

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Clark Mills School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 34 Gordons Corner Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Manalapan State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07726-3798

County Monmouth County

Telephone (732) 786-2720 Fax (732) 786-2730

Web site/URL https://www.mersnj.us/cm E-mail jorlando@mersnj.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. John Marciante E-mail jmarciante@mersnj.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District Tel. (732) 786-2500

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 Mrs. Dotty Porcaro  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	43	43	86
2	52	47	99
3	51	49	100
4	46	48	94
5	52	55	107
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	244	242	486

\*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
  - 7 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 81 % White
  - 2 % 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: 3%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	508
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Ukrainian, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %

Total number students who qualify: 28

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %

75 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>3</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>16</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>34</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</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: 9

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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	18
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 21:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Our learning community strives to provide students with relevant, rigorous, and engaging educational opportunities to ensure that they are "Stepping Up to Learning" each day.

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**

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Clark Mills School is a first through fifth grade school, which houses approximately 496 students. It is located in suburban Manalapan and is predominantly a white, middle class learning community. We are one of five elementary schools that serve this township. Parents are very supportive of their children's education. They actively volunteer in our school and work hand in hand with our dedicated PTO.

Students enter our building every day ready to "Step up to Learning and Kindness." The atmosphere at Clark Mills School is one in which learning is a challenging, rewarding, and exciting experience for our students. At Clark Mills School, we recognize that we have a responsibility to set challenging goals, design innovative lessons, and engage students in meaningful, relevant instruction. It is through this process that we continue to develop motivated students who understand that, with hard work, determination, a growth mindset, and perseverance, they have the ability to achieve high levels of success.

We have implemented the Rigor and Relevance Framework into our ongoing, professional development practices. Teachers have adopted the Daily 5 or Readers Workshop Model, Daily 3 math workshop model, and Teacher's College writing workshop model into their instructional repertoires. Furthermore, we have implemented a W.I.N. (What I Need) period daily in the schedule to further personalize learning. During this W.I.N. period, students participate in tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) interventions as well as enrichment activities such as Genius Hour, Art, Music or Makerspace enrichment as well as academic choice-based projects.

Clark Mills is a data-driven school. Clark Mills utilizes a variety of assessment tools. Clark Mills teachers and administration analyze data to meet the individual needs of our students. We have an active Problem Solving Committee who work closely with staff and parents to support our students' needs. In addition, our Response to Intervention model affords us the opportunity to identify students who need further language arts, math, and behavioral support early on. The evolution of our RTI and flexibly scheduled support services bolster the growth and learning of many students and help to close the achievement gap in some instances. Additionally, the digital tools and content afforded to our staff and students have been woven seamlessly into the fabric of all lessons across the content areas and special subject disciplines. We aim not to simply use technology to guide learning; but, rather, we strive to integrate these tools to encourage collaboration, foster critical thinking and problem solving skills, and promote research — not simply for the attainment of knowledge, but for the application and synthesis of information as a means of creativity and innovation.

Furthermore, Clark Mills School staff strategically and effectively integrates technology throughout the school's teaching and instructional practices. Technology includes, though is not limited to, the use of digital assessment data analysis and evaluation systems. We also utilize wireless equipment such as 1:1 usage of Chromebooks and IPADs for use in Daily 3 and Daily 5 self-selected centers. Google Expedition virtual reality headsets and digital tools further enhance lessons. Creation and usage of Google accounts for all students and staff further supports collaborative learning efforts that can extend beyond the school day. Students also learn science in our mobile Star Lab. Due to our technology advances, Clark Mills has achieved the honor of being named a Future Ready School. Technology is also used as a tool for strong, parent communication. In addition the Media Makerspace offers students the opportunity to participate in STEAM lessons and to tinker and explore.

