

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Laura Anne Jackson Friend
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Luther Burbank Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1 Hollywood Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lancaster State MA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 01523-4500

County Worcester County

Telephone (978) 365-4558 Fax (978) 365-6882

Web site/URL https://burbank.nrsd.net/ E-mail lfriend@nrsd.net

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Ms. Brooke Clenchy E-mail bclenchy@nrsd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Nashoba Regional School District Tel. (978) 779-0539

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

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

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

Date _____

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public 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 (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. 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 OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. 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.
11. 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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	39	36	75
7	37	40	77
8	47	44	91
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	123	120	243

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.2 % Asian
 - 0.8 % Black or African American
 - 10.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84.4 % White
 - 3.3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	241
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Arabic, Chinese, Creole, Haitian French Creole, Portuguese, Pushto, American Sign Language, Spanish, Telugu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
6 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 23 %

Total number students who qualify: 56

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %

42 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>15</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

The Lancaster Luther Burbank Middle School's mission is to build wisdom, knowledge, responsibility, and compassion by engaging the head, hands, and heart of all its students.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III - SUMMARY

Picture a quintessential New England town rich with history and legacy. Picture Lancaster, Massachusetts. The Luther Burbank Middle School is set amidst this picturesque backdrop in Lancaster, a town incorporated in 1653 and considered the earliest permanent settlement in the central part of Massachusetts. Lancaster boasts a well-worn narrative rich in history. The town dates back to the King Philip War and later became home to Luther Burbank, a 19th-century horticulturist who distinguished himself as a visionary and a true pioneer in agricultural science. Lancaster's origins are built on New England heritage, science, innovation, and, most importantly, community.

The Luther Burbank Middle School sits nestled in this framework of history and community. The school, a Title 1 school established in 1973, is one of six schools in the Nashoba Regional School District. With a population of 244 students, our school serves a wide range of learners in grades 6-8. With our town's long history, one may assume that our student body is reflective of its origins from long ago. This could not be further from the truth. Our student body is diverse, indicative of changing demographics which inform our own understanding of the many layers of diversity that exist beyond what may appear at face value. Our students come from varied socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. They bring with them different belief systems and different levels of academic readiness. In addition to our students who call Lancaster home, students who reside at the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps' Residential Treatment Campus, a state-approved special education residential therapeutic program located in Lancaster, are also integral members of our student body. As well, our school is proud to be the home of our district's PACE (Personalized Academics and Community Education) program, which supports students of varying levels of academic, cognitive, and functional need through community-based instruction, differentiated academic instruction, and inclusion. We are proud of the different dimensions of diversity our student body brings. At Luther Burbank, we recognize that it is through our differences that we recognize our collective strength. This is what we refer to as #theLBMSWay, our school's (very proud) hashtag.

The Luther Burbank Way is a culture built on the importance of relationships - connectedness - and the shared belief that ALL of our students are capable of excellence. Relationships and high expectations, positive school climate and achievement, go hand in hand. Cohesive and coordinated curriculum and instructional planning led by strong teacher teams, on behalf of all students, has transformed what was once the school's traditional approach to instruction into a fully inclusive approach driven not just by what "teachers are teaching" but what "students are learning." To this end, Luther Burbank has implemented a workshop model for literacy, the co-taught model of instruction for English language arts and mathematics, and an inquiry-based approach for science and technology instruction - all within a 1:1 environment focusing on technology as a driver to support student learning. All students, at all grade levels, experience the highest levels of academic rigor in learning environments which provide multiple on-ramps for access to high-quality instruction where it is expected that each student will excel and reach his/her/their fullest potential.

In 2019, these efforts resulted in a distinction from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We are very proud to have earned the esteemed ranking of a "School of Recognition," one of only 67 other schools in the state to be recognized for high achievement, high growth, and/or exceptional performance relative to improvement targets. Luther Burbank was not only recognized as one of these 67 schools, it was also recognized on a much shorter list as one of only six schools in the state, and the only middle school in the state, to be recognized for performance in all three categories.

