

***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[X] Choice

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

Official School Name Island Heights Grade School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 115 Summit Avenue PO Box 329  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Island Heights State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 08732-0329

County Ocean

Telephone (732) 929-1222 Fax (732) 929-9563

Web site/URL http://www.islandheights.k12.nj.us E-mail trehm@islandheights.k12.nj.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\* Mr. Timothy Rehm E-mail trehm@islandheights.k12.nj.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Island Heights Tel. (732) 929-1222

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. Maureen DeSanto  
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	8	10	18
1	8	4	12
2	6	7	13
3	10	6	16
4	7	6	13
5	11	8	19
6	8	13	21
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>	58	54	112

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 88 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

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

<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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	127
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

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

Total number students who qualify: 8

8. Students receiving special education services: 22 %

25 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>0</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	7
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
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 16:1

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%	95%	95%	94%
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 school strives to provide a safe community where diversity is celebrated, respect is practiced, and where families are seen as valued partners in education.

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

The Island Heights Grade School became a Choice School in 2014-2015 after approval from the New Jersey Department of Education. The State currently gives us fourteen choice seats which we fill each year through an application process. Applicants are reviewed and then placed in a lottery system. As choice students leave our district we can replace them with new students. If students are on the waiting list they need to reapply each year. Once a student becomes a choice student they do not have to reapply. For the 2020-2021 school year we have fourteen seats which are filled. We currently have three students on the waiting list.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

---

Island Heights Grade School is a pillar in the foundation of our town. Many generations of families have passed through the walls of our elementary school, and many staff members reside in this extraordinary little town. Our community embraces and encompasses our school therefore we appreciate and utilize the opportunities afforded to us inside and outside of our brick walls. Educating the students of Island Heights Grade School goes beyond the classroom. It is truly a collective partnership between students, teachers, staff, and community members.

Our quaint school houses one class each, of grades kindergarten through sixth grade. Upon sixth grade promotion, students continue their education at Central Regional School District in Bayville, NJ for grades seven through twelve. We educate approximately 120 students each school year.

Island Heights is a small town located along the Jersey Shore. As the town is located along the water, our students often participate in lessons and activities that involve the water; specifically, the Barnegat Bay that surrounds our town. Throughout the year people from organizations, such as Save Barnegat Bay and the Barnegat Partnerships, come in to share their knowledge by having our students participate in hands-on lessons. Additionally, teachers take advantage of our unique location and often spend time taking our students on walking trips to learn and appreciate the history and beauty in our town.

If you were to drive past Island Heights Grade School on a school morning, you would not see the typical line of school buses. Instead you would see families walking to school together; students riding their bikes to school, and dedicated staff members greeting students by opening their car doors on the drop-off line. Each child is greeted with a smile upon their arrival and wished a wonderful afternoon as they leave at the end of the day. Island Heights truly is a place where every staff member knows all of our students' names. This school is a place where students feel safe and important. Many people from nearby places do not even know that our precious school exists. Some may even argue that Island Heights Grade School is a "hidden gem." However, those that do know about us and do not live in town try hard to become part of our special school family by applying to our Choice Program. We currently have fourteen students from surrounding towns enrolled in our Choice Program.

The fact that our school is small offers us a remarkable opportunity as a staff to truly get to know each child and their academic and social-emotional abilities. There is daily parent communication through emails, Remind texts, phone calls, and face-to-face conversations. As a staff, we are very motivated to adjust our teaching and classroom lessons to pave the way for each child to reach their own personal growth, work to their full academic potential, and challenge them along the way. This is done through significant data analysis throughout the year. Individualized learning plans are developed for each student to help them enhance their strengths and support areas that need to improve. To prepare our students for their futures, technology and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) lessons are infused within the classroom through the use of iPads, Chromebooks, and coding programs. Our school works extremely hard to maintain our current Bronze Certification with Sustainable Jersey for Schools.

Recently our community passed a large referendum project which allowed us to update our school so that it can continue to offer a top notch education to our students. Our community has been a tremendous source of support. Additionally, this past year we implemented a district Strategic Plan to offer our staff, parents, and community members an opportunity to guide us in the district's direction and establish goals for us in the next five years. These meetings were extremely well-attended and brought an outpouring of community support.

As a result, we developed strong ties with local organizations, such as the community food bank and Ocean of Love. Each year our students help collect donations for the food bank, as well as provide a variety of fundraisers to raise money for Ocean of Love, which is an organization that supports local children with cancer and their families. It is a wonderful learning experience and offers our students a chance to give back to those in need.