Character Education is also an important element to ensuring the well-being of our students. The counselor/anti-bullying specialist and school psychologist work closely with school administration, teachers, students, and parents to reinforce the elements of good character and conflict resolution strategies. Students from each class are recognized each month for being an outstanding role model. In addition, each day, our students hear a special morning announcement which focuses on character education, social and emotional learning, and/or life skills that will help them grow into great citizens of the world! After the morning announcements are broadcast over Clark Mills television, the teachers conduct a short mini-lesson during a morning meeting to reinforce the message. A Sensory Hallway and a Calming Corner in all classrooms allow students a safe place to help regulate their emotions and activity. Students participate in classroom

counseling sessions once every six days and the counselor and school psychologist also offer small social groups to assist students. Through a united effort of staff, parents, and administration, all of our expertise and resources are utilized to provide each child with a safe learning environment to learn and grow.

Our leadership team, parent/teacher organization, school community, staff, and students not only take pride in their hard work and efforts, but they are determined to continue to promote and foster a collaborative culture premised on creative and critical thinking, problem solving, and integration of technology which will successfully prepare the children of Clark Mills School for their future tomorrow. We are confident that the lessons learned now and activities implemented today will provide our students with necessary global competence and interactions to be successful in college, careers, and citizenship.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

At Clark Mills School we believe in educating the "whole" child. Not only do we teach children to read, write, and do arithmetic, but we educate and prepare our students to be responsible, productive citizens, and lifelong learners. We instill the growth mindset that, with hard work and dedication, all students can achieve their goals. In order to achieve this goal, Clark Mills School utilizes Weston Kieschnick's "Bold School" approach to education where we use John Hattie's research proven instructional strategies that have high effect size while incorporating technology to ensure students are college and career ready. All classrooms utilize Bill Dagget's Rigor/Relevance Framework to ensure instruction is personalized, rigorous, and relevant across curricula and in everyday life.

In Language Arts, instruction is guided by the Reading and Writing Workshop framework through whole class, small group, and individual opportunities. Teachers differentiate their instruction, utilizing an assortment of reading assessments including the Development Reading Assessment, Achieve 3000, Linkit, as well as Word Analysis for various skill levels.

Instructors also employ a Daily Five format to allow sufficient time to further personalize learning, allow student choice, and provide both RTI and enrichment instruction. Using both Project Read as well as Words Their Way allows pupils to be engaged in a multi-sensory approach to spelling and phonics to reach all modalities of learning.

Differentiated math instruction is provided via problem based learning experiences as well as the Daily Three format allowing teachers to utilize time efficiently to maximize small group instruction. Data folders and data meetings are maintained and held to ensure a continuity across grade levels as well as throughout the year to ensure students are meeting grade level standards while receiving appropriate interventions, instruction, and enrichment opportunities.

Students partake in highly engaging, hands-on experiments and problem based learning activities in order to increase critical and scientific thinking. Our social studies curriculum includes inquiry based learning stations following the reader's workshop model where students meet in strategy based groups to actively collect, analyze, and synthesize information and draw conclusions.

#### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

Clark Mills uses a balanced literacy approach for Reading/Language Arts instruction. The workshop model is used to provide students with differentiated instruction that will best meet their individual needs. The workshop model includes a whole class mini-lesson where students are given direct instruction on specific reading strategies. Students then have the opportunity to practice these strategies independently or in partnerships using self-selected books. While students are reading independently, teachers use a variety of ways to meet with students and target their individual needs. Teachers confer with readers one on one, meet with them in partnerships, meet with them in strategy groups, or in guided reading groups to help move their students up reading levels.

The writing curriculum used is Units of Study by Lucy Calkins. Teachers model writing strategies during a mini-lesson. Students are then given an opportunity to practice these strategies in their own writing. Students are taught to reflect on their writing, set goals, and use a variety of tools, such as mentor texts and checklists. Teachers conference daily to identify an individualized teaching point for each student. At the end of a unit, an on-demand writing prompt is used to assess student growth. Project Read, which includes phonics instruction, reading comprehension, and written expression is another component of our reading program. Students are taught phonics through a multisensory approach.