A strong positive school climate has been instrumental to our school's success. Concerted efforts have been made to strengthen our school's social-emotional programming for students, staff, and parents. We have built traditions for the entire schoolwide community, implemented an advisory and a student mentoring program, and, most recently, initiated a Parent-Teacher Book Study based on the book, *Middle School Matters*, enabling staff and families to join together as a truly authentic learning community. Positive Notes to Kids, Fun Mondays in February, and Pop-Up snack bars further contribute to the spontaneity and positive climate at Luther Burbank.

The day does not end when the school day is “over,” either. Luther Burbank is proud to offer over 16 after-school enrichment and extra-curricular offerings that are intentionally diversified to further meet the varied needs of our middle school student population. 74% of Luther Burbank students participate in an interscholastic, intramural, or extracurricular activity ranging from Flag Football to Chemistry Club to Honors Wind Ensemble. We recognize the powerful impact that these offerings provide, fostering relationships and providing opportunities for our students to celebrate their uniqueness and explore their individual talents and interests.

At the Luther Burbank Middle School, we strive to not only live up to the legacy long established by the rich historical foundation of our town, we strive to live up our school’s namesake, a pioneer in his own right. We think Luther Burbank, the innovator, the thinker, the visionary, would be proud.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

The Luther Burbank Middle School believes that all students are capable of high levels of achievement and growth across all curriculum domains. Our curriculum is driven by the rigorous standards outlined by the current Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and further enhanced by the Next Generation Science Standards and the National Standards for the visual and performing arts, physical education and wellness. In 2019, our school's achievement and growth scores resulted in state-wide commendation, including recognition in the accountability category of "exceeded typical growth" for all students and all subgroups for both mathematics and English language arts.

At Luther Burbank, high expectations and results go hand in hand. This philosophy is supported by our student-centered approach to teaching and learning at all grade levels and in all content areas. Our models of instruction include a fully co-taught model of instruction for English language arts and mathematics, a workshop model for literacy, and an inquiry-based approach to the study of science and history/social science. Consistent across all domains are common instructional practices, such as problem-based and cooperative learning which provide the landscape for students to develop critical 21st-century skills, and skills such as critical thinking, flexibility of thought, collaboration, and communication. As a result, students leave Luther Burbank with rich content knowledge and the dispositional skills needed to succeed in the world that lies ahead.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Four years ago, the Luther Burbank Middle School transitioned to the workshop model for literacy. This transition was propelled by the growing needs of incoming 6th grade students and supported by a new principal and an engaged team of English language arts teachers who envisioned a model for literacy instruction at Luther Burbank which aimed to both develop students' literacy skills for the 21st century AND grow readers, writers, and thinkers. What began four years ago as an idealized vision for what literacy instruction could be at the middle school level has become a reality for what literacy instruction is at the Luther Burbank Middle School. Student engagement for reading and writing are at an all-time high with a culture of reading firmly established; circulation numbers in our school library have tripled since 2016, students and teachers regularly engage in booktalks, and schoolwide events such as the Great LBMS Read serve to celebrate reading as a community.

Drawing on the works of experts in middle school literacy (Nancie Atwell, Lucy Calkins, Jennifer Serravallo, and Kate Roberts), units of study for reading and writing have been developed in accordance with the 2017 English Language Arts and Literacy Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Units of study such as the Deep Study of Character, Literary Nonfiction, and Julius Caesar: Shakespeare Set Free, challenge students to think deeply and broadly about texts and further provide multiple avenues for writing and discourse based on concepts discussed and explored during each unit.

Literacy workshop instruction is multi-faceted at Luther Burbank. Instruction relies strongly on explicit instruction and clear teacher modeling with mentor texts to ensure skill and concept understanding. Focus lessons are supported by a gradual release of responsibility model where students transition from explicit instruction to small group and independent practice within lessons and throughout units of study. Students share thinking through turn-and-talk partnerships, small group discussion formats, round table and fishbowl discussions, and Socratic seminars. Reading and writing conferences are used for formative assessment and provide students with immediate feedback for remediation and enrichment and extension purposes. Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention is used to provide supplemental small group literacy instruction for students requiring additional literacy instruction with our Title 1 literacy specialist, and the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System is used as a tool for progress-monitoring and benchmark purposes.