Demonstrating good character is a common theme that is stressed to our students every day. Through the Project TEAM program all students in kindergarten through sixth grade learn about the qualities that encompass good character through the use of the Project TEAM Super Heroes. Helping others, positive change, anti-bullying, problem solving, resiliency, and leadership are important life skills that are conveyed to students through this program. Our school has built a positive climate and a culture of teamwork. Go Sea Devils!

## **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

Our approach to curriculum at Island Heights Grade School is to create an environment that fosters academic excellence through intellectual, creative, and physical challenges. We encourage students to make connections through cross-curricular projects and experiences. The ultimate goal is that through our curriculum, students will be empowered to function as productive and successful citizens in our changing society.

Students receive a well-rounded education that aligns with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Teachers are dedicated to providing learning opportunities for students to increase critical thinking and problem solving skills. Additionally with a rapidly changing world, technology is a key player in our curriculum. Students utilize technology across all subject areas to strengthen and enrich their learning.

Our teachers have been trained on how to analyze student data to differentiate their lessons and instruction to reach the needs of each student. This can be seen through the use of multisensory learning centers and small group instruction within each classroom. In addition, grades three, five, and six follow a departmentalized model in which students switch teachers for language arts/social studies and math/science. This allows our teachers to teach to their strengths and reach more students in their subject area of expertise.

Students learn real-life speaking and listening skills by participating in lessons that promote collaboration and teamwork. Furthermore, teachers integrate brain breaks, through websites like Go Noodle, in order to keep our students productive and on task. Teachers often utilize interactive games, such as Jeopardy, to create fun and engaging lessons.

Island Heights Grade School is fortunate enough to offer chances for our students to participate in valuable educational field trips. These experiences not only enhance classroom lessons, but they also offer incredible opportunities to enrich the lives of our students.

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

Island Heights Grade School places a great emphasis on English Language Arts. Each day our school shuts down for fifteen minutes after lunch for Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) Time. This precious time is a chance for students and staff members to read books of their choice.

Students have a daily eighty minute language arts block. Additional time is devoted to differentiated literacy centers and weekly writing. Our district utilizes Harcourt's Storytown program. Students are assessed on reading comprehension, oral fluency, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar. By being exposed to a variety of genres, students learn to compare and contrast texts. Students monitor their own fluency by recording themselves on a voice recording app and listening to themselves read. Leveled readers allow for differentiation to meet individual needs. Teachers supplement phonics instruction by using methods from the Wilson Foundations and Orton Gillingham programs. Tremendous growth in students' reading abilities has been realized due to these programs.

Along with our regular curriculum, our teachers have developed a solid writing program. There is a major focus on the three types of writing: explanatory, persuasive (opinion), and narrative. Teachers in grades two through six use mnemonics, such as OREO (Opinion, Reasons, Examples Opinion), in an effort to maintain continuity in writing instruction throughout the grades. Most often students develop their writing through Google Docs. Once the drafting is complete, the revision process takes place. We are firm believers in the expression, "Once you're done, you've just begun." The final step is student publication. This is a crucial step to help build students' confidence and to share their hard work with their peers.

Throughout the year we host additional schoolwide literacy events, such as our annual Literacy Fair. Each Literacy Fair has a unique theme, such as Camp Read S'more. On this night families and community members come together to celebrate literacy and view the students' work. Individual class events are also held to showcase literacy. Our third graders host an Amelia Bedelia Day to demonstrate their understanding of idioms as learned through their focus on Amelia Bedelia books. Students dress up as maids and butlers, while serving their guests the main character's signature lemon meringue pie.

Read Across America is another important event. During this week, our school has many activities and spirit days to celebrate Dr. Seuss by encouraging students to read. For example, on Green Eggs and Ham Day, students are encouraged to wear green and listen to the famous story while eating green eggs and ham. We invite guest readers from the community into the school to read. Throughout this event, students have the opportunity to read with reading buddies from different grades.

Although our school does not have its own library, each week we walk our classes to the Island Heights Public Library. During these visits, the librarian reads books that connect with what the students are learning in school. The warm and inviting atmosphere of the library has helped to spark an excitement for reading in our students.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The mathematics program focuses on practices that develop the problem solving, reasoning, and strategic planning skills of each student. While a strong foundation in basic facts and operations is stressed, the program is driven by real-life situations to create relevance. Through the McGraw-Hill My Math Program, students solve problems of the day, learn to reason abstractly and quantitatively, analyze situations, and model with mathematics. Our curriculum allows for remediation, enrichment, and acceleration in order to foster student growth.