Clark Mills believes in the importance of targeted instruction based on a continuous process of analyzing and discussing data among teachers, administrators, and interventionists. Formative and summative assessments are used to collect data and group students for targeted strategy groups, guided reading groups, as well as tiered intervention plans. These assessments include Linkit, a district-wide benchmark assessment given three times a year. Linkit provides teachers with important data that is broken down by skills and standards. Achieve 3000 is used to obtain student Lexile levels in grades 3-5 in order to teach students at their instructional level. The data is also used to develop plans for our tiered intervention program. These plans are developed based on student learning gaps identified in regards to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards are the standards used at Clark Mills to identify mastery towards skills and strategies. Administration, teachers, and interventionists use these standards when developing a plan of action to ensure mastery of grade-level expectations. Teachers identify where students fall in regard to the standards and teach along a learning progression to support achievement. Teachers assess progress towards these standards throughout the year and report their findings to parents using a standard based report card.

We use technology as a tool to teach students how to navigate and comprehend digital text to be able to succeed in our global society. Students use personal chromebooks in grades 3-5 and ipads in grades 1-2 to access both assessments as well as individualized learning programs such as Razz Kids, Study Island, Moby Max, IXL and Achieve 3000. These programs are used to progress monitor and to support strategy based groups.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The mathematics curriculum at Clark Mills Elementary School is developed with focus, coherence, and rigor. The attention to rigor reflects the balance of conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and applications in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Our school uses Pearson enVision Math 2.0 as the resource that guides our instruction. The program provides all teachers a scope and sequence for concepts and student outcomes while delivering families a clear picture of expectations. The standards and subsequently the curriculum at Clark Mills Elementary School provide students with an opportunity to be engaged in the learning process and share their knowledge through authentic formative and summative assessments.

At Clark Mills School, we offer a meaningful and challenging mathematics curriculum. Students learn content aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Concepts are introduced and taught, then strategically revisited and reinforced to provide students the time and skills needed to achieve mastery. Student level of expertise is monitored through diagnostic assessment, formative assessment, summative assessment, and self-monitoring. Lessons are designed to accommodate all learning styles through presenting concepts concretely, pictorially, and abstractly, which aid in the development of mathematical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

The use of Daily 3 Math in combination with the enVision Math 2.0 program allows for the teacher to build relationships and trust with students. Teachers provide opportunities for all students to develop their skills as independent learners. It also not only allows for teacher choice but student choice as well. Students are separated into differentiated groups where the teacher has the opportunity to work in small groups to meet the individual needs of all students. The Daily 3 framework is a student centered approach that allows learners to monitor, reflect, and revisit lessons on their own time to support and enhance their learning. Individual student needs are addressed in a multitude of ways.

Teacher differentiation and the workshop model, a systematic approach in the classroom, and our intervention programs have enabled us to further address these needs. Students performing below, at, or above grade level can develop or enhance skills through our intervention and enrichment programs. Interventionists meet with students identified through a data sweep to target skills and their individual needs. The combination efforts work to bridge the gap in achievement.

Ultimately, students are engaged through open-ended questions, mental math, hands-on explorations, writing activities, and the use of technology to develop mathematical thinking and confidence. Students also work using technology on visual, instructional programs such as ST Math and IXL. These programs engage, motivate, and challenge students toward higher achievement. Instruction provides opportunities for students to focus on questions that are designed to create a mathematical discourse. Students and teachers discuss different strategies used, the reasonableness of answers, and brainstorming techniques. Math classes are structured to provide students opportunities to develop their mathematical skills by working both collaboratively and independently, creating learning experiences that prepare each child for success on district benchmarks and standardized tests at the current and next grade levels of study.

#### **1d. Science**

Science education at Clark Mills School embraces the New Jersey Student Learning Standards which are based upon the Next Generation Science Standards. Students are engaged in real world experiences and apply what they learn to understand natural phenomenon. Students use critical thinking skills to evaluate their own claims and use evidence and reasoning to explain those claims to others. Students participate in hands-on activities which require collaborative planning and the ability to both provide and receive constructive feedback which is a necessary 21st century skill.

