

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Oakwood Junior High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1200 Far Hills Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Dayton State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 45419-3157

County Montgomery

Telephone (937) 297-5328 Fax (937) 297-7807

Web site/URL https://ojh.oakwoodschoools.org E-mail badenhop.tim@oakwoodschoools.org

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. Kyle Ramey E-mail ramey.kyle@oakwoodschoools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Oakwood City School District Tel. (937) 297-5332

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Todd Duwel
(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, leave blank.*

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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	71	70	141
8	85	88	173
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	156	158	314

*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
 - 5.6 % Asian
 - 0.3 % Black or African American
 - 6.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80.6 % White
 - 6.6 % 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 2020 - 2021 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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	315
(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):

Mandarin

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1 %

Total number students who qualify: 4

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 8 %
26 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. All students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>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: 6
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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
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 16:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	98%	97%	97%	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 2021.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Doing what is best for students is our guiding principle. To this end, the Oakwood School community commits the resources, support, expertise and experiences needed for all students to achieve.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

The Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and transgender identity), disability, military status, ancestry, age and genetic information in its program, activities or employment. Further, it is the policy of this District to provide an equal opportunity for all students, regardless of race, color, creed, age, disability, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, place of residence within the boundaries of the District, or social or economic background, to learn through the curriculum offered in this District. Oakwood Schools' Civil Rights Compliance Officer is the Director of Educational Services, (937) 297-7802.

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Oakwood, Ohio is a geographically small city of just over two square miles, and this space includes over three thousand homes ranging from large estates to sections of smaller residences. Many homes date to the 1920s and 1930s, when Oakwood's makeup shifted from primarily farming homesteads to a desirable residential community. Citizens take pride in Oakwood's rich history, which includes prominent residents the likes of Orville Wright and John H. Patterson, as well as noteworthy involvement during World War II. Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) resided at Sugar Camp and worked to produce US Navy Bombe machines for decoding the German Enigma, and the Runnymede Playhouse was used in polonium research as part of the Manhattan Project. Rooted in its history, Oakwood is now home to approximately 9,200 citizens. Many professors, entrepreneurs, business owners, and servicemen and women stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base (AFB) move here with their families in large part for the education provided in Oakwood City Schools. The community truly values doing what is best for its children, and the involvement and investment of families and the broader community are essential components augmenting success at Oakwood Junior High.

Within Oakwood Junior High, the faculty and staff work to maximize student outcomes. For all students, a culture of high expectations for student achievement, self-management, and respect for self and others provides a foundation for learning in a safe, supportive, and rigorous environment. Student development and outcomes are monitored on an ongoing basis to detect when additional support may be needed. This includes weekly review of all grades of D or F in any course, monthly review of all students who have missed 10% or more of the school year to date, and thrice-yearly screening of whole-group social and emotional status using Panorama. Supports can be implemented flexibly based on student needs. The first level of support is often through our advisory program, Timber, in which small groups of students meet daily with their assigned Timber teachers. Specific days of the week are allocated for group activities or lessons, individual check-ins, building connections/providing structured time for student support, and providing space for administrative tasks, safety drills, or other activities. If Timber time and structure are not sufficient to resolve the identified issue, the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) team can recommend a schedule change to provide a daily class period for academic or social-emotional support in a small-group setting.

These settings - directed study hall for academic concerns and directed wellness center for social and emotional concerns - are limited to approximately ten students per section and are staffed with a teacher as a duty period. Teachers regularly review students' grades, help create structured supports, and foster improved student habits. Directed study hall and the directed wellness center were created to allow intervention when students' executive functioning and/or social-emotional skills become barriers to their success. Each can be requested, recommended, or later added as a class for one or more quarters during each school year. The wellness center space also includes students from Hope Squad - a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program - who volunteer to spend a daily period in the wellness center. The involvement and support of each student's family is an essential component of identifying and successfully addressing individualized needs, but the structures in place allow support to be available during any class period.