Our English language arts classes are co-taught by both a general educator and a special educator. This model allows for all students to receive rigorous instruction by a content expert while benefiting from the pedagogical expertise of a special educator. The co-teaching model also allows for more small group teaching, reteaching, and 1:1 instruction, benefiting all students in the classroom.

1c. Mathematics

Mathematics curriculum at Luther Burbank is driven by the Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework. This framework provides a vision of content rigor that strives to develop students' mathematical ability through an integrated instructional approach. Students develop conceptual understandings, procedural fluency, and problem-solving capacity as they become mathematical thinkers who are able to use and apply their mathematical thinking in various contexts and across subject areas. We offer integrated fully co-taught mathematics classes at all three grade levels and an Algebra 1 high school level course for ready learners in 8th grade.

The Luther Burbank curricular approach is an iterative one. Our mathematics teaching team has worked collaboratively to prioritize standards for mastery; these standards are then reinforced throughout the year and further reinforced for retention and application in subsequent years. For example, 6th grade students learn about rates and ratios. This learning then segues to 7th grade where students develop an understanding of proportional relationships. 8th grade students then apply their knowledge of mathematical relationships to explore multi-step, open-ended tasks involving systems of linear equations.

Curriculum units emphasize conceptual understanding over procedural understanding and use the backward design approach to curriculum planning. Unit design includes a compelling question in an effort to connect the mathematical topic to real-world applications, as well as the key concepts and skills that students learn within the unit. For example, 6th grade students explore rates and ratios by grappling with compelling questions such as, "To what sizes can I enlarge this photograph?" and "How can I modify this recipe to serve fewer people?" These types of questions not only build students' conceptual understanding, they further serve to develop students as mathematical thinkers across real-world contexts.

While a primary curricular resource is used schoolwide for consistency and calibration purposes, content teachers supplement with a variety of materials to ensure that each lesson and learning sequence leads students forward in their thinking and learning. Lessons are differentiated to meet the various levels of student readiness. All lessons strive to incorporate open-ended, low-floor, high-ceiling problems. Evidence of student thinking is a cornerstone of instructional practice. Simply providing the correct answer is not enough. Instead, students are required to explain their thinking and do so through a variety of formative assessment methodologies, such as through classroom discourse, entry and exit tickets, and interactive technology tools such as PearDeck, Desmos, and PollEverywhere.

1d. Science

The Massachusetts Science and Technology Engineering Frameworks and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) both inform and guide science curricula at Luther Burbank. Grade level teams have analyzed both sets of standards and developed foundational units for each grade level. These units are approached with an inquiry-based lens and include specific targeted learning activities to build conceptual understandings and skill development in alignment with the NGSS science and engineering practice standards. Units present real-world application opportunities so that students begin to develop a broader understanding of the important intersection of science and the world around us.

For example, in a study of plate tectonics, 6th grade students plot real-time tectonic activity data sourced from the U.S. Geological Survey website in order to better understand global landforms and the constructive and destructive forces at work. This past year, 7th grade science classes participated in the Woods Hole Data Jam competition, analyzing real-world datasets, developing scientific questions to analyze, writing short scientific reports, and developing a creative presentation of their choosing by which to share the data trends with a non-scientific audience. In 8th grade, students apply what they have learned in 6th and 7th grade to analyze data on carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and then create models of representation to illustrate

impact and potential steps for future action.

Assessment at all grade levels is broad in scope and recursive in nature. Students are presented with multiple opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skill development. Hands-on labs, oral and written presentations, and choice-driven, differentiated product options to demonstrate learning are preceded by fluid formative assessment evaluations of student comprehension and academic needs.

At Luther Burbank, science is so much more than concept and skill development. It is about developing future scientists who are curious and empathetic; scientists who are able to identify issues within our local and global communities and generate solutions to these issues with intelligence and with care. Problem-seekers. Problem-finders. Problem-solvers.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Our social studies curriculum is based on the Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Framework. This framework provides an integrated approach to the teaching of content standards with appropriate content-literacy standards and practice standards to build students' skills as historians, global thinkers, and responsible citizens. Units of study are built with foundational questions as drivers for student learning using a backward design for curriculum planning. Our 6th graders grapple with "What is a Civilization?" Our 7th graders delve deeply into "Global Citizenship and Human Rights," and our 8th graders not only learn about "Civic Engagement," but they also participate in a civics project with real-world application to promote engagement for future citizenship.