Clark Mills is a 1:1 digital device school in grades 3-5. Students have access to programs such as Legends of Learning, Mystery Science, IXL Science, Moby Max, Explore Learning's online simulations. Teachers use these programs to personalize student learning based upon formative and summative assessments. Access to these programs allows teachers the opportunity to construct differentiated lesson plans to meet all learners and to provide small group direct instruction. Students partake in authentic, real world experiences in our mobile state-of-the-art Star Lab and explore science using the virtual reality headsets.

Science and technology interest is high at Clark Mills School. Teachers volunteered for training on the Tower Garden Aeroponic gardening system. From seed germination, tower set up and maintenance, and how to properly harvest their produce, teachers share this experience with their students.

Engineering activities are embedded into each unit providing students with STEM connections in Physical Science, Life Science, and Earth & Space Science which supports our initiative to make all learning relevant to all students.

Additional engineering and critical thinking skills are developed in the Makerspace. The MakerSpace activities were specifically selected to align with grade level standards from all content areas. Students may be engaged in coding activities, or they may be collaboratively working on an engineering solution using readily available materials. The activities are frequently changed to match the instructional needs of classroom teachers and to respond to student interest.

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

Clark Mills School uses an inquiry-center based approach in grades 1 through 5 to implement the Social Studies curriculum. Social Studies incorporates a balanced literacy approach. Students work with the teacher during whole class instruction. During whole class instruction a poem may be read, a video is viewed, maps are studied, or a primary source might be analyzed. Students then participate in various learning centers while the teacher coaches the students in these centers. These centers include a text analysis station, video immersions, photo/image analysis station, and a map station. Skills and strategies from Readers Workshop are reinforced during whole class and center based instruction. Students close read and analyze a text(s), video(s), map(s), and image(s) multiple times. If there is more than one video, map, or text during the unit, students compare and contrast. With each analysis, students either draw or write to demonstrate how they synthesize information and determine main ideas. During centers and share time, students reflect upon their learning. Upon completion of a unit, students create a project to demonstrate their knowledge. Some projects include writing an opinion essay, written responses that demonstrate point of view, culture related projects, or diary entries. Some topics that are covered in these units include culture and diversity, government, historical events such as The American Revolution, and the study of Native

Americans and their impact on how America was shaped. Each grade designates a day to share their projects with their families. Social Studies special events include: Cultures and Traditions Around the World, Hero Day, A Mock Trial based on The American Revolution, Living Museum, and We Are America Day where students highlight their families' culture, heritage and traditions using digital media.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

All Clark Mills students in grades one through five attend special subject classes on a 6-day rotation schedule for forty-minutes in library media/technology, art, music, physical education/health, bi-weekly school counselor sessions, and monthly American sign language lessons. At Clark Mills, there is no shortage of well-designed instruction that supports and integrates classroom experiences to foster connectivity to the real-world.

The Library-Media Center is a vibrant, innovative and welcoming space that nurtures a life-long love of learning. Our students find out how books and other forms of media connect to the real-world. The media specialist provides physical and virtual resources to augment all areas of the curriculum. Students are guided by way of ongoing inquiry to grasp how humans, tools, and technology shape and impact our world. The introduction of visual tools such as Google virtual reality aids to bridge the digital and physical world. Classes utilize a plethora of technological tools (Chromebooks, Ipads, document camera, databases, robots, apps) to navigate digital content. Further support provides opportunities to turnkey learning to an audience of peers. During Media Makerspace, students are guided through a multitude of ways to “tinker” with various tools and objects. They may elect to code lego robots, build structures through design challenges, or operate 3D pens.

