

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

- 1. The school has some configuration that includes grades early learning to 12.
- 2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
- 3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
- 4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
- 5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
- 6. 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 public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
- 7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

Name of Principal: Mrs. Jennifer Miller, M.A.Ed.

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

Official School Name: St. Martin of Tours Academy

(As it should appear on an award)

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

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Jennifer Miller

_____ Date: 1/14/2022

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent: N/A

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in official records)



District Name:

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

<u>N/A</u> Date: (Superintendent's Signature)

Nominating Authority's Certifications

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

- 1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
- 2. The school is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
- 3. The school meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency: California Department of Education

Name of Nominating Authority: State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond

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

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

Date: February 15, 2022

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUBMISSION

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: December 31, 2023

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.





St. Martin of Tours Academy

California Private School Nominee to U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools



Prepared By: California Department of Education School Facilities and Transportation Services Division <u>Green Ribbon Schools Award Program</u> February 2022

PART II – SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

St. Martin of Tours Academy, La Mesa, Calif.

Using Fair-Trade as a School Goal for Global Sustainability

St. Martin of Tours Academy (SMA) is a kindergarten through eighth-grade Catholic elementary school located in La Mesa, a suburb of San Diego, California. Founded in 1951, the school celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2021 and serves over 220 students. SMA is a commuter school with students attending from all over San Diego County.

The school received the "Re-Imagine" Catholic School Award 2021 for offering in-person instruction throughout the 2020–21 school year [during the COVID-19 pandemic] and giving parents the choice of virtual or in-person learning. Each quarter, parents had the option of having their child return to the classroom or continue distance learning from home. The school's experience gives it a unique perspective on adaptations made to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

SMA performs among the top 25 percent of similar buildings nationwide based on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager data. In 2018, SMA invested in rooftop solar sized and designed to provide energy for all operations. In addition to reducing costs and lowering the carbon intensity of energy use, SMA participates in net energy metering that exports surplus clean energy to the grid. SMA's investment in solar generation for its facilities reduces 13 metric tons of CO₂ annually.

The school reduced overall water consumption in 2017 when they replaced the landscaping throughout the property with drought-tolerant plants and rocks. The school also added mulch throughout the property to reduce run-off and retain water. In addition, rainwater is collected from gutters on most buildings; in the school's courtyard, condensation from the solar roof is used to water succulent planters. SMA also has three 50-gallon rain barrels in the garden.

All SMA students contribute to the compost at the school. Students collect the organic waste from their lunches and snacks to add to buckets placed in the school's two courtyards, which are put in a three-bin compost system to complete a full cycle of composting. SMA and the St. Martin of Tours Parish are implementing a new organics recycling program in partnership with the City of La Mesa and the local waste hauler. The new program provides "Green Carts" to collect food scraps and yard waste. Students will continue to compost, but this will allow more items to be recycled, such as dairy, prepared food, and soiled paper products.

SMA has a "Load and Leave" system, which significantly minimizes any car idle times at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, with staff waiting at designated areas to open car doors in the parking lot. In addition, fifth-grade "Safety Patrol" students participate in directing foot traffic and helping load and unload cars. At dismissal, each family has their name on yellow cardstock, and the cards are placed on dashboards to allow staff to call students quickly to their cars using walkie-talkies. The staff has enhanced efficiency by opening the doors of three vehicles at a time creating almost no wait time for those in the line. With these procedures in place, nearly 200 students are in their cars within 15 minutes of dismissal time.

SMA has developed outdoor learning spaces by adding a permanent shade structure to their Peace Garden and five shade structures with student desks to their courtyard to create outdoor classrooms. The school also added Wi-Fi throughout the campus so students could extend their learning.

SMA students learn how to sustain an organic garden, which provides many opportunities for community outreach as well as environmental and life science curriculum goals. Classes conduct science and nutrition lessons in the school's garden, where students can see healthy produce being grown for the school's food pantry. In addition, the garden is a shared community area where students and the local community can come to learn, meet, and benefit from the garden's harvest.

Several gardens around the campus emphasize the importance of creating a healthy living environment. The school's Peace Garden serves as an outdoor classroom and eating area. A native plant habitat surrounds the garden. Additionally, the school's inner courtyard has become a succulent garden, and California native plants are identified by markers in brick-enclosed planters. Each planter is also a seating area for students, with nearby benches for outside classroom work.

SMA partners with a local family farm to participate in California Thursdays, a program supporting schools in purchasing and preparing fresh and local meals one day a week. In addition, a school-wide "healthy snacks only" policy also supports nutrition education. For example, the fifth-grade nutrition education program consists of seven lessons that include interactive activities, simulations, and reflections taught by classroom teachers. In addition, students in all grades participate in Dairy Council lessons followed by an assembly with a live cow.

The school's administration recognized the challenges teachers were facing in the 2020–21 school year with hybrid teaching due to COVID. As a result, they approved "Wellness Fridays" for the teachers' mental health, implementing an early dismissal at noon.

SMA has a multidisciplinary approach to curriculum development across all grade levels. Sustainability, climate change, and the environment provide a platform upon which students learn core subjects as well as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concepts. In first grade, students design and engineer solutions on plant and animal survival using recycled items found around the classroom. Fifth-grade students host annual "Climate Change" and "Future of Food" science fairs to educate the rest of the student body about climate and sustainability issues. Each student selects a topic to research, internalize, and present. Students get real-world experience in their studies with a field trip to a working organic farm, and a community march to the local City Hall where the students have met with members of the City Council to present their topics.