In addition to supports when students struggle, Oakwood Junior High offers numerous opportunities for students to excel. Several core area and elective area courses are offered in general and honors formats, and differentiation/extension for student needs is a core facet of instruction. Clubs and activities offer opportunities for students to explore interest areas, assume leadership roles, and engage in facilitated planning. New clubs and activities are regularly proposed and initiated by students, and these vary from year to year as interests change. As an overall theme, our staff seeks to truly individualize instruction, supports, opportunities, and extensions so that each student and all students can achieve to their potential.

Regarding adaptations throughout the pandemic, these will be addressed in several sections below. Overall, our teaching staff's agility and dedication have helped mitigate impact on student learning. After Ohio's schools were closed following a Friday in March 2020, off-site learning including live virtual instruction, assignments and assessments, and materials were delivered to student homes, and more began the following Tuesday. In fact, the most pressing adjustment after it became apparent more than two weeks of closure would be needed was to reduce the quantity and in some cases rigor of tasks presented to students. That

Oakwood Junior High was nominated for this prestigious award following a year fully affected by the pandemic is a testament to each of our students, teachers, and staff - their shared efforts have been an inspiration worthy of this recognition.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The instructional experiences offered at Oakwood Junior High share several common threads that reflect overarching philosophies. First and foremost, each person at Oakwood Junior High is treated as an individual worthy of a safe, supportive, welcoming, and individualized educational environment. Teachers establish inclusive classroom cultures marked by high expectations and student choice in and ownership of learning. Instruction includes leveled materials, allowing students of all abilities to access and meaningfully engage with content. Great care is taken to make different materials appear similar so that students need not feel self-conscious. Each student has access to a personal Chromebook, and all classes employ Google Classroom to some degree. This allows further differentiation and extension in that groups and individuals can be assigned varied work aligned to each lesson. There is an emphasis on formative instructional practices, provision of specific feedback, and teaching to mastery. Within Google Classroom, teachers often assign tasks to each class and ask students to generate individualized or small-group responses that are evaluated before providing written feedback to each student. Students are often asked to share their learning with classmates and to listen to and reflect upon the learning of others, and there is a high emphasis across subjects on explaining one's thinking. Many courses allow test retakes, and past restrictions affording this option only below a certain percentage have been removed to encourage all students to pursue and demonstrate full understanding of key concepts. Value is also placed on breadth of experiences and student choice through course scheduling. In addition to required courses, 7th grade students must take an art course and a music course but are afforded many options from which to select these and elective courses. Overall, we aspire to provide personalized and appropriate opportunities for each student at Oakwood Junior High.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Instruction in English Language Arts (ELA) at Oakwood Junior High follows Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts and includes four core courses - English 7, English 7 Honors, English 8, and English 8 Honors. Through recommendations for honors-level coursework are made by the preceding year's ELA teacher, students, and parents may pursue a process to achieve honors placement without recommendation by notifying of this intent, completing an assessment, and reviewing provided feedback within stated guidelines. Because of this, all students may choose a desired level of rigor on a year-by-year basis. In addition to the core coursework, there is a required quarter of Reading and Writing Connections in seventh grade and a required semester of Composition and Communication in eighth grade.

English Language Arts coursework is taught without use of a packaged curriculum. Rather, teachers develop lessons aligned to Ohio's standards that address several focus areas. Each class period begins with ten (10) minutes of independent student reading to build reading stamina, fluency, comprehension, and interest. English teachers have classroom libraries of diverse options for student reading, and these libraries are updated yearly. The intent of this practice is to build a culture of literacy that recognizes student interest and independence, but this daily time also allows teachers to check in with students individually, informally assess comprehension and analysis skills, and complete needed tasks such as meeting with students returning from an absence.

Following the ten minutes of reading, classes transition to their lessons for the day. Key targets in 7th and 8th grades include development and mastery of reading strategies, annotating with purpose, identifying central ideas in a text, increasing vocabulary using Latin and Greek roots, summarizing and determining importance of information text, and understanding each author's purpose. In-class readings and excerpts include fiction and nonfiction literature as well as informational text. All core coursework uses a thematic approach to emphasize student connections to what they are reading. For example, readings in 7th grade can include several works addressing themes of adversity with adolescent protagonists - *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, and *Refugee* by Alan Gratz to list a few.