Across grades, students engage in interdisciplinary project-based learning focused on big ideas and essential questions which seek to make real-world connections between our past and our present. On any given day, social studies classrooms are abuzz with chatter as students collaborate and wrestle with how history has shaped the world and how they, as citizens, can create change for the better.

For example, 8th grade students learn about various forms of government and how power is used to shape opinion. Students read George Orwell's *Animal Farm* in English language arts and then engage in an interdisciplinary project in social studies where they explore forms of propaganda in historic and current-day media and politics. Students then demonstrate their learning and thinking by becoming media influencers, producing a speech on a topic of their choice for their classroom community.

Assessment in social studies focuses on assessment for learning. Information from formative assessment tools, such as entry and exit tickets and PearDeck for Google Slides, inform instructional planning to ensure individual and whole class student learning. Through summative assessments, such as mini document-based questions and simulations, students develop skill and conceptual understanding for cross-content transfer and deep understanding.

1f. For secondary schools:

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Luther Burbank Middle School offers five related arts programs for all students in grades 6-8. Students are scheduled for each class for two periods during a rotating six-day schedule. 6th and 7th grade students additionally participate in a hands-on technology course (i-Lab) once per cycle during an enrichment block, and 8th grade students take a full year of Spanish I, offered daily within the academic block schedule. Luther Burbank musicians are offered an additional two days of instrumental classes during grade-level tutorial and enrichment time.

The music program at Luther Burbank Middle School is designed to foster creativity in young minds, build community through music, and encourage students to become lifelong learners and music-makers. General Music classes explore themes of music literacy, multi-ethnic music, and American music across the three

years. Students enrolled in Instrumental Music learn technical and expressive skills as a team. The bands perform in three concerts each year and participate in festivals and competitions in 7th and 8th grade. Each year, the 7th/8th grade band has achieved gold and platinum medals at ensemble festivals. Additionally, Luther Burbank's performing arts program is a community affair. This year saw the implementation of a high school mentor program in the Jazz and Wind Ensembles, and our concerts now take place at the high school due to a need for more audience seating and space on stage for the musicians.

The goals of the visual arts program at Luther Burbank are broad and varied. Projects are developed to accommodate and differentiate to meet students' levels of readiness, and include problem-solving, choice, and extended learning opportunities. Students use a sketchbook throughout each grade to serve as an ongoing record of personal growth, development, and reflection. Throughout their art experience, students define and refine artistic techniques using a myriad of art mediums, from pencil and charcoal to repurposed objects and fiber arts. Students analyze and discuss visual art using a developing vocabulary regarding the elements and principles of art and design, and use technology tools to exhibit an online portfolio of their work.

In the Luther Burbank technology engineering program, students develop a deep understanding of the engineering design process as a means to solve real-world problems. This course educates students in five integrated areas: science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. Students explore scientific concepts such as Bernoulli's Principle, Archimedes Principle, and Newton's Three Laws of Motion through hands-on, project-based units. During this course, students come to understand that "failure" is an organic part of the design process, and that it's okay to make mistakes! Units of study range from system design, to 3D modeling, to biomedical engineering and innovation.

The physical education program at Luther Burbank strives to build students' knowledge and awareness of healthy living, physical skill development, and teamwork. Students gain an appreciation for the lifelong benefit of exercise, strength, balance, coordination, and endurance through units like fitness training and team and individual games that teach communication, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Luther Burbank's health program is based upon the National Health Education Standards and is further informed by local and state health and wellness initiatives. In health class, students explore the many dimensions of physical, emotional, and social wellness. Life Skills Training I, II, and III are offered as an essential component of learning in each grade, respectively; these units focus on the development of both content knowledge and essential skills. Specific units of study include "Self-Image and Self-Improvement" in 6th grade, "Media Influences" in 7th grade, and "Resisting Peer Pressure" in 8th grade.

