

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

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

City Minot Air Force Base State ND Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 58704-1423

County Ward County

Telephone (701) 727-3300 Fax (701) 727-3303

Web site/URL http://memorial.minot.k12.nd.us/ E-mail stephen.young@minot.k12.nd.us

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* Dr. Mark Vollmer E-mail mark.vollmer@minot.k12.nd.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Minot Public School District #1 Tel. (701) 857-4400

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 Mr. Jim Rostad
(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):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 18 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	30	35	65
7	29	33	62
8	32	30	62
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	91	98	189

*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):
- 1.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5.3 % Asian
 - 15.3 % Black or African American
 - 14.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 62.4 % White
 - 0.5 % 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: 32%

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

Memorial Middle School is located on Minot Air Force Base and serves the dependents of a transient military population.

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	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	59
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	186
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.32
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	32

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

Tagalog

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
1 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 21 %

Total number students who qualify: 39

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

15 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>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</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: 1

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	8
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 24:1

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%	95%	95%	96%	96%
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 mission of Memorial Middle School is to empower all learners to succeed in a changing world.

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

Memorial Middle School, located on Minot Air Force Base, is home to two major Air Force units: the 5th Bomb Wing and the 91st Missile Wing. The 5th Bomb Wing and 91st Missile Wing are Air Force Global Strike Command units. The base, with a military population of over 5,000 military personnel, plus their families, is located within Ward County, North Dakota. Minot Public Schools, a district of nearly 8,000 students spread across more than a dozen schools in a core city of approximately 50,000 people, operates three schools on the base, including Memorial Middle School. Nearly all of Memorial's students are military dependents.

The school's administration and staff work closely with the Air Force's School Liaison Office to meet the unique needs of our student population. It is estimated that these children move six to nine times during their K-12 school years. We strive to remove barriers to our students' educational success, encouraging and challenging them to reach their full potential.

Our school applies Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), an evidence-based, three-tiered model that uses systems and data to drive practices that support decision making, positive behaviors, social competence, and academic achievement.

Because our student population is transient, it is especially important that we support our students in a variety of ways. Supported by the Military Child Education Coalition, our Junior Student 2 Student (JS2S) program seeks to ease transitions. A peer-to-peer program, JS2S helps create a positive middle school environment for our students.

We also utilize Sources of Strength, a peer-to-peer program that focuses on suicide prevention but also touches upon violence and substance abuse. The program promotes connectivity, school bonding, and appropriate peer-adult partnerships, and it encourages students to seek help when it is needed.

For those students and their families who may request more intensive support, the Military & Family Life Counseling (MFLC) Program is a resource that is available to our school community. The MFLC program is a Department of Defense funded program that provides confidential, short-term, non-medical counseling services. Through the MFLC program, a licensed professional counselor (LPC) is in our school multiple times per week, engaging with our students, making a variety of group presentations, and (with parental consent) providing counseling services. This is in addition to services provided by our own school counselor.

Additionally, we have implemented the Second Step Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program. This program allows our teachers to implement a curricular structure which enables those in our school to understand, manage, and express emotions and empathy, develop positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

This dovetails well with our implementation of the Love and Logic approach, which informs our discipline policies and procedures. The philosophy of Love and Logic is that students become more motivated and have fewer discipline problems when they are respected and appreciated by their teachers. It encourages responsible decision making, allowing students to make choices (within limits) and to solve their own problems, enabling them to understand and "own" the consequences of their decisions. Consequences are provided by staff with empathy and compassion.

Our teachers form Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), both within the school building and across the school district. This further fosters relationships, the identification of shared goals and ideals, and contributes to a strong and shared culture.

These key programs and strategies form the overarching framework in which we operate, for the benefit of our students.

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

North Dakota Content Standards serve as our foundation for what students should know and be able to do for each grade span. The standards represent our goals for teaching and learning. In North Dakota, the content standards serve as a model. Minot Public Schools has identified prioritized standards for content areas. This has been a collaborative process among content area teachers from multiple schools within the school district, including Memorial Middle School. In meeting the identified standards, teachers at Memorial Middle School are free to engage in the art of teaching, employing the pedagogy that is the most effective with particular students or groups of students and that is informed by the teacher's own philosophy of education, understood within the context of Memorial's broader school culture of respect, relationship building, and self-responsibility. It is not a one-size-fits-all approach. This may include but is not limited to cooperative learning, direct instruction, differentiated instruction, and technology-assisted instruction. Progress toward identified goals and standards is measured through formative and summative assessment, as well as the North Dakota State Assessment program. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction ensures that each of the state assessments meet rigorous program requirements for validity and reliability, inclusion, technical quality, and reporting.