As students reflect on these works and consider how they would respond in similar circumstances, prompts leverage their interest into developing argumentative writing skills through the writing process using claim, evidence, reasoning, counterclaim/argument, and audience. Similarly, students learn to find, read, analyze, compare, and contrast varied viewpoints on topics of interest before synthesizing them in their own written and shared conclusions. Student thoughts and reflections are monitored through Google Classroom, and teachers provide specific individualized feedback in addition to whole-class instruction based on formative assessment findings. Overall, English Language Arts coursework at Oakwood Junior High emphasizes the inclusion of high-interest readings that foster thoughtful student reflection on diverse viewpoints, discussion and acknowledgement of these viewpoints, and synthesis, sharing, and defense of each student's conclusions.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Students at Oakwood Junior High have the ability to take coursework that accurately reflects their ability and provides an appropriate level of challenge. Current math coursework available to students includes Math 7, Math 7 Honors (which compacts 7th and 8th grade content into one year), Math 8, Math 8 Honors (taken by 7th graders who have already mastered 7th grade math content), Algebra I Honors, and Geometry Honors. Algebra I Honors, and Geometry Honors coursework are 9th and 10th grade level equivalents, respectively, and are transcribed courses for high school credit. All courses below 9th grade level follow the Connected Math curriculum, which was originally funded through the National Science Foundation and is now in its fourth edition. Courses at this level emphasize connecting big ideas throughout the curriculum, and lessons follow a launch, explore and, summarize format. Small-group and partner work move beyond problem-solving to emphasize student communication of mathematical concepts and understanding prior to whole-group sharing and discussion of solutions and key concepts.

Algebra I Honors and Geometry Honors use the College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM) curriculum, which emphasizes strategies guided by recommendations through the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Principles emphasized through these curricula include problem-based lessons structured around a core idea, teacher-facilitated student group discourse, and ongoing practice with skills over time. Like Connected Math, CPM uses a launch, explore, and summarize format.

Given their reliance upon group dialogue to build mathematical understanding, the format of math courses has been significantly impacted during the pandemic due to restrictions on group work. Primary reactions to this have been substantial integration of technology-based learning tools that aim to achieve similar outcomes through different means and increased emphasis on teacher collaboration and sharing. For several courses, teachers created daily Screencastify video lessons with integrated Edpuzzle questions both to monitor engagement and formatively assess student understanding. During the first three quarters of 2020-2021 SY, in-person students attended half-days and only had each class every other day. Math lessons, however, were provided daily throughout the school year and were available to students whether present or absent. Group work was preserved through Google Jamboard and application of the activity builder in Desmos, which included interactive slideshows, graphing, and structured group interactions. Homework was digitized to facilitate off-site work and increase immediacy of feedback through teacher assessment. Collection of student work through electronic means also allowed anonymous sharing and discussion of correct and incorrect thinking during whole-class review, which preserved the authenticity of problem-solving. GeoGebra and Formative were additional tools whose usage increased by necessity but are likely to remain long after the pandemic has passed. All lessons and tools were sequentially organized by number in Google Classroom. In summary, the strong foundational values and the inquiry-based approach within mathematics curricula have required significant adaptation over the past two years in particular but have been intentionally and thoughtfully preserved through the efforts of our teachers.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Science 7 & 8 feature an integrated science curriculum that follows Ohio's content standards and offers learning experiences in three major areas of study: earth science, life science, and physical science. Building on past science curricula, each content area provides opportunities for expanding students' basic science processing skills, improving students' understanding of scientific concepts and misconceptions, and refining