The 8th grade Spanish program at Luther Burbank aligns with our high school equivalent of Spanish I. The course functions as an introduction to the Spanish language and creates opportunities for students to engage in basic conversational skills, a study of basic grammar, and an exploration of Latin American history and culture. Comprehensive input (a constructivist approach to learning), coupled with cooperative learning to facilitate dialogue, serve as core instructional methodologies. Multiple formative assessment strategies further inform instruction, and project-based assessments provide opportunities for authentic summative assessment.

I-Lab is a technology-based course that is extended to 6th and 7th grade students in an effort to build their capacity as digital citizens and contributors. This course moves students along a learning continuum from digital consumers to digital producers. Students learn about the collaboration and productivity tools within the G Suite for Education, explore multimedia platforms, and engage in elements of computer programming such as Scratch and CS First. As producers, students create WeVideos, digital portfolios, and multimedia posts and graphics using AdobeSpark.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

The Luther Burbank Middle School works incredibly hard to meet the needs of our students who may be performing below grade level. We have developed a fully comprehensive at-risk data protocol in order to identify and monitor the progress of all learners within our building. This protocol allows staff to reference a system whereby student progress can be tracked and information shared with support staff who work directly with students during personalized scheduled learning times. This at-risk data protocol is an integral component of STAT, our student-teacher assistance team. STAT supports our strength-based Response to Intervention Model at Luther Burbank. The STAT team, made up of administration, teachers, related service providers, and our school nurse, works to target areas of need for students, build intervention plans based on student strengths, and assign case management to follow up with students, parents, and the grade-level teams. Embedded within the school day are Tutorial and PLUS periods built into the daily schedule which allow for personalization and additional related service provider support to students with particular needs; this allows for the provision of Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports and instruction. Luther Burbank additionally offers an after-school academic support program each day, which is staffed by teachers, to provide even further support beyond the school day. Programming is tracked with attendance monitoring and includes follow up with parents, staff, and administration to support our team-based approach. During the summer months, eligible students are invited to participate in a mathematics' summer bridging program taught by Luther Burbank math teachers in an effort to bolster foundational mathematical skills in preparation for the upcoming school year.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Providing students with opportunities to extend and enrich themselves in and outside of the school day is as important to us as supporting the needs of our most struggling learners. Differentiation to meet student readiness levels is at the core of teacher lesson planning. Pre-assessment tools inform instructional next steps and allow opportunities for ready learners to accelerate within units and extend beyond units with extended enrichment opportunities. For example, a group of 6th grade students demonstrating readiness levels for algebraic expressions and equations are able to accelerate through the traditionally-paced 6th grade unit. Using Defined STEM, the students select from three authentic task project options related to above grade-level content standards and work in small groups over the course of the unit span to complete project task steps and present their work to an authentic audience.

Enrichment opportunities extend beyond the school day with our enrichment programming. By the conclusion of the 2019 school year, 74% of Luther Burbank students had participated in an interscholastic, intramural, or extracurricular activity. To this end, our school has worked to intentionally diversify enrichment offerings to meet the varied needs of our middle school student population. An Honors Wind Ensemble and Chemistry Club were added to our list of offerings in 2019, bringing our total number of extra-curricular offerings to 16. Of particular note, the Luther Burbank Middle School music program has grown exponentially in size, scope, and notoriety over the past four years. Participation in Jazz has doubled, Chorus is five times larger, and the level and participation in the Concert Band program has led to the formation of an Honors Wind Ensemble this past year. Individual ensemble students seeking out challenges in music have increased by 200%, with students accepted to Massachusetts Junior District Festival increasing by 900%.

3c. Special education

The Luther Burbank Middle School prioritizes the specific learning profiles of our students with special needs. Each grade-level team consists of a dedicated special educator who serves an important dual role as co-teacher in content area classes and interventionist, providing specially-designed instruction and accommodations to meet individual student needs. This model of full inclusion allows students to be engaged in a classroom setting with a content expert, the content teacher, and an instructional expert, the special educator. Co-planning time is built within the master schedule to allow teacher dyads to plan for differentiation and to examine student work to ensure student learning. Instructional methodologies are driven by data collection and analysis. Strategic scheduling further allows each grade-level team to contribute to a weekly special education consult that affords the team the captured time to coordinate, plan, calibrate, and cultivate the work of the co-teaching model. Strategies are provided by related service providers to further complement student programming. Connected to all of this work is the strong

communication each grade-level team shares with parents as they work to provide updates within the home-school partnership. Special educators also have a dedicated learning lab instructional space in order to review, reteach, and personalize instruction and service delivery with students as needed.