Students engage in STEM activities that explore the environment, climate change, sustaining the Earth's resources, and how each ecosystem is a balancing act to support life. Students in grades K-5 demonstrate their acquisition of subject material by engaging in performance assessments based on STEM applications and engaging in "real-world" challenges such as the International Space Station, agriculture, ocean life, life cycles, building models, and water usage. Eighth-grade students participated in a Regional Sea Perch® challenge, an innovative underwater robotics program that teaches instructors and students how to build an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

In 2015, SMA became the first Catholic elementary school in the nation to be declared a Fair-Trade School by Fair-Trade Campaigns. The school met the requirements for the declaration by forming a committee, creating events, and replacing products on campus that affect the global community. Through the Fair-Trade curriculum, the whole school community learns how Fair-Trade practices support small farmers and artisans who make or grow products in developing countries in an environmentally sustainable way. The school partners with several Fair-Trade companies to provide Fair-Trade products to the local community while educating them about the benefits of being a Fair-Trade consumer. SMA staff partnered with a local Catholic high school to successfully guide them through the process of becoming a declared Fair-Trade school.

Many of SMA's students are members of the local chapters of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, which operate in tandem with the local community and parish to foster the completion of activities related to the environment and physical well-being. Scouts meet in the school garden monthly and take care of the school's raised beds and citrus trees during meetings. A recent project includes the addition of bird and pollinator feeders handmade by the Girl Scouts around the raised beds.

At St. Martin of Tours Academy, students continue formulating ideas and presenting project ideas to their teachers and staff. SMA faculty and staff encourage student ideas to help sustain the school and environment.

PART III – DOCUMENTATION OF STATE EVALUATION OF DISTRICT NOMINEE

Pillar I: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

Element IA: Energy

- St. Martin of Tours Academy (SMA) has an energy master plan for facility improvements. In accordance with the energy master plan, SMA worked with the Pastoral Council, Finance Committee, and the Diocese of San Diego to save and plan for solar panels added in 2018. In addition, the school replaced light bulbs with LED lights and existing heating/air conditioning units with energy-efficient models. Currently, the school's building committee is beginning the permit process for a new preschool and meeting room building, including solar and following LEED guidelines. Every effort is being made to make the building a healthy, highly efficient, and cost-saving green building.
- SMA utilizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager to manage its energy use optimally. San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) Benchmarking assisted with data from January 2018 through August 2019. The school has a Source Energy Use Intensity of 10.1 kBtu/ft² and received an ENERGY STAR score of 100. Based on this data, the school is performing among the top 25 percent of similar buildings nationwide. The twenty-month time period this scoring is based on reflects normalized pre-pandemic operations and energy usage scenarios.
- SMA began its sustainability efforts in 2015. Since 2015, SDG&E assessed that the school has achieved an 84% reduction in non-transportation energy use. The current use rates are 101 kBTU/student/year and 2.13 kBTU/square foot/year.
- In 2013, SMA qualified as a non-profit school for the California Teleconnect Fund Service Discounts run by the California Public Utilities Commission. The school continues to benefit from a monthly utility discount of about \$18-\$25 through this program.
- SMA participated in the SDG&E Commercial Direct Install Program that provided energy assessments and energy-efficient equipment upgrades in 2015. SMA used this program to replace the light bulbs in the school's parking lot, every classroom, preschool, and

auxiliary buildings with LED lighting. In addition, new energy-efficient HVAC units are installed in all classrooms and the computer lab. Each HVAC is energy efficient, providing 16 field-selectable cooling and heating airflows.

- In 2018, SMA installed a solar photovoltaic array that consists of (220) 360-watt modules, with (7) string inverters, creating an array of 68 kilowatts AC. The solar array generated a surplus of 7,556 kWh from October 2020 through September 2021. SDG&E modeled the carbon reduction from the solar array using a carbon calculator (codeveloped with E3). The model estimated that SMA's solar generation for its facilities reduces 13 metric tons of CO₂ annually.
- The school obtains its energy from its solar panels and energy provided by SDG&E. SMA also participates in net energy metering that exports any surplus clean energy to the grid. For example, in July and August of 2021, the school exported 3,663 kWh back to the grid. In comparison, the school purchased 1,317 kWh from September through December 2021.
- The school's energy provider, SDG&E, has surpassed their Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) goal by providing customers approximately 40% of their electricity from renewable sources. In California, utilities are governed by the RPS program that annually increases the renewable procurement requirements with a goal to get to 60% renewable by 2030 and 100% renewable/clean energy by 2045. The current RPS compliance target is 33%. SDG&E's renewable energy consists of 31% renewable energy, 9.3% renewable energy credits, and 1.7% hydroelectric power.
- SMA replaced windows with high-energy performance Milgard Windows SunCoatMAX in four classrooms. The windows are dual pane with triple glazing, "Low-E," and a solar control coating to improve thermal performance. Other classroom windows are dual-paned and tinted.
- SMA replaced the entire roof with a Firestone, UltraPly TPO single-ply reflective roofing membrane. TPO is energy-efficient and is a cool and reflective roof. TPO is used in new garden/vegetative roofs; TPO membranes do not contain toxic or hazardous ingredients and are fully recyclable. TPO roofs can be resurfaced or repurposed at the end of their life cycle as there is no need to tear off the old roof and send it to a landfill.
- The school's inner courtyard is painted green to reduce heat. During COVID-19, SMA added a large windsail shade cover to a new outdoor classroom to reduce the heat island effect.

Element IB: Water and Grounds

- Indoor and outdoor water use is metered together. SMA reduced water use by 10% from 2017 to 2021.
- There is one meter for the entire property, which services the K-8 school, preschool, parish office, priests' residence, parish and Barry halls, and church. SMA is responsible for 61% of the meter and sewer bill. Helix Water District supplied consumption rates. The school leadership reduced overall water consumption in 2017 when they replaced the landscaping throughout the property with drought-tolerant plants and rocks. A drip irrigation system installed in the garden and around the property also contributes to the reduction in water use.
- SMA'S irrigation controllers are adjusted according to the season to prevent overwatering. Furthermore, their landscaper turns off the irrigation controllers in advance

whenever rain is forecast. Additionally, the landscaper has replaced all old irrigation valves on the sports field to minimize water loss.