1b. Reading/English language arts

North Dakota's Language Arts and Literacy Content Standards indicate, in part, that students should comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school; therefore, students entering the sixth grade at Memorial take reading and language arts as two separate courses, enrolling in both Reading and Language Arts 6. Exceptional students may enroll in Advanced Language Arts 6, in addition to Reading, while those students who struggle may utilize Read 180 or System 44, when appropriate. When students enter the seventh grade, reading is no longer a stand-alone course (for most students), but students now begin to understand literature and writing as parts of an integrated whole in Language Arts 7. Among other things, students read novels and are exposed to continued instruction in vocabulary acquisition and use, writing, and the conventions of standard English. In the eighth grade, students continue the acquisition of increasingly complex language arts and literacy skills, enrolling in Language Arts 8.

This approach is utilized, because there is a logical progression in both what is taught and what is expected from students, with each successive year building upon prior knowledge. Additionally, our school seeks to meet the needs of all learners by differentiating instruction within individual classrooms, as well as in our course offerings. While we continue to provide remedial instruction to all of our students, we will begin offering Advanced Language Arts 7 in the 2020-2021 school year. This reflects our commitment to meeting the needs of all learners and to continuous improvement.

The progression of Reading/Language Arts coursework at Memorial Middle School prepares students well to enter the ninth grade and benefit from a variety of freshman course offerings at the high school level, including Language Arts, Honors Language Arts, Fundamentals of Language Arts/Read 180, and Basic Writing, depending upon the student's needs and interests.

Individual classroom teachers may use their professional judgment to choose the instructional practices and activities that best help students meet standards. Teachers are encouraged to implement a variety of instructional strategies. Tiering is a common instructional approach in Reading/Language Arts at Memorial Middle School, since the writing process essentially represents the components of a tiered task. The instructional approaches chosen by teachers are guided by formative assessments that drive the next steps of instruction and by summative assessments that underscore what the student has learned.

1c. Mathematics

North Dakota's Mathematics Content Standards outline the math knowledge and skills that should be mastered at each level. In this content area, Minot Public Schools has developed prioritized standards, as well as pacing guides, scales, and scale-aligned assessments. This work was accomplished collaboratively by teachers across the district. It provides clear direction for the teaching and learning of mathematics at Memorial Middle School.

Instruction is differentiated both in course offerings and within courses. Students are placed in math courses based on the needs and abilities of individual students. Most students are enrolled in their grade-level math course, while other students are more appropriately placed in advanced courses or a transitional math program, if remediation is needed. By eighth grade, students may take a mathematics course for high school credit.

Beyond differentiation, teachers use a variety of instructional approaches, such as cooperative learning, direct instruction, and tiering to meet the established standards. Learning is additionally supported through technology, both in the use of technology within the classroom and by web-based programs such as IXL.

Instructional decisions are made based upon formative assessment. Additionally, IXL can provide a variety of analytics for those students utilizing the program.

Lastly, the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA) program measures student performance in mathematics in relation to the established state standards.

This data can be analyzed by PLCs engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement.

1d. Science

At Memorial Middle School, North Dakota's Science Content Standards guide our teaching and learning with regard to science content knowledge and hands-on practices. The state science standards are aligned across disciplines and grade levels. At the middle school level, the state standards are grouped by content domain: earth and space sciences, life science, physical science, and engineering technology. Additionally, teachers from across our district have worked collaboratively to identify prioritized science standards and develop proficiency scales.

Memorial Middle School's science offerings include Science 6, which is a survey course presenting the above-referenced domains. Students then move to Life Science in the seventh grade and Earth Science in the eighth grade. This is a logical progression that prepares students to take a physical science course as high school freshmen.