Luther Burbank is also home to the District's PACE program (Personalized Academics and Community Education), a substantially-separate program for students with moderate/intensive special needs, where students are fully included in many aspects of the school day including lunch/recess, specialist classes, and social opportunities including our Best Buddies program. Like all programming at Luther Burbank, our PACE program operates on a strengths-based approach to student academic and skill development, with the goal of increasing independence over time.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

The Luther Burbank Middle School accommodates and supports English Language Learners (ELL) through best practices and progress monitoring in all academic settings and strong school-family partnership connections. At the current time, the Nashoba Regional School District and the Luther Burbank Middle School have a low-incidence designation. Data-informed decisions regarding programming are made through the review of annual ACCESS and MCAS scores, local assessment data, and a records review from a student's school or country of origin. ELL staff members work collaboratively with general educators, specialists, and related service providers in order to deliver scaffolded lessons and supply supplemental resources and materials to support student access to the curriculum content areas to the fullest extent possible. ELL teachers serve an important role as necessary liaisons between school and home. Outreach assumes a variety of forms, including phone calls to parents (with staff members and administrators present to support translations) and assistance with the navigation of medical or assistive service processes.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Luther Burbank, our school's namesake, once wrote, "The greatest happiness in the world is to make others happy." These words are the first words you see when you enter the doors at Luther Burbank. Prominently displayed in our school's foyer, with photographs of our smiling students to welcome visitors, these words serve as our community's cornerstone.

We believe that positivity is infectious. Each morning, students are greeted by name by staff waiting for them in the hallways. Positive Sign Thursdays bring music in the hallways and photo opportunities with a positive message for the week which is then displayed on the school's front foyer signage and shared via the school's social media account. Positive referrals and positive phone calls home are frequent and serve to acknowledge students' hard work, academic risk-taking, and compassionate citizenship in small and large ways. Every staff meeting begins with Positive Shares and Positive Notes to Kids, a writing activity where each staff member selects a minimum of one student to whom to write a positive note. These notes are either hand-delivered by the teacher or the school's principal or mailed home. The Luther Burbank Award, awarded each trimester to two students at each grade level, acknowledges students for demonstrating the qualities of humble leadership and inclusivity, and the triannual Honor Roll Breakfast brings students and entire families together to enjoy breakfast with administration and staff (and the LBMS Jazz Ensemble as accompanist) to celebrate academic accomplishments.

Former graduates, and current high school students, return to Luther Burbank to mentor students in our robotics, jazz band, choral, and drama programs, and this year's 7th grade students are serving as academic mentors for reading, writing, and mathematics at the nearby elementary school. Students arrive early to school and stay well after the school day is over to participate in a number of extra-curricular offerings or to receive extra help from teachers in individual and small group tutorial settings. Luther Burbank teachers go above and beyond to meet the needs of our students and their boundless efforts are acknowledged by the administrative team in various ways, such as "Wow Appreciation Notes," pop-up snack bars, "room service" during parent-teacher conference days, traveling breakfast carts, Fun Mondays in February, and a visit by an old-fashioned ice cream truck during the last staff meeting of the year.

The Luther Burbank advisory program complements our school-based approach to creating a positive and inclusive environment for all learners. All students and all staff, including the school's principal and assistant principal, serve as advisors leading a small group of 8-10 students. Advisory is built into the master schedule with groups meeting twice per week. Advisory provides students with an additional safe space to discuss middle-school relevant topics and to strengthen relationships with an adult and with other peers, further strengthening the fabric of our school community. Advisory lessons focus on CASEL's core competencies of social-emotional learning, self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Team-building games (and laughter) are also important elements of advisory. Staff and students alike know the importance of having fun in middle school!