students' critical thinking, data compilation, and data analysis skills. Students are frequently provided the opportunity to creatively solve problems while working cooperatively with their peers through a variety of classroom activities and laboratories in an inquiry and application setting. Science classes utilize an Interactive Science Notebook (ISN), which acts as a "one-stop-shop for all science content provided by teachers. This tool has proven invaluable in meeting diverse student needs. Differentiated content and products are available to best meet the academic goals of each student while allowing for authentic connections and assessment of instruction. ISNs are paired with the Ohio version of Science Fusion textbooks, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Along with Google Classroom, these resources have proven to create an effective platform for creating continuity of instruction and learning. With an emphasis on building student independence in organizing and managing their own learning, this collection of resources has supported consistency regardless of location, COVID-related restrictions, and consistency of school attendance and continues to augment student learning.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The social studies curriculum includes Early World History in seventh grade and Early American History in eighth grade. Early World History focuses on the cultural, economic, and political legacies of early civilizations with emphases on economics, systems of government, civic participation, and social studies skills. In Early American History, students explore the political, social, cultural, geographic, and economic legacies of America's history from colonization through reconstruction.

Throughout each course, instructional targets include content-based and skill-based student growth. Students are commonly asked to draw connections between historical events and current events through application tasks, such as thesis writing, primary source analysis, and document-based questions. Assignments and assessments are differentiated to meet diverse student needs with collaborative support from the Gifted Intervention Specialist and an Intervention Specialist. Multimodal formative assessments are built into daily instruction, allowing teachers to monitor understanding, create student groupings, and develop student mastery. Using online assessment tools has facilitated prompt and specific feedback to students while informing the need for responsive reteaching and assessment retakes. Electronic tasks, simulations, and debates also promote student engagement and frequent peer-to-peer feedback.

Within the social studies department, teachers have teamed to create standards-based common assessments and writing/documentation skills assessments that emphasize development of skills needed for success in high school and beyond. These common assessments are used for pre-assessment at the beginning of the year, formative assessment throughout the year, and summative assessment at the end of the year. Standards-based target sheets guide instruction for each unit, and the team meets regularly to ensure vertical alignment and discuss student growth needs. Because social studies courses have embedded technology-based learning tasks and management systems for several years, the pandemic's impact on student learning in social studies was minimized and did not prevent live instruction, student-led learning, or the offering of engaging tasks with cross-curricular skill implications.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students are offered a wide range of options while at Oakwood Junior High. In the visual and performing arts, 7th grade students are required to take at least one quarter-long visual arts course and one music course from a set of provided options. Initial options for visual art include Sculpture I and Drawing and Painting I, which are prerequisites for Sculpture II and Drawing and Painting II. Music options include choir, a cappella choir, band, orchestra, history of rock and roll, and intro to guitar. Performing music classes are two non-

consecutive quarters and have separate 8th grade versions, while non-performing music classes are one quarter in length and can be requested by 8th graders if not already completed.

All students take physical education/health in both 7th and 8th grades. Each course is taken for one semester as one-third health and two-thirds physical education. Physical education courses are often held outdoors at the adjacent athletic spaces, with indoor weight room and gymnasium spaces also integrated. Areas of emphasis include personal wellness, sportsmanship, lifetime physical activities, cooperation, and improvement. Students complete station-based skill acquisition activities with pre-tests, data tracking, and post-tests as they build skills. Health lessons are part of a sequenced K-12 health curriculum and follow developmentally-appropriate topics while emphasizing personal application.

Oakwood Junior High offers two world languages, French and Spanish. Incoming 7th grade students may request either language, and one semester during 7th grade precedes a full-year course in 8th grade. Upon successful completion of the sequence, students earn credit for French I or Spanish I, respectively. Students who elect to take a world language in junior high have two fewer spots for quarter electives in 7th grade and four fewer spots for electives in 8th grade than those students not taking a world language.

Regarding technology, 7th and 8th grade students take required courses through Project Lead the Way. Several additional electives address application of technology, including courses in robotics, video production, computer programming, energy/environment, and (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)). Technological components are integrated into every course across content areas.

Other elective or required courses include financial literacy, critical thinking, a project-based history course, and courses in family and consumer sciences. Offerings emphasize a base set of common experiences, encouragement for students to evaluate and select courses of interest to them, and connections to future courses for students who wish to further pursue new interests.