- The SMA garden features three 50-gallon rain barrels. Rainwater and condensation are also collected in the school's courtyard from the solar roof and used to water succulent planters. The school also collects rainwater from gutters on most buildings.
- Bioswales run along the west and north sides of the sports field to reduce run-off from the lower playground area. In 2019 and 2020, SMA added a total of four bioswales to the garden to prevent run-off.
- The school controls excess water accumulation by diverting water with a drain added to the garden. The drain disperses rainwater around the fruit trees to prevent run-off that was creating ruts in the ground. The school also added mulch to the organic garden and the parking area in front of the school to retain water and reduce run-off.
- The school has water-efficient, regionally appropriate trees and plants around the property. Ninety-five percent of the school's landscaping is medium water-efficient, and 5% is low water-efficient. Trees and plants around the campus include Crepe Myrtle, podocarpus pine tree, Redbud, palm trees, bougainvillea, Cape honeysuckle, lantana, milkweed, Jasmine, Bird of Paradise, succulents, and rosemary.
- At least 85% of the school grounds are devoted to ecologically beneficial use. The school has dedicated a quarter of an acre to its organic garden and citrus tree area. The garden has strategically placed, socially distant, recycled seating and wooden stump stools in theater-style format for optimal teaching. The area includes a butterfly, native plant, and bird attractors habitat. The school's Peace Garden serves as an outdoor classroom and eating area. A native plant habitat surrounds the garden. The school's inner courtyard has become another outdoor classroom, where five large planters support native habitat and succulents. Plants have posted identification for student learning.

Element IC: Waste

- SMA documents a diversion rate of 66% from recycling and composting. Their local waste hauler, EDCO® Waste Management services, collects two recycling dumpsters and two waste dumpsters each week.
- SMA is starting a new organics recycling program with a newly added green dumpster. SMA can now collect mixed food scraps, dairy, prepared food, soiled paper products, and yard waste in the new green dumpster. Students will continue to compost, but this new system allows more items to be recycled on-campus. All paper products and other recyclables will continue to be put into the recycling bin.
- SMA students learn the value of composting through curriculum and "hands-on" experience. The school has an extensive three-bin composting system. Designated buckets located in the upper and lower courtyard areas collect organic waste. Students discard fruit, vegetables, and lunchtime waste to be collected daily as nitrogen-rich greens. These "green" compostables combine with carbon brown matter consisting of the fallen leaves of trees from around campus. A parent volunteer oversees the compost and ensures the pile gets the proper carbon-to-nitrogen ratio. Students in all grades participate in composting, and teachers have included composting in the curriculum.
- In 2020, the school cut down a large tree that became unstable in the garden area. School personnel recycled all parts of the tree. First, the tree trunk was cut into 17 stumps and used for socially-distant student seating in the garden. Then the school

chopped the tree's branches into mulch that staff distributed throughout the garden and on the hillside above the garden for weed prevention and soil erosion.

- School and parish utilities are billed together every month. Therefore, SMA depends on the cooperation of the school community and parishioners to follow their Sustainability Practices Policy. The policy reduces waste by eliminating single-use plastic water bottles and Styrofoam and teaching all students the importance of recycling, reducing, and reusing. SMA supports this commitment by placing recycling containers throughout the parish halls and in every usable room at the school. Since there are no non-service times, recycling and waste bins are always available to parish ministries and events (e.g., weddings, baptisms, funerals, meetings, and receptions).
- SMA uses a Justrite Sure-Grip EX manual flammables mini safety storage cabinet to store oils, chemicals, and cleaners. This locked location is secured from student access. Any hazardous waste products are taken to EDCO® Waste Management on designated disposal days. In addition, Lightworks recycles used projector bulbs.
- Science and math teachers are responsible for adequate safety in the classroom and laboratory. All experiments use organic material with proper disposal through EDCO® Waste Management or by correctly disposing them in a recycling bin.
- SMA purchases items that say "recycled" or "plant-based materials" or "sustainable forestry initiative" according to their Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy. SMA orders plant-based drinkware, starch utensils, and bamboo plates for school events. School leadership works directly with their Maintex janitorial supply representative to ensure cleaning products are "Green" or "Safer Choice" certified.
- 100% of the SMA's office/classroom paper is post-consumer material. All paper is reused or recycled, acid-free, chlorine-free, eco-conscious, leadership forestry, and SFI Certified. The school has blue paper recycling containers in every classroom.
- SMA encourages parents to reuse school uniforms in good condition. Parents are welcome to take whatever clothes they need for their child at no charge from an exchange bin. Through SMA's unique partnership with a non-profit organization, Build-A-Miracle, the school donates used uniforms to a community center in Mexico. A women's sewing cooperative in Mexico repurposes SMA uniforms to make other articles of clothing for students, such as hair ribbons, bows, and bags. The school's custodian takes lost and found items to an orphanage in Tijuana, which includes water bottles, lunch boxes, and miscellaneous clothing throughout the school year.

Element ID: Alternative Transportation

- SMA has a "Load and Leave" system to reduce environmental impact, which significantly minimizes any car idle times at morning and afternoon drop-off/pick-up with staff waiting at designated areas to open car doors in the parking lot. Fifth-grade "Safety Patrol" students help during these times by directing foot traffic and helping load/unload cars. At dismissal, each family has their name on yellow cardstock, and the cards are placed on dashboards to allow staff to call students quickly to their cars using walkietalkies. The staff has enhanced efficiency by opening the doors of three vehicles at a time creating almost no wait time for those in the line. Nearly 200 students are in their cars within 15 minutes of dismissal time with these procedures in place.
- Vehicles at SMA are not allowed in the upper parking area next to classrooms. The drop-off/pick-up area is over 100 feet from classrooms eliminating any vehicle exhaust close to classroom windows. The school's online newsletter also reminds parents that limiting idle time leads to cost savings, decreased pollution, and reduced noise.