The visual arts program focuses on the elements of art and the principles of design. Students are encouraged to use self-expression and creativity in all that they do. The Art program includes the study of art history in Pop Art, Op art and Impressionists movements. Special projects include lessons on how to design an original graphic novel character. Later, students create a storyline for characters and are assigned roles to experience what it is like to work as graphic designers in the comic book industry. During art enrichment, selected students use advanced materials that include slipping and scoring of clay, printmaking with ink, and metalwork. By being exposed to art, students gain an appreciation and understanding of the importance of art in our world.

Our music program keeps students singing, dancing and performing throughout the year. All students learn skills in rhythm, pitch, dynamics, and timbre. Students learn keyboards, various percussion instruments and sing songs from around the world. Students study music history and learn about a variety of composers that span the centuries. Students create special projects using iMovie as a culmination of what they learned. The chorus, band, and orchestra experiences allow our students to share their talents with our school community and foster a love of the performing arts.

During group guidance lessons, students are exposed to the Second Step curriculum which focuses on character education and social/emotional learning. Students are taught conflict resolution skills that will benefit them for a lifetime. Additionally our fourth and fifth grade students work with the counselor and technology teacher to set life goals and create an action plan in meeting these goals through the use of a digital portfolio.

The Physical Education program at Clark Mills School teaches the importance of living a healthy, active lifestyle. Our Physical Education curriculum encourages physical fitness and engages students in multiple sports activities. The students especially enjoy the Haunted Gym which promotes the development of motor skills. All students participate in the annual Kids Heart Challenge with the American Heart Association (AHA). They learn basic and advanced jump rope skills and how to be heart healthy. Clark Mills recently raised over \$7,000 for AHA demonstrating community service and good citizenship. In June, all students,

staff and parent volunteers enjoy participating in Field Day where they can have fun and apply skills learned throughout the year.

At Clark Mills, students learn American Sign Language (ASL) through an on-line program called Proximity Learning. Once a month students connect digitally with a certified ASL teacher to gain a foundation in this area.

Our technology teacher guides and encourages students to become responsible digital citizens who actively pursue up to date information which may be quickly applied to many content areas. Our technology curriculum provides students with a solid understanding in computer literacy and helps prepare them for 21st century careers.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

Clark Mills is on the cutting edge of helping students who perform below grade level. In order to help close the achievement gap students are first identified during a data sweep. The data sweep is based on a multitude of assessments. There are three levels of support within Response to Intervention (RTI). Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 students are identified and placed in tiers based on the data sweep. Through a collaboration model between the teacher and RTI teacher, a goal is provided to help target student needs. Coaching and modeling for teachers is provided to help support Tier 1 goals in the classroom. Tier 2 and Tier 3 teachers provide support to the most dependent learners (in math and reading) in a pull out program.

In addition, regardless of a data sweep, teachers advocate for their students throughout the year. Teachers complete problem solving paperwork and the Problem Solving Team meets to discuss the student and analyze data to determine next steps. An action plan is then implemented or developed. Regardless of the tier that students are placed in, teachers continually progress monitor the targeted goal, and instruction is tailored if the student is meeting or not meeting their goal. Depending upon the data from progress monitoring, goals will be adjusted. Learning is differentiated in the classroom to meet the various needs of our students.

Beyond the School Day Programs are also offered to support dependent and "bubble" students. These students have the opportunity to participate in small group targeted instruction in reading or math. These supports that are provided for dependent learners at Clark Mills ensures that we are meeting the individual needs of students, and more importantly, fostering an environment that ensures students close their learning gaps.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

At Clark Mills School we continuously determine how best to help our students succeed through assessment data analysis, student goal setting and feedback, and informal classroom observations. Our goal is to meet each learner at their instructional level so they can continue to grow at their pace, exceed expectations, and develop a love of learning. We have implemented a school wide W.I.N. (What I Need) period. This time allotment allows for teachers to differentiate and gives students a time to enhance and increase their learning. This also allows time for students to have choice in their learning and create Genius Hour or Passion Projects. These are student driven research projects where students are asked to select and pursue a project they are passionate about. We address the various learning styles of all our students through multimodal strategies and tiered learning experiences. This includes our individualized technology programs where students have the ability to work on their own level and pace. Students have a voice and are able to pick activities that best meet their interests and needs. In addition, students also have the option of being placed in "special subject" enrichment programs. Students can express an interest in a certain special subject, and we provide the tools and resources for them to grow and explore in this area. Whether we are tailoring assessments and instruction or providing enrichment and interventions, at Clark Mills School, we make sure that every student has an individualized learning experience and environment.

