. The SMCS Aquinas Program takes place in a multi-age classroom, and is led by a teacher who is certified in gifted-and-talented education.

The program is open to students who apply, complete the assessment process, and are admitted into the program. Potential participants will have demonstrated the ability to set and work toward goals and to work independently. Invitations for admission are based upon standardized assessment results and the successful completion of prior classroom projects.

THE SMCS AQUINAS PROGRAM SCHOOL DAY

The SMCS Aquinas Program's curriculum meets and exceeds diocesan expectations, and focuses on specialized instruction in core areas including:

- Language arts
- Mathematics
- Science*
- Social studies

**includes Project Lead The Way modules*

Students integrate with their age peers at St. Mary Elementary for specials* and activities including:

- Art
- Faith-building activities, liturgy, and sacraments
- Library
- Lunch and recess
- Physical education
- Vocal/instrumental music
- World languages

**participating students are also able to participate in SMCS's band program*

Students have the opportunity to participate in a variety of learning styles including:

- Field trips
- Independent study
- Inquiry-based learning
- Learning contracts
- Project-based learning
- Service-learning projects
- Small-group work

CLASS SIZE

The size of the class is limited to 22 students, with a minimum of eight students expected to begin the program. Additional classes will be added as resources and interest dictates.

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION

For additional information about the program, please contact one of the following personnel:

- **Stacy Sweetalla**, Aquinas Program coordinator/teacher, 725-5351, ssweetalla@smcatholicsschools.org
- **Jill Ahles**, St. Mary Elementary School principal, 725-5351, jahles@smcatholicsschools.org
- **Patrick Batey**, SMCS director of educational services, 722-7796 ext. 802, pbatey@smcatholicsschools.org
- **Helen Englebert**, SMCS president, 722-7796 ext. 804, henglebert@smcatholicsschools.org
- Visit smcatholicsschools.org/smcs-aquinas-program

EVALUATION PROCESS

- The Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) evaluations are administered, one on each day of testing.
- Computer-based assessments are administered by the Aquinas Program coordinator/teacher.
- Students unable to test due to pre-planned events (vacations, medical treatment, etc.) must wait for summer testing.
- Scores will be reviewed and assessed by the evaluation team. The Aquinas Program coordinator/teacher is not part of the review process, and students' names are removed from the tests for evaluation.
- Assessment scores are evaluated using established criteria to determine program eligibility.
- Applications that meet the eligibility requirements are ranked within four tiers through a process that combines achievement and ability scores.

NOTIFICATION

- Parents receive a letter stating their child's acceptance or decline of acceptance for the program.
- Starting with tier 1 qualifiers, eligible students will receive placement offers and enrollment forms.
- Results and a wait-list rank position are sent to remaining qualifiers until the enrollment target of 22 students is reached.

COST

For the 2018-19 school year, the cost of the SMCS Aquinas Program is \$4,500 per student. However, thanks to a tuition grant made possible through the generous Ray and Maria Miller bequest, that cost is reduced for each charter-year student by 25%, resulting in a tuition rate of \$3,375 per student for next year.

Additional tuition assistance is available, and WPCP voucher students are eligible to apply for the program.



St. Mary
Catholic Schools
— Grades P3-12 —