In our sixth-grade course, students begin a "deeper dive" into the scientific method. In all of our science classes, hands-on learning engages students in inquiry and discovery. Sixth grade students, for example, may build a model of an atom. Other students encounter dissection, often for the first time. Teachers also make use of both direct instruction and cooperative learning.

Formative assessment guides next steps in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, eighth grade students complete the state assessment in science, measuring student performance in science in relation to the established state standards. Collectively, this data is used to drive instruction, including reteaching, pacing, and curricular revisions, with the overall goal of improving student learning.

Additionally, teachers participate in our Professional Learning Communities, exchanging best practices, making appropriate suggestions for change, and analyzing data.

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

Memorial Middle School's social studies offerings begin in the sixth grade, with a survey of world history. Seventh grade students continue with World Geography, and students in the eighth grade take a survey course in U.S. History. In the eighth-grade course, the teacher at Memorial has embedded North Dakota studies. The current North Dakota Social Studies Content standards were adopted in August 2019, and our teachers are currently identifying prioritized standards and revising scales for our students. This work will further the development of our curriculum.

Teachers use a variety of instructional approaches. In addition to direct instruction, students have engaged in cooperative learning and in a variety of hands-on projects, such as creating "ancient" scrolls that reinforce course content. Another group of students keeps journals regarding current events, which are reviewed by the teacher and can serve as a springboard for classroom discussion.

Formative assessment is used to make decisions about future instruction, including reteaching, pacing, and curricular revisions, to improve student learning.

1f. For secondary schools:

Memorial Middle School, spanning grades six through eight, does not offer apprenticeships or industry-recognized credentials; however, state content standards frequently connect to college and career readiness anchor standards. The college and career readiness anchor standards and grade-specific content standards are seen as complementary, together defining the knowledge, skills, and abilities that all students must demonstrate. Memorial Middle School supports these standards, as appropriate at this grade level, for the benefit and success of our students.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Opportunities exist in other curriculum areas at Memorial Middle School. These other curriculum areas support our students by enabling them to acquire additional knowledge, skills, and abilities upon which they can continue to build.

In the arts, students in the seventh and eighth grades may take Art, a one-semester course that allows them to explore drawing, painting, and ceramics. Musically inclined students in grades six, seven, and eight may select Band, Choir, or Orchestra. Each of these is a one-year (two semester) course. Another elective, Music Industry, a one-semester course, is available for those seventh- and eighth-grade students who have an interest in music but who may not be interested in playing an instrument.

In physical education, health, and nutrition, students in grades seven and eight may choose Wellness, a one-year (two semester) course that combines health and physical education. Sixth-grade students take a traditional P.E. class, which meets every other day for one year (two semesters). Family and Consumer Science, a one-semester course, is available as an eighth-grade elective.

Students in the eighth grade may also elect to take Foreign Language, a one-semester course that introduces students to beginning Spanish, German, and French. The course has the added benefit of helping students select one of those three foreign languages for further study as high school freshmen.

Our Tech Ed course, a one-semester course, is offered as an elective to seventh- and eighth-grade students. It introduces students to robotics, programming, and engineering. This course is very popular with our students, whose Air Force parents frequently work in technology-related fields.

Memorial's library staff provides library services to our students, as well as supporting the ELA curriculum through periodic lessons and activities.

Lastly, seventh- and eighth-grade students may also elect to take Business Ownership and Careers, a one-semester course.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

STAR testing is administered to all students three times a school year in the areas of reading, math, and writing. Data from these assessments are analyzed to identify students below, at, and above grade level in these areas. Students who are performing below grade level in the areas of reading and math are given opportunities to focus—and make progress—on foundational skills through intervention classes, such as Transitional Math, System 44, and Read 180. These courses are supplemental to their grade level courses and allow students to work at a pace that is better tailored to their individual needs, and it reteaches them the skills that they need to work toward grade level performance.

In Transitional Math, students participate in structured lessons and activities that aim to address the understanding and generalization of foundational math skills, such as place value, number sense, basic operations, and order of operations.

In System 44, students are given individualized instruction through structured group lessons and student software that addresses foundational phonological awareness skills. Skills are taught and reinforced in the areas of phonemic awareness to enhance progress on decoding and reading fluency. Students work their way through multiple series of skills tailored to their needs until they are reading to move on to Read 180.