To further and deepen the understanding of mathematical concepts, writing is often integrated into our math curriculum. This is accomplished by having students explain how they reached an answer by sequencing the steps needed in a written format or illustration. In addition, students often are given a problem that is already solved, and they need to explain if the answer is correct or incorrect. If the answer is wrong, students are to explain how to find the error and then correctly solve the problem.

Technology is integrated through the use of a variety of math websites and programs, such as Prodigy and Xtra Math, to support mathematical skills and concepts. The use of a variety of apps on the iPad help enhance K-2 math instruction. Students also love to utilize the Osmo kits to help them learn math in fun and interactive ways. For example, the game Pizza Co. allows students to pretend they own a pizzeria while also learning to count money.

In addition to traditional assessments, students are assessed on their knowledge and mastery of mathematical skills and concepts through projects that emphasize real-life learning experiences. For instance, students in grade six have been given virtual money to spend at a nationally recognized chain store promoting discounts. The students determine if a \$5.00 or 20% coupon receives the greater savings, therefore giving them further opportunities to purchase additional items. Fifth graders prepare for Entrepreneurial Day by designing a product while staying within budget, determining the cost and profit to recreate the product, and creating advertisements to promote each product. Third graders then purchase the products, while following given constraints using their computation skills.

Kindergarten through second grade participates in our 100th Day Celebration, which involves multiple projects and hands-on activities using the number 100. Students in grades three through six are invited to compete in Quick Draw, a mathematical computation competition that promotes accuracy along with speed. Through the year, students may also participate in Sumdog's Ocean County Math Contest, providing them an opportunity to strategize and compete among other students in their locality.

Furthermore, our sixth graders took a trip to the National Museum of Mathematics in New York City to explore math through a fun, hands-on perspective versus traditional paper and pencil problems. Students

viewed mathematical exhibits while also participating in a stimulating cryptography program. Sensible, useful, and worthwhile experiences such as these help all students understand, apply, analyze, and create so they may prepare for future mathematical success.

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

The Island Heights Grade School science curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. Students are exposed to core science lessons that are hands-on and inquiry-based. Instruction focuses on the areas of physical science, life science, and earth and space science. Engineering design is integrated into science throughout the year.

Various performance tasks allow students to demonstrate understanding of science concepts. For example, after learning about weather phenomena, students recorded weather reports and told “the public” how to stay safe. Second graders make root beer floats while learning about solids, liquids, and gases.

Every class attends a weekly STEAM special with our designated STEAM teacher. During this time, students are provided with additional opportunities to practice the engineering design process. They learn to form hypotheses, experiment, and draw conclusions, in addition to making and revising plans. Students showcase what they learned in this program at our annual STEAM Fair.

Our school district recognizes the value of providing our students with authentic science learning experiences both in and out of the classroom. Third and fourth graders visit the Liberty Science Center, while fifth graders seine in the Barnegat Bay. Last year, gifted and talented students went indoor skydiving to learn the science behind wind tunnels and how it relates to various jobs in the STEAM field. A variety of guest speakers visit classrooms throughout the year to share their scientific expertise.

In addition to Chromebooks, students have access to a variety of technology that supports our science instruction. Teachers have access to an iPad cart, coding drones, coding mice, and Osmos to use in science lessons. We have a hydroponic tower that students use to grow various vegetables and herbs year round. Additionally, the district offers clubs that reinforce STEAM concepts, including robotics, broadcasting, and Roots and Shoots.

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

Our social studies curriculum was created to provide students with a meaningful understanding of history, culture, and socioeconomic principles that make up our nation and our world. We focus on raising our students’ awareness that they are citizens of a global society and further their understanding of the democratic process by practicing its principles within the classroom. Students learn to identify, interpret, participate, and practice concepts of citizenship, democracy, and constitutional government. This is achieved through the use of the Pearson My World program and supplemental resources. Scholastic News provides instruction on current events.

Students are introduced to many social studies skills, such as the process of change and its effects upon their community. For example, third graders examine the history of Island Heights. The class takes a tour of local landmarks by walking around town. Members of the community, including the mayor, visit the school bringing pictures and discussing the changes that have happened in the community over time.