### **3c. Special education**

At Clark Mills School, we believe that all students can achieve academic success with the right support, interventions, and instructional strategies. This drives our special education program to meet the expectations of highly individualized goals and objectives based upon the grade level standards. We determine how to support students through ongoing assessment, data analysis, feedback, and observations. To meet the diverse needs of the special education population, we employ a continuum of services that include consultation, in-class resource, and replacement resource programs. Students are educated within the general education setting with the support of supplementary aids and services to the maximum extent possible.

Intensive reading interventions are systematic and research based using Project Read, a multisensory language arts program. Within the inclusion setting, teachers employ specialized instructional strategies and rely heavily on assistive technology, such as FM systems, ipads, chromebooks, soundfield systems and the use of google extensions. Teachers regularly collaborate with instructional assistants, occupational therapists, physical therapists, counselors, case managers and a teacher of the deaf in order to ensure that students' needs are being met. School administrators, district level administrators, case managers and service providers meet monthly to review student data and identify students making limited growth and to ensure implementation of additional interventions when necessary.

Special education students have access to numerous academic programs including Mind Play, ST Math, Reflex Math, Achieve 3000, and Fast ForWord. Fast ForWord is an online, evidenced based reading and language program instructed by our Fast ForWord Coach. Each special education student is also provided a membership to Bookshare, which allows access to a web based audible library to use for academics or pleasure. Heavy emphasis on establishing parent/guardian relationships and continuous communication between home and school is a priority. An Extended School Year (ESY) program is provided for children who have demonstrated regression of previously taught skills and have difficulty recouping after school breaks.

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

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

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

At Clark Mills School, one of our main focuses is to provide students with a positive environment that supports their academic, social, and emotional growth. All faculty goes above and beyond to engage and motivate students. Students are greeted each morning with their choice of a fist pump, hug, or high five. On Fridays, staff greet our students with our Dragon Claw foam hands for High Five Friday. We start each day with social and emotional lessons presented on the morning announcements. Each week there is a main theme guiding the lessons and teachers conduct a morning meeting to discuss why each lesson is important and what goals the students can set. We also reinforce these lessons throughout the year as we promote our Year of Kindness campaign and provide assemblies that support social and emotional growth. One example of this is our Camfel Assembly that taught students that kindness is not just being nice to others, but is also being respectful of others learning in the classroom. Each month we celebrate one of the 10 pillars of character and students are recognized for their citizenship by being selected by their peers and teachers as Student of the Month. Students also have the opportunity to earn gold slips in the lunchroom and Dragon confetti daily to acknowledge and encourage kind and respectful behavior. We have also incorporated a Sensory Hallway and Calming Corners into our school. These spaces allow students to take breaks and help them work through their emotions so they can come back to the classroom ready to learn.

Clark Mills also provides various academic based events throughout the school year where visitors come in to see what students have learned. This encourages students to put in their best efforts and produce quality work. Such events include Author's Celebration, Hero Day, and the 4th grade Living Museum. Our very active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) hosts various after school events to motivate our students and create a sense of school spirit. Some of these events include Student Faculty Challenge, Movie Matinees, Valentine's Day Bingo, and our Neucomb competition. Furthermore, our Student Council plans various spirit days throughout the year to bring our school community together. Young Scientists, Coding Club, Chorus, Band, and Orchestra provide students with opportunities to be engaged in the school community after hours in areas of interest.