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Luther Burbank Middle School values an open-door policy with families and welcomes visitors and community members to join us for a visit or to share their talents with our students in a myriad of ways. Luther Burbank curates a talent pool of parents and family members who are interested in sharing their career and interest expertise. As a result, 6th graders have participated in micro-lectures on local geographic features presented by a parent who is a professional geologist, 7th graders have heard what it was like to be a Lost Boy of Sudan from one of our beloved custodians and community members, and 8th graders have experienced a facilitated visit to a local courthouse to learn about the judicial system from one of our parents, a sitting judge.

Luther Burbank boasts a strong site-based council, the Luther Burbank School Council, whose membership is comprised of parents, teachers, and staff members. The Council is co-chaired by a parent member and the

school's principal. The School Council is a pivotal voice in our school improvement efforts, responsible for developing, stewarding, and continuously monitoring achievement as it relates to the LBMS School Improvement Plan. The Luther Burbank School Council also develops and analyzes the results from annual parent/guardian satisfaction and student satisfaction survey results to monitor growth towards school improvement and to make recommendations for change. For example, as a result of this combined analysis, efforts to review our school's homework practices, particularly in and around vacation weeks, have ensued, and additional components have been added to our incoming 6th grade transition plan and annual open house format.

Parents and teachers join together as learners at Luther Burbank. A parent-teacher book study has brought staff and families together to discuss relevant middle school topics. Most recently, the book study was thrilled to virtually welcome the author of *Middle School Matters*, this year's book study title, to one of the evening discussions.

Clear, transparent, and frequent communication is important to our families. Incoming 6th grade families are invited to join with the Luther Burbank Middle School team for Meet and Greets and Cookies with the Principal prior to the start of the school year, and 8th grade families are invited to experience a Day in the Life of an 8th Grade Student in the fall. The Burbank Bulletin, a bi-weekly online newsletter, shares recent success and provides important information and announcements about upcoming events and celebrations. The Luther Burbank Twitter account further works to provide a glimpse into classroom happenings on a daily basis.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Luther Burbank Middle School recognizes that the most powerful influence on student learning is the teacher in the classroom. To that end, the administration has been fully committed to supporting a professional culture where administration and teachers strive to be their best so that students develop to be their best. Sustained, authentic professional development and a comprehensive evaluation tool emphasizing goal setting and reflection are important elements of this professional culture.

School and district improvement plans drive professional development at Luther Burbank. Professional development at the district level fosters cross-district professional collaboration focused on district goals and initiatives. Most recently, teachers have worked collaboratively with grade-level colleagues to revise and develop curriculum units for technology integration, student empowerment, and innovation. This year's district-wide professional development, "A Community of Innovators," will culminate with a full day of professional development offering a myriad of choice workshops and a keynote address by Tony Wagner, author of *Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World*.

Professional development at the school level supports goals most directly aligned with our school improvement plan (SIP). Teachers and parents are actively engaged and involved with the development of our school's improvement plan which focuses on Teaching All Learners, Climate and Safety, and Community Partnerships and Communication. Faculty meetings are used for professional learning and have included Technology Tastings and book studies led by staff, and professional development on the topics of social-emotional learning, vaping and our youth, and creating safe and supportive schools.

Because teachers have such an active voice in the development of the SIP, they are active participants in, and often "idea generators" for, professional development to support the actualization of SIP goal areas and benchmarks. The transition to the literacy workshop for curriculum and instruction in English language arts (ELA) was jump-started by an onsite internship professional development opportunity Luther Burbank teachers sought out at the Nancie Atwell Center for Teaching and Learning, a demonstration school in Edgecomb, Maine. Literacy workshop professional learning has continued from this original experience and has included teacher-initiated book studies, study groups, visits to one another's classrooms, and on-site literacy coaching from the Teaching and Learning Alliance. In order to further develop students' capacities for mathematical thinking and boost math achievement, Luther Burbank math teachers and special educators, along with the school's principal, have participated in a summer-long online professional development opportunity, "Mathematical Mindsets," taught by Dr. Jo Boaler through Stanford's Graduate

School of Education. This year, Luther Burbank science and engineering teachers have engaged in a unique year-long professional development opportunity through Boston's Teacher Collaborative, whose mission it is to "[build] a movement of Massachusetts educators who, together, are empowered to reimagine the profession and ultimately transform learning for all students."