The first Thanksgiving is explored in kindergarten and first grade. Students wear costumes and participate in an annual Thanksgiving Play to demonstrate what they learned. Afterwards they celebrate at their own feast by eating yummy treats, such as cornbread with their homemade butter. Fourth graders learn about influential figures in history by researching historic people and sharing their knowledge through their Wax Museum. Students transform into their famous person and share details about their life and accomplishments with students, staff, families, and community members.

Sixth graders discover the contributions of ancient civilizations. For Egypt they learn to make papyrus and to write in hieroglyphics. The goal is not only for our students to leave our building knowledgeable in all the

concepts taught in social studies, but more importantly learn to be tolerant and respectful of other cultures and people throughout the world.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

All students attend weekly music and art classes. Additionally, Chorus Club and Art Club are offered as extra-curricular activities. In music, students learn the importance of music in cultures and in history. Students learn about different genres of music, instrument families, and musical notation. A main theme throughout music class is creating music and performing. Our students do an amazing job performing several times per year at our annual Veteran's Day, Winter Concert, Spring Concert, and Flag Day. These events are open to parents, family members, and the community. Band lessons are offered to students in second through sixth grade during the school day. Furthermore, the school has an instrumental band that practices after school weekly. In addition to seasonal performances the band has marched in the Toms River Halloween Parade and Founder's Day.

Our art program focuses on different artists and styles. Students experiment with various techniques and then have an opportunity to exhibit their creations at the annual Island Heights Grade School Art Show. This year we are honored to have our local art museum, the Peto Museum, display our students' work in their gallery allowing a broader range of community an opportunity to view the work of our talented young student artists.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has been a fabulous supporter of the arts in education. Each year they sponsor Theater Week in which a professional company comes into our school to teach students in first through sixth grade to experience what it takes to perform in a play. Students are assigned a variety of roles and songs to practice throughout the week. The program culminates with a performance at the end of the week.

Island Heights Grade School's health and wellness programs incorporate more than state mandated physical education, nutrition, and health teaching. Physical education instruction focuses on exercise and physical fitness, as well as the importance of cooperation and teamwork in achieving goals. Our health instruction covers all areas of social, emotional, and physical health and stresses the importance of mastering self-care and a proactive approach to wellness. Our students are encouraged to participate in various after school sports activities, including tennis at our community courts. Running Club is held every spring encouraging students, parents, and staff to focus on their wellness by learning proper running techniques. This club culminates with participation in the annual Island Heights River to Bay 5K Race. Our health and physical education programs are designed to improve, protect and promote the health and safety of each member of our school community.

Every student receives weekly foreign language instruction. Students engage in interactive activities and projects. Through song, storytelling, and movement the students learn new vocabulary and conversational skills that may be useful in the future.

Technology is a fundamental part of our daily instruction. Students have one-to-one Chromebooks allowing them to utilize a variety of websites, as well as the Google Suite. The students learn to navigate lessons on Google Classroom. An iPad cart is available to students for special projects, and Osmo kits. Each classroom is equipped with an Epson Projector and interactive whiteboard software which enhances instruction by allowing students to follow along and interact with lessons. Many students in grades five and six participate in our Broadcasting Club, in which they research school news, record segments, and then edit their recordings to create a weekly IHGS News Broadcast. These segments are streamed throughout the classrooms each Monday and sent out to parents and community members.

Heights Town Library. Each week our students and teachers walk to the town library for their weekly library period lessons. The town librarian exposes students to a variety of genres, as well as teaches important library skills, such as the Dewey Decimal System. Each session always concludes with the students exploring the library's selection of books followed by checking out a book using their library card.

Our guidance counselor conducts weekly lessons in character education that relate to our Project TEAM program. The topics taught are helping others, anti-bullying, problem solving, resiliency, positive change, and leadership. The guidance counselor also provides support to our students and their families.

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

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

The Island Heights Grade School believes that every student should be provided with the necessary tools to be a successful learner. While some students performing below grade level are supported through special education, other students are served through our Basic Skills Instruction program. We refer to this program as STARS because these students are “stars” for striving towards their academic improvement.

Student's instructional needs are fulfilled using the results from various assessments and data sources, but the main source of data is from the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth assessments. This test is given each fall, winter, and spring. The test questions adapt to students' responses providing them with a personalized testing experience.