SMA does not have a district fleet, bus, or other school-owned vehicles for school transportation. Before COVID, parents signed up to carpool students for field trips, events, and other extracurricular activities; a bus company was used for transportation when warranted. During COVID, the school canceled all field trips. SMA contracted Sun San Diego Charter this school year to transport seventh and sixth-grade students to AstroCamp. SMA chose Sun Diego Charter Company because they are recipients of multiple awards that demonstrate their commitment to protecting the environment and serving customers.

Pillar II: Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff

Element IIA: Environmental Health

- SMA has an Integrated Pest Management Plan through Harbor Pest Control, which complies with all requirements of the California Healthy School Act. Harbor Pest Control focuses on long-term prevention and suppression of pests through accurate pest identification, frequent monitoring for pest presence, application of appropriate action levels, and attention to making the habitat less conducive to pests using sanitation, mechanical and physical controls. The custodian provides visual monitoring for pests. Non-chemical measures include: removal of food, leak repairs, cracks repair and seal, installation of barriers, physical removal, traps, and irrigation management.
- SMA reports all pesticide use to the California Department of Pesticide Regulation through Harbor Pest Control and keeps records in the school office for four years. The school keeps a Healthy Schools Act Pesticide Information Handbook on file in their office, where it is reviewed with Harbor Pest Control. The school has eliminated most pesticides on school grounds except outside of buildings. The school posts warning signs 72 hours before pesticides are applied. Play areas and the sports field remain pesticide-free, and the organic garden controls rodents using an electronic pest control unit using high-frequency sound and bait stations.
- The school restricts hazardous substances around the campus. There is no smoking allowed in or around the entire campus. The science teacher only uses organic material for classes. There are no fuel-burning combustion appliances. All art supplies are also nontoxic.
- In San Diego County, radon levels have a predicted average indoor radon screening level of less than two pCi/L. There is no elemental mercury in or around any classrooms or utility rooms. Following federal asbestos regulations, the school maintains a file with the results of asbestos surveys in various buildings. The school newsletter notifies parents annually that the file is available for review.
- The school works with the representative from Maintex to make sure they use third-party certified green cleaning products. The school's Safety Data Sheet (SDS) binder is on-file in the designated utility room, where cleaning products are stored. Therefore, there is no student exposure. SMA's custodian is the only person who regularly accesses these locked rooms. SMA replaced chemicals with *Safer Choice* or *Green Certified* products. A representative from Maintex trains the school's custodian on best practices of cleaning and using mops and towels and safer alternatives to traditional cleaning.
- For COVID preparedness, the school uses an off-area room for easy access for teachers and staff to get hand sanitizing wipes (Seventh Generation) and other supplies. Gloves, hand wipes, and hand sanitizer are available throughout the campus. Masks are required and readily available for anyone on campus. In addition, the school added handwashing stations to the lower and upper courtyards.

- The school received donations of many brands of hand sanitizers during COVID. Leadership staff learned that many of these products are toxic and skin irritants. As a result, SMA has decided to use Purell Advanced Hand Sanitizer Green Certified Foam for bathrooms and hand sanitizing wipes that students and staff can use on skin and surfaces, with a 99.9% sterilization rate.
- SMA administration follows the California Department of Public Health's "Healthy Cleaning and Asthma-Safer Schools: A How-To-Guide." Air purifiers are in every classroom. In addition, classroom doors and windows are open for consistent air circulation during the day and after school. The custodial staff uses HEPA vacuums to reduce/remove allergens, dust, and dirt in classrooms. Animals are not allowed on campus to keep dander away from the classrooms.
- To minimize asthma triggers, the school replaces air and heating unit filters twice annually, and the custodian checks bathrooms and classrooms for leaks or other issues to prevent mold. Custodial staff also sweeps the campus using a broom (no blowers) to avoid asthma triggers. The staff has the training to be alert for asthma triggers, and inhalers are in the office or carried by the child in need. Every child with asthma is known, and their parents have the option of having an Asthma Action Plan in place. The principal also asks staff not to wear strong perfume in the classrooms. The school does not permit pillows or cloth-covered furniture that accumulate dust in classrooms. Painting of interior and exterior walls is completed in the summer to avoid student exposure to any fumes.
- SMA classrooms do not have background noise such as aircraft, traffic noise, or vibration. Outside noise is limited to occasional playground noise in the lower classrooms due to keeping students in groups and the staggering playtime during COVID. All classrooms have carpeting, and most have acoustical ceiling tile for good sound mitigation.
- All classrooms have windows that allow views of trees and nature, natural lighting, and good airflow. Although humid conditions are not common, open windows help to reduce moisture levels in the classroom and increase airflow for optimal health and wellness.
- SMA's buildings have not had any moisture leaks or excess humidity since they installed new HVAC units along with a new cool-reflective roof in 2015. Faculty and staff monitor and immediately inform the office of any spills, leaks, or condensation to be addressed.
- In 2013, the school tested the soil in the garden area with no trace of lead. Helix Water District tested 5 locations on campus in 2017, and again, no lead was detected. The construction of many of the school's buildings dates back to 1951. Since then, all the lead paint has been painted over with latex, high gloss paint (most areas, several times), and joints sealed with caulking. For example, when two of the classrooms had their windows replaced with higher efficiency windows, a hazmat crew removed the original lead paint surrounding the windows. After the school replaced the windows, the area was caulked and painted with latex, high gloss paint.
- Helix Water District has no lead water mains or service lines in its distribution system, and its water is non-corrosive to customer plumbing. As a result, drinking water meets or surpasses every public health requirement set by the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Helix Water District uses a 5-step treatment process that disinfects water with ozone to produce high-quality, better-tasting water.