Amidst the pandemic, alternative projects were generated to offer authentic learning experiences. Visual art projects included outdoor sculptures made from leaves, sticks, or rocks, for example, that were photographed and uploaded for review and feedback while students learned at home. Upon a return to in-person instruction, band and choir classes were held outdoors under canopy tents except when cold weather prevented this. The choir director moved an electronic keyboard outdoors daily to provide accompaniment. The French teacher used a green screen to create interactive videos, which included lesson-specific settings and circumstances. Emphasis was placed on projects providing flexibility to be accessed as students were well and able.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

For students who come to Oakwood Junior High with an individualized plan in place, strategies for support will be reflected in the response for the special education section below. Most commonly, students, who do not have an identified academic skill deficit but struggle at Oakwood Junior High, do so because they have not yet developed the executive functioning and overall self-management skills to navigate the transition from elementary to a seven-period day with class changes, increased at-home work, long-range tasks, and a generally higher expectation of independence. When this is true, additional skill teaching and scaffolding through Timber time or through an assigned directed study hall period are common strategies to increase student skill while limiting the impact of current deficits on ongoing learning.

When students are performing below grade level but have no existing plan and for reasons not believed to be due to the increase in newly-expected self-management, assistance begins with a referral to the MTSS team to determine what strategies may be most successful for targeting improvement. This may still include support through one of the strategies above, but period placement may be based on the skill teaching background of the directed study hall teacher or interventionist. At this stage, the student and parents or guardians are involved as part of the team to identify suspected root causes and develop strategies for addressing them.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Oakwood students who have been identified as gifted in one or more areas and/or for their overall cognitive ability have personalized goals through Written Education Plans (WEPs). Goals address each core content area applicable to the goal area, and they specify targeted enrichment experiences. More importantly, WEPs create dialogue between the gifted intervention specialist and classroom teachers regarding each gifted student's area(s) of identification and the types of strategies and supports that can be used to extend and enhance the individual's learning.

Because approximately half of students in the district have gifted identifications, teaching of gifted children is a frequent session offering during district-wide professional development days. All classroom teachers are required to complete at least 60-hours of professional development every four years specific to the education of gifted students. Structurally, the large population of identified students also allows for most core content area classes to include clusters of gifted students that promote flexible use of homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings. Whether through a specialized project or with a specialized role in a heterogeneous group, opportunities for extension are intentional and common.

In addition to the practices above, the varied needs of students performing above grade level are generally addressed through a wide range of course offerings at Oakwood Junior High. English and mathematics courses are available in honors and general pathways, with mathematics additionally having multiple courses open to students across grade levels. Performing music courses have honors groups accessible by interest and/or audition, and three electives courses have been offered exclusively to students with gifted identifications. Two of these will open to all students next year through co-teaching with the gifted intervention specialist, but the intent is to offer leveled challenges that will meet the unique needs of each student.

3c. Special education:

Special education offerings are based on the collection of specialized services and supports reflected in each year's population of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and available related services include but are not limited to physical, occupational, and speech therapies. For students with the most significant educational needs, the resource room setting consists of two teachers teaming with paraprofessionals to construct skill-based learning experiences in a 7-12 model. Students can be grouped differently depending on the skill or content area and appropriate transition-related learning. Junior high students in the resource room setting typically complete core content in this environment and take physical education and some elective courses with paraprofessional support alongside their typically-developing peers.

With few exceptions, other students with IEPs receive instruction in an inclusion model. One section of each grade level general social studies, science, math, and English courses includes both an intervention specialist and a content area teacher in the classroom. IEP teams determine per class when this is a needed support for a given student. Intervention specialists in collaborative sections are grade-specific to maximize understanding of each inclusion student's course content. For students who are not intentionally scheduled into the collaborative section, section placement is randomized but can be revised based on the group's constitution. When possible, though, the attempt is made to have students with the same core area teacher who teaches the collaborative section. This facilitates intervention specialist understanding of and communication about tests/assignments, use of differentiated tasks across sections, and overall cooperation between teacher and intervention specialist.