In order for our students to become innovators, thinkers, and problem-solvers ready for the global world ahead of them, we must create a professional culture where our teachers are both equipped and inspired to create environments where these skills can take hold and flourish. At Luther Burbank, this is our collective goal.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership model at Luther Burbank is built on communication, relationships, and positivity. There is a "We Can Achieve Great Things Together" mentality stewarded by the leadership team and embraced by the entire school faculty. The building principal and assistant principal set high expectations for themselves, and these high expectations are mirrored by the staff and translated to the students. It is the expectation that all students can - and will - achieve at high levels, and that every staff member plays an important role in the social, emotional, and academic development for each student. Together, we achieve.

The administrative team at Luther Burbank is comprised of the building principal and the assistant principal, but titles really operate only as names at Luther Burbank. The principal and assistant principal view themselves as both stewards and servants in service to the school community, staff, students, and families alike. The principal and assistant principal share responsibilities fluently, and work to be ever-present and always available. From arriving early to ensure that the building is staff and student ready, to sharing time in the cafeteria with students during lunch, to working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop the next iteration of our school's improvement plan, no job is too small, no job too large.

The administrative team values the importance of shared decision-making for an effective and positive school climate. A Principal Advisory Council, a voluntary council comprised of teacher leaders and staff, has helped prioritize school needs for improvement, resulting in master schedule changes to maximize time on learning and the integration of advisory at each grade level. Each week, the principal and assistant principal meet with grade level and specialist teams during common planning times to discuss academic growth and to collaborate in support of student needs.

Transparent, responsive, and timely communication are further elements of an effective and positive school climate. As such, they are important to the Luther Burbank leadership team and, humbly, viewed as a leadership strength. Inspired by the work of Dr. Todd Whitaker, nationally known author and lead educator, the principal communicates with staff via a Monday Memo. Each week, the Monday Memo includes a timely reflection on teaching and learning relevant to the school, important announcements, a two-week look ahead, a learning segment on social-emotional learning, a puzzler, and a picture of the week.

All in all, school leadership at Luther Burbank is a partnership that reflects high expectations for ourselves on behalf of our students. Together we are committed to sustaining, and even further strengthening, our positive school climate in support of continual growth and achievement for all learners, always.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most instrumental factor in our collective success at Luther Burbank is our shared belief system that all students are capable of achievement at high levels. This belief system, which is driven by creating opportunities for educational equity and educational excellence, serves as the foundation for core instructional programming at Luther Burbank.

An integral practice at Luther Burbank that illustrates this core belief system “in action” is our model of full inclusion for all learners at all grade levels. Four years ago, faculty and staff reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring open doors of educational equity with the transition to a fully co-taught model of instruction for mathematics and English language arts. This transition involved sustained and focused professional development, fluid communication with families, and a reworking of our master schedule to allow for dedicated co-planning time each week. The results of these efforts have been profound. Cohesive and coordinated planning between special educators and content teachers has led to further improved instructional practice within the classroom. All students have benefited from the co-taught model for instruction which combines content-rich instruction with strong, differentiated teaching practices. Students with individual education plans, specifically, benefit from the inclusion setting, where they are exposed to the rigors of grade-level content and provided the opportunity to engage in classroom discourse with peers. Academic support during PLUS and tutorial periods throughout the week complement this instructional model by providing students with opportunities for specially-designed instruction to help further reinforce, build, and preview important skills and conceptual understandings. These concerted and coordinated efforts have resulted in steady growth and notable achievement on statewide assessments for mathematics and English language arts. In 2019, mean student growth percentiles in English language arts for All Students and for students identified in the Students with Disabilities and High Needs subgroups, respectively, were at a three year high, and performance in mathematics reflected equitable growth and performance for All Students and for all identified subgroups.

We are incredibly grateful for the commitment of our dedicated faculty and staff, and we are infinitely proud of our students for all of their efforts and hard work. Students enter Luther Burbank as 6th graders surrounded by teachers and staff confident in their students' ability to learn and achieve at high levels. Students leave Luther Burbank as 8th graders, confident learners in their own right. Collectively, we believe this growing identity as assured, resilient, and creative learners is the greatest gift we can instill within our students; it is what our students will need most as they move onward, towards their next big adventure.