- An Elkay Cool Water Filtration Station was installed for students and staff in 2019 to encourage students to keep hydrated with filtered, cool water and eliminate plastic bottles.
- SMA has developed outdoor learning spaces by adding a permanent shade structure to their Peace Garden and five shade structures with student desks to their courtyard to create outdoor classrooms. The school also added Wi-Fi throughout the campus so students could extend their learning.
- The school's inner courtyard has become a succulent garden, and California native plants are in brick-enclosed planters, including plant identification markers. Each planter is also a seating area for students, with nearby benches for outside classroom work.

Element IIB: Nutrition and Fitness

- Kindergarten through fifth-grade students participate annually in the California Dairy Council's program, "Shaping Up My Choices." First, the students learn to make healthier choices by "trading up" to food with better health advantages than what they eat. Then students learn the criteria for a "balanced" meal and the benefits of exercise. Finally, students take a day and track their food and exercise choices and then analyze how they can make choices for a healthier lifestyle.
- SMA policy only allows fresh fruits, vegetables, and proteins as campus-wide morning snacks to nurture and empower students to form lifelong healthy eating habits.
- SMA participates in California Thursdays, a program supporting schools in purchasing/preparing fresh and local meals one day a week, partnering with a local family farm, Yasukochi Family Farms. The school also partners with Yasukochi Family Farms to run a separate program that provides parents the opportunity to order from the farm online between Tuesday to Sunday, to have a farm box delivered to the school or their home on Mondays.
- The school's fifth-grade nutrition education program consists of seven lessons that include interactive activities, simulations, and reflections taught by classroom teachers. Aligned with California's Common Core State Standards, California's National Health Education Standards, and current psychological theory, each lesson is designed to be on grade level. Fifth-grade students also work on more advanced goal-setting lessons and an advertising lesson designed for students to analyze marketing information related to foods.
- All students receive instructional time in the garden or Peace Garden. Teachers and students engage in hands-on experiences extending their study of plant life and ecosystems in the garden. Hands-on instructional experiences include the following:
 - Classes in grades K-5 help maintain the garden by planting seeds/seedlings for vegetables and herbs, watering, and weeding.
 - The kindergarten class has an annual butterfly release.
 - SMA added a wildflower bed near the first-grade classroom and California poppies on a barren hillside. Students witnessed a beautiful blooming and butterflies emerging from their chrysalis.
 - o Sixth-grade students read, write poetry, and journal in the school garden weekly.
 - Students in seventh and eighth grades use the garden for reading, creating artwork, and reflecting.

- The eighth-grade class donates a tree to the garden on Arbor Day. Last year, the garden received an olive tree as a gift from the Class of 2021.
- All students contribute to the production of healthy produce for their parish's food pantry.
- K-5 classes, staff, and families sign up to maintain the school's garden. Typically, produce is donated to the food pantry located on the parish grounds. This program provides food for La Mesa residents and serves an average of 250 people each month. In 2019, students washed, bagged, labeled, and donated over 200 one-gallon bags of fresh lettuce, carrots, and spinach to the program. However, due to COVID, most of the produce has been taken home by students or garden volunteers since March 2020.
- The school follows the California Department of Education Physical Education Standards and the Diocese of San Diego Standards for Physical Education. Physical education classes are 90 minutes with the P.E. teacher and 30 minutes over the week with the homeroom teachers who take students out on the track or in the courtyard for a run/walk daily morning break. Physical education classes convene outdoors unless there is extreme heat or rain. The P.E. teacher uses the SPARK P.E. National Program. SPARK focuses on creating, implementing, and evaluating research-based programs that promote lifelong wellness. Weekly physical fitness activities also include various types of circuit training. In addition, P.E. teachers use FitnessGram® twice a year to track the development and progress of each student in 5 different areas: cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, endurance, flexibility, and body composition.
- Sixth through eighth-grade students run a timed mile weekly, and the fourth and fifth grades run a half-mile. In addition, students in the upper grades engage in creating fitness plans and goals.
- SMA hosts a "Fun Run" on their track before school. After a hiatus caused by COVID, the "Fun Run" will resume in the middle of the 2021–22 school year.
- SMA's physical education opportunities extend beyond the school day to include basketball, cross country, and track and field on their schedule for winter sports. Unfortunately, the school temporarily canceled these activities due to COVID. However, this school year, the school will resume yoga, ukulele, and Folklórico dance classes.
- Teachers and students participate in occasional "brain breaks," yoga, and GoNoodle® movement activities to enhance physical and mental health. In the classroom, yoga, mindfulness practices, meditation time, and Brain Gym contribute to the wellness of every student. Teachers in the primary grades use Brain Gym activities and exercises that cross the midline (e.g., cross crawls and infinity figure eights) to increase synaptic connections across brain hemispheres. Teachers also frequently take their classes to the school's track during the day for a run or walk, change of routine, or to get fresh air for a morning or afternoon break. These school wellness policies and practices apply to all afterschool programs and activities.
- Students have the opportunity to lead outside activities during the year. For example, "Coach for a Day" gives a student the role to lead P.E. for the day. The Student Council also leads several activities, including Red Ribbon Week, Halloween carnival, pep rally games, Walkathon warm-ups, and end-of-year field activities.
- Every SMA class engages in weekly class meetings whereby students can constructively work in a collaborative environment to resolve issues that affect an individual or the class as a whole. These meetings are held once a week and have a

formulated structure so everyone's voice can be heard in a safe and supportive way. The teacher facilitates the discussion and keeps the class on topic throughout the meeting.