By providing students with an engaging and motivating culture in our school, we set them up for success. When students feel loved and nurtured, they are more willing to take academic and social risks. This is something we pride ourselves on at Clark Mills School.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

An increased emphasis on providing parents/guardians with specific opportunities to create a partnership with the school and to provide at-home supports for the academic, social, and emotional well-being of their children is part of our school culture. Clark Mills fosters relationships between teachers, staff, administration, and families within our community. Workshops are held at the district level such as Parent University, where parents have the opportunity to attend workshops that range from Social/Emotional awareness to reading and math. In addition, our RTI teacher creates parent workshops throughout the year to provide families with strategies and tools to implement at home. We teach parents how to instruct their child in all components of reading from early literacy skills to more advanced comprehension skills. During these workshops teachers model and then actively engage and coach parents to try the instructional strategy. Another attribute to our parent involvement is when any student reaches a Tier 3 intervention status, a mandatory meeting will be scheduled with the administrator, RTI teacher, and parent to review progress, discuss next steps and to be trained on a required home intervention plan to engage parents with their child's learning needs.

Clark Mills also fosters a student council where they run various donation drives to help support our community and organizations in need. Such donation drives include the Make A Wish foundation, a "souper bowl" food drive, candy for the troops, and yarn for a senior center. These drives help our students learn how important it is to give back to others, while providing our community with support when needed. Our Parent-Teacher Organization also hosts various events during and after school to engage parents and

families. These events include monthly birthday bashes, a Halloween Boo Bash, Dr. Seuss Reading Night, and Spring Carnival which all create fun family nights where families and faculty can get together outside of the school day.

Clark Mills also makes sure to constantly communicate with families through school emails, Blackboard, our online messenger system, Facebook posts highlighting work in the classrooms, back to school night, and conferences. Many teachers also use the Remind or Dojo app to communicate frequently with parents. A successful school environment cannot exist without the positive influence of reciprocal interaction between and shared partnership with the community and families that support our students each and every day.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Clark Mills believes in the importance of creating a professional culture where teachers feel valued and supported. The professional development approach includes in-house, job-embedded professional development opportunities, such as choice-based faculty meetings, “pineappling” and lesson study/micro-teaching rotations. Pineappling is the process of teachers learning from one another by inter classroom visitations. Lesson studies and microteaching rotations provide teachers with a schedule and process that enables them to reflect on their instruction and make adjustments for improvement. We believe in the importance of empowering staff to support the concept that “we,” as a team, are our best resources and most valuable purveyors of pedagogy and content.

Ongoing professional development is embedded into each teacher’s daily job responsibilities. In addition to working together during their daily common prep time, teachers meet as a professional learning community with their grade levels twice a month in order to analyze student achievement data, intervention data, and to make informed decisions about individual and class instruction. During PLC meetings, teachers also participate in book clubs. This provides them with an opportunity to read professionally and discuss implications for their classroom with their colleagues.

Clark Mill’s works to empower teacher leaders by building a collaborative culture. Teachers are encouraged to lead professional development in areas of strength and provide their colleagues with individualized learning opportunities. Teacher leaders have chosen the role of writing facilitators in order to lead their school in writing curriculum work. These teachers attend training given by a writing consultant or coach and then turn-key information to their grade level.

Along with teacher-led professional development, Clark Mills also believes in the value of instructional coaches to support teachers on a daily basis. A writing coach, Project Read coach, as well as a reading and math interventionist, work to individualize each teacher's learning plans based on their needs. Teachers work with coaches in order to identify areas of focus and collaboratively develop a plan of action for improvement. Coaches are invited into classrooms to demonstrate lessons and effective teaching practices, as well as provide feedback, and help plan lessons and gather materials.