Students scoring in the 40th percentile or below on the assessment may qualify for STARS. Additionally, scoring below a “4-Met Expectations” on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) will help determine if a third through sixth grader is eligible. Teacher input and student performance in the classroom are also put into consideration. Parents must grant permission for the program.

STARS students receive at least an additional forty minutes per week of instructional time in the area that warrants improvement from their basic skills teacher. Support is given through a push-in or pull-out model. Students work on strengthening their areas of weakness through hands-on activities and multisensory teaching approaches. The classroom teacher and STARS teacher communicate regarding each student's progress.

MAP Growth data is reviewed after each testing session to determine if new students need to join the program throughout the year. Additionally, student progress is carefully monitored through midyear meetings with the Superintendent/Principal, nurse, guidance counselor, classroom teacher, and basic skills teacher. Students in this program have shown tremendous growth and improvement. We owe much of our academic success to our remarkable STARS program!

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

The Island Heights Grade School recognizes that some students have exceptional talents and are gifted in various academic areas. These students whose learning styles and varied interests warrant experiences beyond the classroom may qualify for our gifted and talented SAIL (Students Accelerated Initiative for Learning) program. Our SAIL teacher coordinates learning programs for students in grades three through six who have been identified as gifted in one or more areas. These students are identified through a combination of Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) scores, NJSLA scores, MAP scores, classwork, and teacher and parent input. All students are administered the CogAT in grade two, and students in grades three through six can retake the CogAT yearly if other measures warrant retesting. The SAIL program runs weekly math and language arts sessions for each grade level. High achieving students in kindergarten through second grade receive weekly enrichment lessons.

The SAIL program is designed around a theme for each grade level. Students use technology and complete various research projects, including scaling buildings, 3D printing, and claymation to explore their grade level's theme. Third graders virtually soar into “Space,” while fourth graders take a “Great American Road

Trip.” Fifth graders visit the past to study “Ancient Greece,” and sixth graders dive into “Oceanography.” Students are provided with extensive opportunities to collaborate with each other and are given various choices in the format of the work they complete.

Island Heights Grade School’s goal is to ensure that all students are motivated, challenged, and nurtured to achieve their highest level of performance. The experiences offered through our SAIL program offers many increased opportunities for our gifted students which will lead to future success both in and out of the classroom.

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

The Island Heights Grade School believes students are diverse learners. Our school continuously strives to accommodate every child’s needs and learning style. Through various assessments and data analysis, we foster an environment that allows special education students to learn at their own pace, gain strategies to meet goals, and become resilient when challenges are present. Our goal for students is to obtain a lifelong love for learning.

The Child Study Team (CST) is comprised of a learning disability teacher consultant, school psychologist, and a social worker. The team continuously works together to build the most comprehensive Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for our students. Through observations and consultations, the teachers and Child Study Team work to meet each child’s needs and set them up for success in the classroom.

Small group, individualized, and differentiated instruction are present throughout every classroom. The Special Education program consists of pull-out resource classes and co-teaching models. Monitoring our benchmark assessments and data analysis continuously ensures us that our students are making progress towards grade level expectations.

Our school also has a resource room for students in kindergarten through second grade that follows a transition model to help them grow academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. This class addresses the needs of our younger pupils allowing them to receive individualized instruction in a small classroom setting to prepare them for transitioning back to the classroom or least restrictive environment.

Island Heights Grade School is truly a unique school. Boasting small class sizes and an intimate learning environment, this school has benefited every student that has attended it. We pride ourselves on our ability to meet the needs of all students regardless of their disabilities. These needs are met and strengthened daily to allow our students to evolve into individuals who demonstrate courage, learn to take risks, and are resilient when challenges are presented.

### **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**

---

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

The Island Heights Grade School aims to provide a safe, supportive, and positive school environment conducive to all students. Our district has adopted a schoolwide movement called, Project TEAM, which is a holistic program based on academic, social, emotional and behavioral development with a focus on teamwork. The framework of Project TEAM is taught through six concepts: helping others, positive change, anti-bullying, problem solving, resiliency, and leadership. Students are instructed on these concepts during biweekly guidance lessons to further develop social and emotional learning, career readiness, and bullying prevention.