- SMA students in all grades have participated in the SunWise program since 2018. The school leads multidisciplinary SunWise lessons that meet national standards for science, math, health, and language arts. Upon parent request, students are allowed to wear caps at recess. Parents also provide sunblock applied to younger students who have requested this assistance before going outside.
- The school's administration recognized the challenges teachers were facing in the 2020–21 school year with hybrid teaching due to COVID. As a result, they approved "Wellness Fridays" for the teachers' mental health, implementing an early dismissal at noon.
- SMA routinely provides a staff retreat day before the school year begins. The purpose of the retreat is to share a day of reflection involving mind, body, and spirit. Past retreats have included faculty and staff team building through various physical activities at a park. Some retreats are more reflective and give time for prayer and meditation at a mission.
- SMA has a Coordinated School Health approach. Students in all grades participate in Dairy Council lessons followed by an assembly with a live cow. Physical activities include the FitnessGram, Spark P.E. National Program, along with the California Physical Education Standards. In October, the Student Council leads Red Ribbon, CHARACTER COUNTS! and Healthy Living Week with activities and awareness to encourage students to make healthy choices. The school uses a Safe Environment program for all who worship, work, or participate in education and formation opportunities in the parish and school. Students are encouraged to embrace the concept "Your Body is a Temple" and the need to treat their bodies with the utmost respect and care. Workbook assignments, activities, and class discussions emphasize the importance of exercise, proper nutrition, and avoiding unhealthy substances (drugs, alcohol, and tobacco). SMA has a psychologist available to the parents and students when requested by teachers or parents. "What is Life Like for Teens Online" was presented virtually to the entire school community. The psychologist covered many areas of concern/enlightenment regarding the mental health of teens and suggested many ways for parent involvement.
- One of SMA's guiding principles is, "Respect the rights of others." One way they support
 this principle is with presentations. The school hosts a local child psychologist and
 the *Power of One* Foundation to speak. Additionally, the NED (Never Give
 Up, Encourage Others, Do Your Best) assembly provides students tools to face
 challenges, and the *Play it Safe* school assembly educates students about bully
 prevention and conflict resolution.
- Students take the "Kindness and Justice" Pledge at prayer services throughout the year. In addition, a Peace Prayer Service commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. takes place annually in the Peace Garden. All the classrooms have consistent and ongoing discussions about respecting each other and the world around them during Religion class. A problem-solving sign on the field provides students options for handling situations with respect.

Pillar III: Provide Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Element IIIA: Interdisciplinary Learning

- SMA's Schoolwide Learning Expectations promote global awareness, concern for social justice, recognition/responsiveness to needs within the community, and value/respect for all of God's creation and diversity in all people. Teachers and students strive to follow the tenets set forth by Pope Francis in the encyclical "Laudato Si," which outlines their moral obligation as Catholic/Christians to conserve natural resources, protect the environment, and foster their students' respect for the entire Earth. Developing an understanding of individual responsibility for the environment is an integral part of grade-level appropriate lessons taught across the curriculum.
- SMA is a partner with the Catholic Climate Covenant (CCT). Major benchmarks completed include implementing and sustaining an organic community garden; creating an outdoor classroom; and utilizing renewable energy sources (solar). Following the guidelines of CCT, the school holds events or services on the Feast of St. Francis, Earth Day, and World Fair-Trade Day with a focus on environmental justice and reducing the carbon footprint. Students have walked for climate change around the track and to the City Council in previous years. In religious education classes and all other content areas, curriculum development includes and references Pope Francis's "Laudato Si," Care of Our Common Home document. This directive states that Catholic Christians have a moral obligation to take care of the planet. To this end, the science and religion curriculums, in particular, incorporate lessons on renewable energy, sustainable farming, conservation of natural resources, and recycling.
- The school's vision for the organic community garden focuses on promoting the space as a unique educational venue that encourages hands-on learning, a healthy lifestyle, and a connection to the natural world. Students have the opportunity to compost, plant, experience nature, taste different produce, and take it home or donate the produce to the food pantry on campus.
- SMA adheres to the definition of environmental literacy and a definition of environmental learning as defined by the California's Blueprint for Environmental Literacy. SMA also implements the California State History-Social Sciences Framework that includes an environmental literacy component. Classroom teachers plan and implement a curriculum in a cross-curricular format through science, mathematics, English language arts, social studies, and religion. Units of study include instruction about conservation, the proper use of natural resources, and care for both immediate and far-reaching environmental challenges.
- Students engage in various sustainability lessons through a CA-NGSS-aligned science curriculum. Across all grade levels, students learn about natural resources, climate change, and non-renewable resources. Examples of lessons include the following:
 - All students plant seeds and measure their growth and adaptation throughout the seasons. They also study the water needs of different plant species and vegetables grown in the garden and apply their knowledge to sustain ongoing donations of fresh produce to the parish's food assistance program.
 - Students in primary grades focus on growing and tasting seasonal produce and writing personal narratives about their experiences. Additionally, art and religion lessons emphasize small group reflection in the garden, where the students explore their relationship with nature through group discussion and artistic expression.