At Clark Mills, we also understand the importance of teacher well being. Keynote speakers on health and wellness are invited to speak at faculty meetings throughout the year. Massage therapists provide luncheons and massages to staff in appreciation of all they do. Furthermore, teachers are acknowledged for their efforts and leadership through our “Caught Being Awesome” staff recognition program. When a staff member is “Caught Being Awesome,” he/she gets their picture taken with our “awesome” hashtag, and it is displayed on the bulletin board for all to see.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The leadership model implemented at Clark Mills School is collaborative, transformative, and inclusive of all educational stakeholders (i.e, administration, teachers, support staff, parents, students, and the larger community). All stakeholders work together as a whole to support each student individually. Decisions are made with collective input, and the successful implementation of programs relies on each stakeholders understanding, evaluation, and feedback. The school principal and assistant principal serve as instructional leaders and have placed an emphasis on analyzing data, building teacher capacity to increase student

achievement, and school culture. The use of data to make informed decisions is of utmost importance and established as a priority at Clark Mills. The school principal and assistant principal hold data meetings with teachers and assist them in breaking down the skills and standards so that we can identify areas of strength and areas of focus for individual students as well as the grade level. Resources are provided to staff to assist them in meeting the needs of our students.

For the past five years, the principal and other district personnel have attended the Model Schools National Conference in order to gain insight on best practices throughout the country. Following the conference each year, we meet and create a year-long leadership plan to help improve school culture and impact student achievement. Some of these initiatives included Dagget's Rigor/Relevance Framework which also focuses on building strong relationships, followed by the Collaborative Instructional Review (CIR) Rubrics, John Hattie's High Effect Size Strategies, blended learning and social-emotional competencies. At Clark Mills School, the School Improvement Panel (ScIP), which includes teachers and administrators, work collaboratively to lead these professional development initiatives. Together, we create slideshow presentations, present initiatives at faculty meetings and serve as leaders and mentors for the roll out of these initiatives. The implementation of these academic and culture building initiatives were so successful that the principal had the opportunity to share her leadership skills and present at the 2019 Model Schools National Conference.

As more demands have been placed on students and teachers, it is essential for school leadership to recognize the efforts and dedication of these individuals. For example, throughout the year, the school administrators provide teachers with notes of encouragement, weekly shout-outs, and surprise them with their favorite treats once in a while in recognition of their hard work and dedication. Building a positive school culture has been an integral factor in our school's success.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Six years ago, Clark Mills decided to learn more about Response to Intervention (RTI) to best meet the needs of our students. We researched, read books such as RTI is a Verb and started a Problem Solving Team. This team consists of building administration, interventionists, CST members, and teachers who all visited another school district that was already implementing RTI. We were destined to gain a better understanding of our students and identify their needs early on in order to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap. These preventative practices and expectations for positive learning outcomes have become part of our school culture.

Obtaining and analyzing student data is one of the most important components of RTI. Therefore, universal screenings and benchmark assessments are administered three times per year and used in our biannual data sweeps. This process identifies approximately twenty percent of students in need of intervention support. Teachers meet with RTI interventionists to develop plans targeting essential skills that align with grade level standards. Follow up meetings focus on progress monitoring and data based decisions regarding Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Intervention plans are effectively communicated with parents and home intervention plans are included for our Tier 3 students to ensure an “all hands on deck” approach.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are implemented by our RTI teacher and two interventionists who provide individualized or small group, intensified, and targeted instruction. The interventionists also serve as instructional coaches who, through job embedded professional development, provide support and guidance to classroom teachers. Tier 1 interventions that are outlined in personalized learning plans are implemented by our classroom teachers during a scheduled W.I.N period.

In addition to our school day RTI program, Clark Mills established a “Beyond-the-School Day” RTI program. This program provides ample opportunities for students to continue their learning beyond the school day through a flexible instruction process. Clark Mills utilizes this time to target students that may need assistance in multiple subjects or may need additional time that cannot be provided during the traditional school day. A team of RTI teachers and classroom teachers, who have established data-driven strengths in reading and mathematics instruction, provide RTI programming for one hour, two times a week to identified students.

The implementation of a data driven Response to Intervention model has afforded us the opportunity to identify at-risk students early on and offer support to close gaps in learning. Since RTI was so successful at Clark Mills, it was then expanded districtwide. RTI has been instrumental in our success.