As the next step in reading intervention, Read 180 supports students in the areas of vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Much like System 44, this is achieved through group lessons and the use of student software that is geared toward every student's individual needs. Students work their way through a series of workshops and categories that progress with them as they enhance their reading skills. In all mentioned intervention courses, student progress is tracked consistently through assessments that are strategically timed throughout the school year in order to determine when students have reached their academic goals and are ready to be mainstreamed in the grade-level curriculum.

3b. Students performing above grade level

STAR testing that is administered three times a year aims to identify students who are performing above grade level in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Students who are performing above grade level in the areas of language arts and math are given the opportunity to enhance their education and skills, depending grade level.

In the sixth grade, those students who have advanced skills in the area of language arts have the option of taking an advanced language arts class. In this course, students are given more complex direction and expectations in writing and other skills. This delivery allows students to focus on continuously enhancing their current abilities. In addition to this course, students who are performing above grade level in the area of math also have the option of taking an advanced math class. This course engages students in the sixth-grade math curriculum, but also includes additional material from the seventh-grade math curriculum, such as work with integers, multi-step equations, multi-step inequalities, and higher order thinking skills. For those sixth graders who are further above grade level, they have the option of taking pre-algebra as a sixth grader, algebra as a seventh grader, and then geometry as an eighth grader.

3c. Special education

Students who are on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are given support and special education service minutes through the implementation of a daily transition hour that takes the place of an elective credit. In this transition class, general education curriculum and skills are retaught and reinforced by the special education strategist in small group and individualized settings, depending on the needs of the students. Necessary modifications and tools are given to support the students in their grade level coursework.

Alternative methods are used for reteaching and learning, such as the use of manipulatives, oral responses, visuals, assistive technology, and having material read aloud. Students who have disabilities other than specific learning disabilities are also given supports in areas such as executive functioning skills, social and behavioral skills, and self-regulation. Paraprofessionals are available to reinforce these, and learning skills, and to help students generalize their skills across the school setting. General education teachers are informed of students with IEPs and the accommodations and/or modifications that are needed for those students to make the curriculum accessible to them, as well as give them the opportunity to be successful. Furthermore, students who require related services are given access to those as well. These include occupational therapy services and speech and language services. Special education staff works closely with all teachers and administration in order to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

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

Minot Public Schools operates the English Language Learners (ELL) program to serve the needs of the district's Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The philosophy of this program is to enhance academic achievement by including the LEP student in mainstream classroom activities and curriculum as much as possible. The ELL curriculum is designed to enrich language development in the classroom. The ELL Program promotes a positive learning environment in which each student's first language, culture and ethnic heritage is valued. The ELL teachers work with students whose first language is a language other than English and who qualify for ELL services through a testing and referral process.

As of Spring 2020, there is one student receiving services at Memorial Middle School. The teacher meets with this student one-on-one for direct instruction and is also available to assist classroom teachers with appropriate modifications and strategies.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Memorial Middle School, our primary method of engaging and motivating students is to focus on building positive relationships throughout the school. The size of our school allows multiple opportunities during the day to create positive connections with our students. We focus on the effect use and continued improvement of our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and Trauma Informed Practices for Schools (TIPS) initiatives to better our building climate and culture.

We have also added our SOAR (Safety, Ownership, Achievement, Respect) initiative, and we select a monthly “SOAR-ing Student” Award for each grade level. Students are nominated by teachers to recognize their character, hard work, and effort within our school. Staff members also have the opportunity to connect with each other through weekly staff “shout-outs” and through events organized by the Pride Committee. Lastly, in our transient school community, it is important to have students feel welcome all year round when they join our school family. Our Junior Student to Student (JS2S) program’s purpose is to make students feel welcome and safe at Memorial Middle School, easing transitions. The hand-selected team of students serves as leaders in our school and continually works to build positive connections between students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Memorial Middle School engages with family and community in a variety of ways. We use social media to help engage our families and community. Frequent posts and photos allow families to see their children participating in sporting events, science labs, and spirit days, while allowing the option to share with loved ones across the country and even the world. Throughout the year, we have had deliberate outreach to the Northern Sentry, a newspaper which focuses on the base community, celebrating the many positives at Memorial, such as our Math Counts team, Spelling Bee champions, Youth of the Year Awards, Honor Rolls, and the winner of the Anti-Vaping Sticker contest through the First District Health Unit. Newspaper clippings are displayed in the main hallway of our school for students to see and celebrate.