- The third grade focuses on the types of plants and flowers that attract bees and butterflies—important pollinators that help maintain the delicate ecological balance in local habitats.
- Sixth-grade students learn a climograph is a type of graph that gives information about a place's temperature, precipitation, and climate over time. Students compare the climate of two places to understand how climate can be affected by elevation, distance from the equator, and distance from oceans and mountains.
- In seventh and eighth-grade religion and social studies classes, curriculum units include lessons on the care of the environment and protection of global resources—particularly the need for clean water in many parts of the world. Students in junior high religion education classes read and discuss the Pope's "Laudato Si" encyclical. As a result, students become more aware of their own choices and how they affect the planet's health.
- Second through eighth-grade students participate in Fair-Trade classes providing education on environmentally sustainable production methods and social justice practices to the school-wide community. Student leaders talk to the classes about Fair-Trade principles that support the conservation of the environment and respect human dignity. In addition, students lead an event on World Fair-Trade Day to inspire students and teachers to be "Agents of Change" for farmers, producers, and the Earth. Fair-Trade lessons also raise awareness about sustainable product production and ethical consumer choices.
- Students engage in formative assessments through class discussions, collaboration, weekly quizzes, science journal writing, homework assignments, and reflection. Summative assessments include standardized tests, final science projects, final reports, science competitions, and customized cumulative assessments. In addition, rubrics and guidelines are applied throughout the learning process to ensure student understanding and success.
- Students in the Fair-Trade class learn how to talk to consumers about Fair-Trade, sharing how buying organic/Fair-Trade is important to the customer. They explain how practicing Fair-Trade companies help keep pesticides out of the food chain and away from the farmers/growers. Students share their interviews and experiences with outreach during class. Through the program, students learn their choices as consumers affect the health and wellness of many people in the supply chain—including themselves.
- Students in all grades regularly participate in field trips incorporating environmental science education. These include the following:
 - Kindergarten, fifth, and seventh-grade students take trips to the Birch Aquarium, Sea World, the Natural History Museum, and the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, focusing on plant and animal life as well as ecosystems.
 - First-grade students walk to the local fire department to learn about fire safety, drought, and wildfires.
 - Second and seventh-grade students take specialized tours at the San Diego Zoo addressing ecology and animal life.
 - Third-grade students go on docent-led outings at Mission Trails Regional Park, with education regarding fauna and animal life.
 - Fourth and fifth-grade students take Helix Water Plant tours, focusing on water use and distribution lessons.
 - Sixth-grade students visit the Living Coast Discovery Center to observe and study coastal environments.

- The Student Council and eighth-grade students participate in "I Love a Clean San Diego" with a beach clean-up twice a year.
- SMA had the local Water Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College present two assemblies in 2019. "Ms. Smarty-Plants Grows Earth Heroes" takes students from grades K-3 on a unique conservation adventure where they learn about water conservation and the interdependence of ecosystems. "Ms. Smarty-Plants Cools the Climate" explores climate change, uncovering the "global weirding" phenomena, and inspiring grades 4-6 to innovate ways to conserve San Diego's most valuable resource of water.

Element IIIB: STEM Content, Knowledge, and Skills

- Students in grades K-4 use STEMscopes, and fifth through eighth grades use Amplify Science curriculum to engage in STEM activities that explore the environment, climate change, sustaining the Earth's resources, and how each ecosystem is a balancing act to support life. For example, in grades K-5, students demonstrate their acquisition of subject material by engaging in performance assessments based on STEM applications. For example, first-grade students use their knowledge of various animal adaptations to design an item that can help people in their daily lives.
- Eighth-grade students participate in a Regional Sea Perch® challenge, an innovative underwater robotics program that teaches instructors and students how to build an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) in either a classroom or out-of-school setting. Students learn engineering concepts, problem-solving, design skills, and teamwork throughout the project. Students apply technical skills like depth measurement, biological sampling, attenuation of light, and fundamental physics of motion. In addition, they learn about all the possible careers in marine/ocean engineering.
- SMA focuses on learning green technologies and career pathways in various projects across the grade levels. Examples include the following:
 - First-grade students design and engineer solutions on plant and animal survival using recycled items found around the classroom.
 - Second-grade students study local examples of engineering designs and work backward to understand how materials are used.
 - Third-grade students learn the importance of careers in science, environmental protection, and conservation in their social studies lessons. In addition, every chapter in the science book has a biography of a scientist and what their job entails. Students discuss who among their classmates might be interested in that profession and why.
 - Fourth grade learns about the water cycle and the importance of water conservation. The class explores the "real world" connection to water and the city's need for daily preservation. Lessons challenge students to think of more ways to conserve water. The fourth and fifth grades take a field trip to Helix Water District every other year. The students learn the entire process of bringing water into their homes. Students see how they clean and treat the water before consuming it.
 - Fifth-grade students work collaboratively to harvest the garden, taking on roles such as picking, packing, washing, and bagging the freshly harvested items. This process inspires students to recognize their passion for working outside, increasing their understanding and knowledge of the agriculture industry.

- Sixth-grade students learn about the use of solar energy to power homes, vehicles, and other machines. The class creates solar-powered cars in teams and exhibits the vehicles in the school's courtyard. Sixth-grade students also learn about climographs and compare the climate of two places to understand how climate can be affected by elevation, distance from the equator, and distance from oceans and mountains.
- Before COVID, seventh and eighth-grade students participated in a "Recycling Fashion Design Challenge" at a local STEAM Festival. The students had to design clothes using recycled materials. The materials were randomly selected then the students had to use tape and string to attach the materials together. The students then participated in a fashion show where they presented their clothes for judging.