Through a schoolwide daily behavior support system, students are taught the importance of modeling these six traits. When students are observed embracing these traits, they are rewarded with individual or class tickets. Tickets are collected on a weekly basis. Students strive to earn tickets to be exchanged for special Spirit Days throughout the year culminating in an end of the year trip to Veteran’s Park for a picnic and celebration. Besides the schoolwide and classroom incentives, students are individually recognized for demonstrating the characteristics during monthly assemblies. Staff acknowledge positive behaviors by nominating and awarding students with color coded pins representing the traits of good character. Because of the incentive, students are eager to model these traits among peers. The Project TEAM initiative has had a tremendous positive impact on our school climate and learning community by engaging all students to build strong, meaningful relationships with their peers and staff.

Student achievement is celebrated in various ways. Students and families are regularly invited to attend monthly Board of Education meetings to be acknowledged for their accomplishments and involvement in school activities. They may also present information to the Board about school projects and events. Students create, edit, and present weekly announcements through the IHGS News Broadcast. A monthly newsletter is shared with the community featuring all of the latest news. Students and staff are encouraged to exhibit pride in their accomplishments. Our positive atmosphere is also exhibited through lunchtime birthday celebrations. For each birthday the whole school sings “Happy Birthday” to the birthday students while a picture is taken with our Superintendent/Principal.

Surveys developed by the NJ Department of Education have been utilized to gather insight from students, staff, and parents on school climate. The School Climate Committee gathers and analyzes data with the administration. After analysis, the administration decides what actions need to be taken to effectively and efficiently address suggestions or concerns.

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

Island Heights Grade School recognizes the integral role that our families and community members play in the growth and success of our school. We form strong bonds with our parents, community members, and local businesses. Our school takes pride in the relationships we build with students’ families. Every morning our Superintendent/Principal and several staff members stand in front of the school to greet students and their parents. Each student and their parent is welcomed with a personalized greeting and a smile to ensure a positive start to the day. Relationships are fostered daily through open communication via email, phone, and communication applications.

The PTO provides our students with enrichment opportunities. Among the programs sponsored are Theater Week, Carnival Day, Halloween, and the Book Fair. The Island Heights Teachers’ Association sponsors numerous events, including Holiday Caroling, Read Across America, Amelia Bedelia Day, and a Wax Museum.

Island Heights Grade School hosts numerous events where family and community members are welcomed to celebrate with students, including Veteran’s Day, Flag Day, and Grandparents Day. The Pasta Dinner is an annual event that helps raise money for the sixth grade class. Multiple fairs are hosted throughout the

school year, such as the Literacy Fair, Multicultural Fair, and the STEAM Fair. These events feature student work, activities, and food. We partner with local high schools, police departments, museums, cultural organizations, and environmental groups to make these events interactive and enriching for our families.

We are part of Fulfill NJ's School Garden Network, which is part of our local food bank. A representative from Fulfill comes to our school to teach students about planting and maintaining a vegetable garden. Additionally students collect canned food on Food Drive Fridays as a way to give back to our local food pantry. Our Hoops for Hunger event encourages students to bring in cans by competing in a free throw contest with students, staff, and local police officers.

This year Island Heights Grade School teamed up with the American Heart Association and hosted the Kids Heart Challenge. This fun event prepares our students for success through physical and emotional well-being. Students also learn about their heart while helping others by raising money for the American Heart Association.

Our community stays updated on school events through our monthly newsletter, The Sea Devil Times, as well as the weekly student broadcast, IHGS News. These sources keep us connected with our school community and town residents.

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

Island Heights Grade School values the importance of providing opportunities for our teachers to continue to grow and learn. Each teacher's weekly schedule has a forty minute Professional Development Period built in to allow them an opportunity to stay up to date on the latest educational trends.

The district presents multiple Professional Development Days throughout the year to offer teachers training in curriculum programs as well as data analysis of MAP Growth assessments and NJSLA scores. These are also opportunities for teachers to meet their NJ state-mandated training on topics such as Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB), health issues, and suicide prevention. Training sessions are done in-house or speakers are brought in from other companies. Monthly staff meetings also serve to update and educate staff members throughout the school year. Our staff boasts an exceptional group of professionals who are up to date on current teaching practices.

Island Heights Grade School is a member of the Stockton University Southern Regional Institute (SRI) and Educational Technology Training Center (ETTC). This membership allots our school a set number of hours each year to allow teachers to go to the SRI & ETTC for many professional development learning opportunities. Additionally presenters come into our school to conduct schoolwide training opportunities. Recently, a presenter came to educate us on "Differentiation in the Classroom." In addition, we began a partnership with Ocean County College, which provides teachers local professional development on current educational trends. Teachers are encouraged to turn-key information to their colleagues upon their return.