Most students with inclusion IEPs have one period per day of support in a small group environment with the intervention specialist. This is in addition to any scheduled collaborative core classes and specialized instruction plus any needed reteaching can be provided during this time.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

At present, all English Language Learners (ELLs) requiring support at Oakwood Junior High speak Mandarin Chinese as their native language. Students who are ELLs have a daily dedicated class period with the ELL instructor, allowing small-group and one-to-one instruction as a support for performance within the core curriculum. The ELL instructor collaborates and communicates with each student's teachers regarding current developmental level and corresponding classroom implications. ELL instruction focuses on language acquisition in accordance with results and recommendations from each student's Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition. In the classroom, translation software options, including wearable microphone systems paired with student devices, are readily available as desired and appropriate. In some cases, though, families prefer to intentionally limit such supports. When assessing skills and content knowledge outside of English language arts, students are generally permitted to complete assessments in their native language using functionality in Google Suite. When this is not the case, students who are ELLs can receive adapted assignments as appropriate to have fewer questions, simplified/shortened written sections, a reduction of items on multiple choice questions, and other accommodations as appropriate.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

While always a focus, the faculty and staff at Oakwood Junior High has had to be very intentional in the creation of an environment fostering student growth during the past two years in particular. The primary space for intentionally engaging students is within each classroom. Teachers are mindful of creating welcoming classroom environments with flexible seating spaces, alternative lighting, familiar classroom routines, clear and high expectations, and genuinely individualized attention and support. Beyond this, students have numerous opportunities for clubs and activities that match areas of interest. During the height of the pandemic, virtual or outdoor club meetings aimed to continue social opportunities as possible. When necessary, activities were reformatted in order to preserve them. Student orientation used smaller groups for scripted building tours that could socially distance and address questions outdoors. The junior high play was rehearsed with social distancing and performed live online to allow culmination of several months' work. Sporting events were held with structured seating, and a junior high dance was held outdoors. Student recognition ceremonies were held virtually, and concerts were a balance of in-person (when able) and virtual. Though there were events that unable to be held, the starting point regarding all events was to creatively consider how they may still be able to be offered so that student accomplishments and experiences could be recognized and celebrated. Additionally, the practice of making masks available to students at building entry each day allowed the principal to greet students daily.

Student leadership opportunities have been preserved through Lumberjack Leaders - a group of 8th grade students who operate orientation in addition to supporting the school and surrounding community - as well as through groups like Ohio Model United Nations, Hope Squad, Building Our Lives Drug-free, and more.

In response to students facing adversity during the pandemic, the theme of "Joy" was selected for this year's advisory program, Timber. Groupings were created around student-selected areas of interest, and special activities during Timber have included a door decorating contest, themed 'dress up' spirit days, a kindness spirit week, and other initiatives to help students contribute to building culture. Additional activities, such as opt-in dodgeball and video game tournaments held during lunch, have sought to provide varied opportunities for students to build connections and compete with peers. Overall, student participation has reflected high interest and enjoyment in a program designed to emphasize student connection communicate their value to the building community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The primary tool used to communicate with families on a regular basis is through a weekly email that includes "A Note from the Principal" in addition to upcoming events and activities. Prior to the pandemic, the focus rotated but included a "Staff Spotlight" to help families get to know their children's teachers, updates and reflections on happenings and events at Oakwood Junior High, and writings regarding common experiences and challenges as children navigate the junior high years. During the pandemic and its coinciding construction, writings have often communicated procedural information and answers to 'hot topic' questions. Goals for sending this weekly connector are to ensure families are informed while also offering insights into what their children's lives are like from 8:15-3:15 each day. When changes are being considered, surveys are sometimes sent to seek parent input as part of the data collection process. For brief updates on activities, events, and student accomplishments, social media posts offer frequent communication as well.

Additional community connections include strong partnerships with our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), the Oakwood Schools Foundation, Oakwood Fine Arts Boosters, Oakwood Band Parents Association, Oakwood Athletic Boosters, and more. In concert with Oakwood Rotary, a Student of the Quarter is recognized at a Rotary breakfast several times per year. Though it wasn't able to be held during the height of the pandemic, the Success Breakfast partners with the PTO to hold a larger recognition breakfast during which students are honored for demonstrating traits like kindness, growth, determination, responsibility, respect, and more.