Element IIIC: Civic Knowledge and Skills

- As a part of project-based learning units, fifth-grade students host "Climate Change" and "Future of Food" science fairs to educate the rest of the student body about climate and sustainability issues. Each student selects a topic to research, internalize, and present. Fieldwork to prepare presentations includes a trip to a working organic farm, and a community march to the local City Hall where the students meet with members of the City Council and present their topics.
- Junior High students host their own Science Fair. Students' projects include life science, invention technology, nutrition, global warming, energy, and engineering. Students present projects to stakeholders, including parents, faculty, staff, and other students.
- SMA has a variety of outdoor learning activities that enrich classroom lessons.
 - The kindergarten life science curriculum includes observing and identifying the butterfly's life cycle characteristics. The butterfly larvae lessons begin in the classroom. Then Kindergarteners identify milkweed, lantana, and other butterfly-friendly plants in the garden. In the spring, the class has a butterfly release near milkweed located on the campus.
 - First-grade students venture outdoors to explore the behavior of light. Students will stand in the same spot and observe the differences between their shadows on a graphic organizer at various points during the day.
 - Second-grade students create and maintain a "pizza garden" that is watered from a rain collection barrel, and deliver the vegetables and spices to the church's food pantry.
 - The third-grade class visits the school's community garden a few times a month. Students observe and record new learning in their journals while surrounded by the natural elements they are studying. Lessons include the life of bees and their importance to the garden and the environment, ways to prevent water pollution and danger to ocean life, and Fair-Trade consumerism. Students also complete a science notebook with entries of "what I saw, what I smelled, what I tasted (lettuces, peppers, strawberries, lemon trees, flowers), what I am grateful for."
 - Fourth grade uses outside areas to extend their classroom as a place to do independent work and group work.
 - Fifth-grade students work collaboratively to harvest the garden, fulfilling their roles as stewards of creation as they bring the harvested items to the school's food pantry. This process inspires students to recognize their passion for working

outside and finding empathy by serving others. In addition, the social-emotional benefits of working in the garden include increased compassion, sensitivity to others, and improved focus.

- Sixth grade meets in the school garden to come up with sustainability ideas as well as ideas for providing food for the community at large.
- Seventh-grade students have created sedimentary rocks and volcano projects outside with sixth-grade students. In addition, students have observed clouds and weather with the sixth-grade class.
- Eighth-grade students plant native, drought-tolerant, trees every Arbor Day in the garden. The tree presentation includes information about the tree, a prayer service, and digging the hole to place the tree. Last year, the Class of 2021 dedicated an olive tree to the school.
- The entire school community engages in Earth Day activities where everyone comes together to participate in various outdoor learning activities. In 2019, SMA students, staff, and parents participated in the La Mesa Earth Day Festival at a local park by having a booth and encouraging other schools to consider applying to be a California Green Ribbon School and a Fair-Trade School. Students also learn about Earth-friendly alternatives. La Mesa Mayor Mark Arapostathis enjoyed talking to the students and expressed how impressed he is with the accomplishments of SMA.
- In 2015, SMA became the first Catholic elementary school in the nation to be declared a Fair-Trade School by Fair-Trade Campaigns. SMA met the requirements for the declaration by forming a committee, creating events, and replacing products on campus that affect the global community. Through the Fair-Trade curriculum, the whole school community learns how Fair-Trade practices support small farmers and artisans who make or grow products in developing countries in an environmentally sustainable way.
- SMA's Fair-Trade committee consisting of at least two class representatives from grades 5-8 (only fifth-grade students this year due to COVID constraints) partners with SERRV, a Fair-Trade non-profit that supports the health and wellness of artisans and growers in developing countries. SERRV created a unique link for the school's parents to support and purchase handmade, organic products from a variety of countries that not only give people a fair income and self-worth but share 20% of sale profits with SMA.
- For World Fair-Trade Day in May, the school's Fair-Trade Committee organizes an event, "Agents for Change," where the committee students speak about Fair-Trade and lead a human chain around the school's field to show that all people are connected. The committee also posts signs made to showcase the Fair-Trade principles. On this day, all SMA students are allowed to wear their organic Fair-Trade walk-a-thon-shirts designed by eighth-grade students. The day concludes with Ben & Jerry's serving their ice cream, showcasing a company that takes care of the Earth and its employees, and sourcing products in an environmentally sustainable manner with Fair-Trade and organic ingredients.
- The school partners with Equal Exchange, a United States worker-owned company that sells Fair-Trade organic coffee, chocolate, and tea as a fundraiser. Students have a booth during the "Holiday in the Village" event in downtown La Mesa to sell their Fair-Trade products when possible. Students also host a table selling organic bananas, cupcakes, cookies using Fair-Trade ingredients at the La Mesa Fair-Trade Gift Fair.
- SMA staff partnered with a local Catholic high school to guide them through the process of becoming a declared Fair-Trade School, which includes effective environmental and sustainability education. In 2017, the partnering school, Academy of Our Lady of Peace,

announced its official designation as the 29th Fair-Trade School in the nation and the first Fair-Trade High School in San Diego.

- SMA's fifth-grade class (before COVID) partnered with Malia Designs on a fundraiser that offers recycled, repurposed, and environmentally sustainable bags. Their motto is "Designed to Carry a Cause," and every purchase helps fight human trafficking. The class also annually partners with Equal Exchange, a fair-trade company that sells chocolate, coffee, and tea, whose products are organic, environmentally sustainable, and protect the people throughout the supply chain.
- SMA is a member of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce, which has supported school efforts in advancement and promotion. The school works in collaboration with the City of La Mesa to address common civic goals such as the development of adjoining property to the school, traffic considerations, and the overall safety of the school's student population.
- The school community participates annually in the Catholic Relief Services *Gift of Hope* service project in which individual classes collect money to purchase animals or items for communities in need overseas. Individuals and groups in these communities use the funds for farming projects that bring families closer to self-sufficiency while educating them regarding sustainable practices as caretakers of natural resources. Other communities may use funds for improving their sources of clean water for drinking, cooking, washing, supporting livestock, and irrigating fields for farming. Each grade chooses how their donations will impact these communities.
- Many of SMA's students are members of the local chapters of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, which operate in tandem with the local community and parish to foster the completion of activities related to the environment and physical well-being. Scouts meet in the school garden monthly and take care of the school's raised beds and citrus trees during meetings. A recent project includes the addition of bird and pollinator feeders handmade by the Girl Scouts around the raised beds.