Teachers meet with the Instructional Curriculum Coach to review data from student test scores to determine areas of growth, areas to improve, and student strengths. As we only have one class per grade, teachers collaborate with colleagues to discuss how to bridge the gaps between grades to keep content and instruction consistent. For example, teachers in grades two through six have collaborated on how to use and implement a variety of writing structures and formats throughout the years. This collaboration has reaped benefits as students learn the same terms and format that build and maintain a strong academic foundation.

In fostering a culture of learning and growth for our teachers, student achievement and growth has soared. Our teachers act as role models by instilling their own love of learning, which motivates students to work hard and continue learning each day.

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

Leadership is prevalent throughout the halls of Island Heights Grade School. We instill in our students that they are part of a TEAM and each has something valuable to offer. As Helen Keller once said, "Alone we  
NBRS 2020 20NJ111PU Page 16 of 18

can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Our school district has one administrator who serves as both Superintendent and Principal. Our administrator works closely with our Board of Education and Business Administrator in order to make important decisions regarding school, staff, and community partnerships. We are grateful to have a supportive Board of Education. The Superintendent/Principal has an open door policy with staff, parents, and community members which helps build a strong partnership. In addition, our administrator works with our Instructional Curriculum Coach in analyzing student data, updating curriculum, and developing professional opportunities for teachers.

Our Child Study Team (CST) provides parents and teachers with a variety of learning related services. Our CST consists of a school psychologist, a social worker, and a learning disabilities teacher consultant (LDTC). The LDTC is available daily and serves as the point person for the CST by assisting staff in understanding the needs of students with disabilities and making recommendations for them to succeed.

Teachers are encouraged to showcase their area of expertise by participating in committees, such as our Code Blue Response Team, Curriculum Committee, and Green Team. For example, our Green Team encourages students and teachers with an interest in environmental concerns to attend monthly meetings. This group spear heads our yearly community cleanups, such as the Barnegat Bay Blitz and Marsh Madness. Additionally, the Green Team highlights their work at our annual STEAM fair with displays and demonstrations.

With teachers and administration taking the lead, students are excited to take on important roles within our school community. For instance, sixth graders assist kindergartners during their lunch and recess periods, make morning announcements, and have the flag and recycling duties. Through our successful Project TEAM program, students have learned what it takes to be a leader and are often found modeling this valuable character trait.

Our PTO is very active and supportive of our school. These parents work hard to provide extra resources for our students, such as educational programs and supplies.

The success of our school can be contributed to the fact that staff, administration, and families work together towards one goal of providing students with the best possible educational experience.

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

---

At Island Heights Grade School, we take great pride in the fact that every staff member knows each child as an individual person, in addition to their strengths and weaknesses as a student. Therefore, the single most influential component of academic success in our school is the development of individualized “prescription plans” for each of our students. A tremendous amount of time and effort is put into analyzing the data from student assessments. Through thorough data analysis, our educational team is able to build these student “prescription plans.” Each child’s plan is tailored to build upon their strengths and weaknesses.

To enhance this effort, two years ago our school adopted an Instructional Curriculum Coach (ICC) position. The ICC reviews the multitude of data with the Superintendent/Principal and together they help share this information with teachers so that they can provide effective classroom lessons that meet the needs of each student.

The main source of data comes from the MAP Growth assessment, which assesses our students strengths and weaknesses in language arts and math. The data compiled from this program has become the key to making decisions for students and developing their “prescription plan.” We take this one step further by linking the student data from the MAP Growth assessment to the Pathblazer online learning program. Each student has an individual learning path based on their results from the MAP Growth assessment. Teachers have been trained to read and utilize this data to properly differentiate lessons in the classroom.

Second graders are given the CogAT assessment to assess cognitive ability. This serves as another form of data to address students' learning needs and to drive instruction. The NJSLA assessments from grades three through six also provide valuable data and help teachers to look for patterns of growth.

Student “prescription plans” are addressed by the inclusion of weekly Study Skills periods for each class. This period offers students the opportunity to focus on following their own personal learning journey while working in Pathblazer. During these periods, students that have been labeled as gifted receive their gifted and talented instruction through our SAIL program, and students needing academic support receive basic skills instruction through our STARS program. Additionally, we have implemented a morning tutoring program to build the confidence of students that need extra support, while they learn strategies to help them succeed. Island Heights Grade School prides itself on developing each student’s growth and achievement!