We also work closely with other agencies and organizations in our outreach to families and community. We are also very proud of our continued collaboration with the Ward County Sheriff’s Department and our School Resource Officer. Our school also communicates regularly with the School Liaison Office on the base, to provide additional opportunities for our military students. Through that collaboration, we have school representation on the Quality Improvement Team (QIT) designed to work closely with Youth Program Leadership on the Minot Air Force Base.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Memorial Middle School is an environment where teachers feel valued and supported. This is evidenced, in part, by relatively low staff turnover, with several teachers having approximately twenty years of service to the Memorial school community.

Teachers have the freedom to implement new ideas in the classroom and then to use data to determine the effectiveness of those practices. Using data, teachers are encouraged to embrace effective practices, to share those effective practices with colleagues and refine them, and to abandon practices that are not effective. This helps to create a school culture of effective practice and collaboration.

As part of the largest public school district in our area, the staff at Memorial Middle School benefits from a wealth of professional development opportunities, further enabling them to grow professionally. This includes but is not limited to opportunities for professional development in Love and Logic, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Love and Logic, Trauma Informed Practices, and Crisis Prevention Intervention. Professional development opportunities range from multi-day conferences or training to “power hours,” which provide the option to learn needed skills after school. Many of our professional development opportunities support school- or district-wide initiatives and are sustained, collaborative, job

embedded, data driven, and student focused. These opportunities increase the capacity of teachers and administrators to meet the needs of our student population. Additionally, our staff can take advantage of our close proximity to Minot State University.

4. School Leadership:

The principal of Memorial Middle School believes in engaging teachers in both the art and the science of teaching. The art of teaching, at its core, is built upon relationships of trust and respect. Teachers are encouraged to try new ideas in the classroom and to explore instructional strategies and practices. The question then becomes, "Did it work?" This fosters an environment in which teachers gather and reflect upon data to drive instruction. Ideas and effective practices are shared among teachers in a non-threatening spirit of collaboration.

The principal has guided building-level PLCs to be more than just a meeting by another name. Teachers are urged to forge a true community that focuses on student achievement by examining ways in which teachers can collaboratively plan, teach, reflect, and adjust. This, of course, is a work in progress, as we seek continuous improvement.

Additionally, there is a building leadership team consisting of the principal and selected teachers. This team serves to advise the principal on critical matters regarding the operation and culture of the school.

Just as the school principal seeks to foster a spirit of collaboration in the building, the district's administration, including the assistant superintendent and the superintendent, seek to work collaboratively with the principal. The assistant superintendent makes regularly coaching visits with the principal and is always available for advice, while allowing the building principal the freedom to direct the building. The superintendent interprets board policies and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the district but is readily accessible to internal and external stakeholders. The leadership of the superintendent and assistant superintendent creates an atmosphere of mutual respect, enabling the building principal to do the same.

All of these efforts are intended to help our students achieve. The school leadership, in collaboration with teachers, has laid the foundation for student success through various programs and initiatives.

Our next step at Memorial Middle School will be to further engage students in leadership through the creation of a principal's advisory board, made of students from each grade level. It is our hope that this will further student engagement, as well as present an opportunity to teach students about leadership, decision making, and collaboration.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has contributed to Memorial Middle School's success is our focus on relationships. This is especially important, given the transient nature of the population that we serve. This is achieved through a variety of approaches and programs, as previously indicated. We focus on caring for the whole person, and we seek to form and support well-rounded young people, both in academics and social-emotional learning. We seek to enable our students to comprehend and engage the world around them, finding meaning in it.

We have attempted to create a school culture of mutual respect. Through relationship, we attempt to engage students as partners in their own education, inviting them to invest themselves in it.

By focusing on relationships between our staff and students, in particular, we strive to create a positive school culture, one where teachers and students are free to take appropriate risks. This creates the foundation from which students are able to grow and learn, becoming equipped with twenty-first century skills and, ultimately, become productive members of our society.