In general, the support of students' families in addition to the support of the Oakwood community are essential to student outcomes. Oakwood families are very involved in and supportive regarding the education of their children, and the faculty and staff at Oakwood Junior High are always open to new partnerships and ideas that can support students. Examples of such partnerships include families serving as guest speakers when content areas match careers, chaperones for dances and field trips, and serving on district committees. Because the school district has no buses, parents also rotate as drivers to transport students to athletic events throughout the area.

Regarding family monitoring of student progress, realtime access to grades posted in ProgressBook, prompt access to teachers via email and/or meeting, and in some cases access to information through Remind and/or Google Classroom ensure families have immediate access to the information and supports they may need to maximize student learning.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Oakwood City School District has numerous structures in place to foster growth of teachers and staff in addition to its students. Designated days for development of all staff are built into the school calendar on an ongoing basis to ensure that reflection on best practices is a staple, not an after thought. These days are divided into time that allows for teacher self-directed selection of topics, district-required sessions for all staff, and choice periods during which each person selects from a menu of offerings scheduled in blocks. Professional development priorities are set by district leadership and the Professional Development Committee, which includes representatives from the administrative team and from each building within the district. Areas for emphasis before and during the pandemic have included integration of technology into the classroom, off-site instructional techniques, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. A professional development playlist was created to support teachers' professional growth via virtual options with restrictions in place for large gatherings.

When groups of teachers share an interest for further study, they may create a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and can seek official approval allowing a small additional stipend as incentive for participation and reflection. Examples of PLC topics at Oakwood Junior High include book studies, wellness initiatives, and other collaborative projects. During the past year specifically, teacher-led PLCs were created to support the social emotional needs of the staff, to study the book *What Happened to You?* by Winfrey and Perry, and to gather staff input regarding desired future junior high course offerings.

Beyond professional development, the past two years have been difficult with respect to ensuring that teachers feel valued and supported. While facing circumstances not represented in preparation programs and having extremely limited notice when reimagining instruction, teachers were also largely disconnected from the standard of strong collegial support due to pandemic-related restrictions. Initiatives to support teachers have included providing additional time for planning and preparation in the half-day schedule, working to match duty period assignments to teachers' preferences, focusing on teacher understanding and wellness through the first year of Social/Emotional Learning programming, requesting and working to honor course assignment preferences, assessing teacher comfort when determining whether to hold meetings virtually or in person, and providing summaries of survey data when teacher input is sought in decision-making. The teachers at Oakwood Junior High have been exceptional before and throughout the pandemic, however, so it is fair to conclude that no amount of mechanisms for recognizing their value could have been sufficient.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Oakwood Junior High recognizes that all staff members offer strengths that add tremendous value to students through creative leadership opportunities. Though the principal is charged with structuring and overseeing building processes, many people serve in leadership roles. The school counselor leads initiatives to review student academic and social emotional progress and to connect appropriate interventions with students who need them. The social emotional learning facilitator and interventionist work alongside the school counselor to review, create, and implement programs that support wellness for students and staff. The gifted intervention specialist provides leadership in design and

implementation of services and supports for gifted-identified students, and intervention specialists lead with respect to design and implementation of specialized instructional supports. People in all of these roles regularly develop and offer professional development to their colleagues, but the opportunity to share professional knowledge and skills is often seized by other teachers as well. The Timber advisory program is led by a teacher within the social studies department in partnership with a colleague at Oakwood High School. Especially with a pandemic-accelerated shift to one-to-one devices, the technology department offers leadership in determining device needs for students and staff, integration of devices and technology into instruction, and creation of professional development offerings that facilitate adoption. Department chairs lead their colleagues in vertical alignment of coursework, updates in curriculum and best practices, and proposal of schedules each school year. Teacher representation is a core value within district-level committees, and this includes professional development, licensure, a recent review of grading practices, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. In general, leadership practices recognize that all people can make meaningful contributions to the ongoing growth and development of staff and students at Oakwood Junior High if afforded opportunities that match their strengths and interests.

During the pandemic, key shifts in administrative responsibilities have included the principal's creation and management of a districtwide COVID metrics and tracking database and the previously-planned management of a major renovation project's impact on classroom availability and alternatives. While efforts were made to limit the impact of shifts in the principal's roles on teaching staff, it is generally true that all school staff members assumed additional responsibilities to maximize student learning despite shifting health requirements, instructional models, and attendance interruptions.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At Oakwood Junior High, ALL students should experience a school environment that makes them feel safe, valued, seen, and heard. In order to continually work toward this, school staff have offered numerous optional and required whole-group and self-directed professional development opportunities under the leadership of the Professional Development Committee and the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force. Additionally, staff self-reflection projects have fostered individual growth in these areas.

At Oakwood Junior High specifically, students can voluntarily complete a beginning of year survey that requests any information students would like to share that could help their teachers teach them better. This can include differences in cultures and values. One outcome from this survey has been student sharing of information regarding such matters as gender and sexuality. Classrooms across content areas have reflected on possible biases built into content and assignments, such as considering the diversity of names in mathematics word problems, and updating genetics terminology. English curricula and classrooms include diverse literature requirements and choices allowing all students to see themselves mirrored in the literature and to have windows into diverse cultural circumstances and perspectives.

One common outcome from viewing the school environment through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion is to recognize appropriate supports. When students of diverse backgrounds require social and emotional supports, these can be made available through the social emotional learning facilitator or instructor, the school counselor, or the mental health therapist. When students experience increased desire for privacy, this can be provided through single-occupancy restrooms and locker rooms. When students feel alone, they can be supported through student-led clubs or activities proving they are not. When students come from families that aren't 'traditional,' school communications updates addressing 'families' instead of 'parents' can proactively be more inclusive.

When current events impact our students, teachable moments are addressed within classrooms in addition to addressing them as a staff as warranted. On the day following the Capitol riots, for example, eighth grade history classes stopped to discuss the connections to the Constitution and the implications for the future. Upon learning about a professional sports team name change, students in English classes debated cultural considerations in team mascots. Clearly, the pandemic itself necessitated our staff to respond and support our community through a difficult world event. Despite widely varied stakeholder viewpoints on appropriate navigation of the pandemic, the focus remained on the needs of our students and how to address them.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Oakwood Junior High, each student is treated as an individual whose academic and social-emotional needs are worthy of being understood and supported regardless of circumstance. A multitude of strategies are employed to understand students' interests and backgrounds, and teacher-student relationships are cultivated through intentional conversations, individualized questions and feedback, and close listening to surface and deeper answers alike. As teachers develop individualized knowledge of their students, deliberate adjustments are made to create unique learning experiences for each learner. These could include differentiated tasks to extend or accommodate, alternative means of students' demonstration of learning, test retakes reflecting teaching to mastery, or simply setting aside time to talk with a student about life. Teachers additionally build strong relationships with families, often initiating contacts to celebrate or challenge as the occasion requires.

All educators at Oakwood Junior High - including the school counselor, administrative professionals, service staff, the school nurse, and more - are valued members of each student's team. During the initial phases of the pandemic, for example, the technology department was amidst an accelerated move to one-to-one devices when it learned that some students did not have access to home internet. While still connecting students with devices district-wide, the technology director also oversaw provision of hotspots to students in need of them. The district nurse contacted families individually for contact tracing communications, relating information to teachers regarding student wellness, return dates, and more. Paraprofessionals designed and operated an off-site schedule for meeting with students in need of individualized support, and intervention specialists created individualized support sessions for students with IEPs. There is beyond a willingness to adjust to the individual student's needs - there is a shared practice of taking all steps necessary to learn about each student, create connected experiences, and develop uniquely individualized educational offerings for each student. Though it is true that not every student will feel a connection to every teacher, it is the goal that every student will have a strong positive relationship with at least one adult at Oakwood Junior High. In this way, the faculty and staff aspire to clearly communicate that each student is a valuable part of our school community and is able to excel.