

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Tom Wortham

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

Official School Name Barret Traditional Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2561 Grinstead Drive

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Louisville                      KY                      40206-2862  
City                                      State                                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Jefferson County

Telephone (502) 485-8207

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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. Martin Pollio                      E-mail  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)                      [marty.pollo@jefferson.kyschools.us](mailto:marty.pollo@jefferson.kyschools.us)

District Name Jefferson County School District                      Tel. (502) 485-3251

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

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

\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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 2013 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: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 91 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 24 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 20 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools

136 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
  - Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	106	112	218
7	103	111	214
8	94	110	204
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	303	333	636

\*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
  - 0 % Asian
  - 22 % Black or African American
  - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 63 % White
  - 8 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 1%

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

N/A

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	636
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

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

Amharic, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Indian, Korean, Malayalam, Nepali, Panjabi (Eastern), Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 34%  
Total number students who qualify: 218

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %  
10 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>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 16
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
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.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 28:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

<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.

We provide a structured environment with opportunities for students to develop to their fullest potential and become lifelong learners in a culturally diverse world.

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

Any student residing in Jefferson County who desires a more structured instructional environment is eligible to apply to the traditional program. Traditional schools use a random draw selection process during the application period prior to the year of placement. Students are selected for the traditional program by random draw while maintaining the District's diversity guidelines. There can be no specific criteria for earned student grades or student achievement as part of the screening procedure. Once the random draw has occurred, families are notified and given the option of accepting their placement for the upcoming school year.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Barret Traditional Middle School (BTMS) is located in the Crescent Hill neighborhood of Louisville, Kentucky, but serves zip codes all across the city. In compliance with district student assignment and diversity guidelines, our enrollment depends on a random student selection process that provides an equal chance of admission to students from different income levels, ethnicities, and household educational backgrounds. As a result, we serve a diverse student population, with families from many different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. We respect those differences and see them as an asset to our school. One commonality that our families share is an interest in seeking out an academic program that is rigorous in nature and a learning environment that is highly structured in order to place emphasis on student success and personal responsibility.

Built in 1932, Barret is known for excellence in both scholastic achievements as well as success in athletics and extracurricular activities. Throughout its history, Barret has celebrated the high performance of its students in nearly every academic measure. Barret was the only school in Louisville to receive the Mayor's Top Apple School Award for all four years that it was available from 2006 to 2009. More recently, Barret has also been recognized for its commitment to service learning. In 2017, Barret received the Crescent Hill Spirit of the Community Award for its contributions to the neighborhood. In 2016, the Barret Cares program was designed to continue this work through the development of schoolwide service projects and individual student service learning contributions.

One key aspect of Barret's success is the implementation of the Traditional Program, which places a strong emphasis on high academic standards, proper conduct, citizenship, courtesy, integrity, and the development of self-discipline. Students have more independence at Barret than at other middle schools. For example, they are not required to wait in a common area until school begins. Instead, they are able to decide how they want to spend their time before school begins, choosing from options such as open computer labs, use of the library, meeting with teachers, eating breakfast, or talking with friends. This increases student choice, and also requires students to practice self-discipline and good decision-making skills every day in a developmentally appropriate setting.

Barret emphasizes student mastery of all curricula including English/language arts, literature, mathematics, history, government, geography, science, World Languages, and fine arts. We also stress the importance of additional skills in listening, penmanship, public speaking, grammar, composition, and spelling. All students maintain artifacts of their learning in a digital portfolio that demonstrates their mastery of standards in their subject areas, as well as success skills including communication, collaboration, innovation, global and cultural competence, preparedness, resilience, and scholarship. Students use their artifacts to prepare and present a Student Defense of Learning to a panel of community members during the Spring of their 8th grade year in order to demonstrate transition readiness for high school. This culminating learning event demonstrates Barret's commitment to not only preparing students academically in ways that can be measured through traditional assessments like standardized tests but also in ways that promote the skills they will need to be successful in life as they consider their college and career options.

While there are many programs at Barret that have contributed to its success, perhaps one of our most important strategies is our School Counselor Looping Model. There are three full-time School Counselors at Barret, each designated to a grade level, resulting in a 1:220 or fewer Counselor: Student ratio. As students move from one grade to the next, their Counselor loops with them. The Counselors are able to develop strong connections and positive relationships with the students and their families within their designated grade. As a result, teachers work together with the Counselors whenever concerns arise either academically or behaviorally in order to focus on whole-child solutions that emphasize positive interventions. This enables them to work proactively with their students to address a significant number of behavior concerns before they reach the level of a disciplinary referral. In addition to looping with the students, the Counselors also maintain Student Councils, hold monthly full-class meetings with their grade level, and spend one day each month teaching students as part of our Classroom Guidance program in order to emphasize character education, focusing on topics like anti-bullying strategies, kindness, and empathy.

In summary, Barret Traditional Middle School is unique because we blend the best of the past with the needs of the future to create a learning environment where students and teachers are focused on success every day. We are constantly seeking ways to continue to improve our methods and consider every member of the Barret community to be dedicated to lifelong learning. We look forward to continuing our tradition of excellence for many years to come.



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

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

Kentucky’s Academic Standards (KAS) for English/language arts (ELA) standards are addressed through a variety of instructional strategies. Our core program includes the Code-X system, class sets of selected texts that are common for each grade level, and novels that are selected by the student. The novels are specifically chosen in order to ensure that students experience a wide range of genres, as well as for their culturally responsive themes.

Teachers implement an instructional framework that is focused on brief periods of direct instruction, group practice, individual practice, and small group/individual reteaching/intervention as needed. Differentiation occurs during the group practice/individual practice portions of the lesson. Students are also provided with technology-based support that is personalized to the needs of every learner. Universal screener data, generated via the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment, are input into the Study Island online system in order to create a customized learning path for each student that is used to supplement their schoolwork and address individual areas of growth. This data also allows teachers to monitor progress at the student level for individual skills.

The ELA department works as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) weekly in order to deconstruct standards, plan for instruction, design common formative assessments (CFAs), and analyze student work in order to identify students who need additional opportunities for mastery or should pursue enrichment. In addition to student work samples, teachers analyze MAP data to group students within their classes that score within similar bands for a given topic. PLCs are charged with using the data to create an action plan for next steps for instruction.

Other features that are distinct to ELA include a robust summer reading program and a popular after-school tutoring program. Also, in addition to the ELA class, students have a Literature class in order to provide additional opportunities to read each day. The literature classes focus on the reading and analysis of classic texts and citing textual evidence.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

KAS for Mathematics are addressed through a spiraling curriculum designed by our team of seasoned math teachers. The core program for math is Big Ideas, and it is supplemented with a variety of resources including online interactives and assignments to assist families as they work at home. Additionally, teachers supplement Big Ideas with project-based learning opportunities that they design collaboratively in PLC groups.

Teachers implement a math workshop instructional approach that focuses on direct instruction, whole class practice, small group practice, and synthesis at the end of the lesson. The end of the lesson is designed to help students share their thinking with one another and compare strategies for problem-solving.

Math teachers develop culminating projects asking students to apply math concepts to real-world scenarios. These projects include tasks like collecting data on the prices of grocery items at various stores in order to compare unit rates to find the best deals or challenging students to use exponential functions to make predictions about the population of a city over time in order to plan for its infrastructure needs.

Another key feature of the mathematics program at Barret involves the use of MAP data and other factors to determine whether students participate in the standard math program or the accelerated program. Fifty-five percent of Barret students participate in the accelerated program, on average each year. The accelerated program works a full grade-level ahead in mathematics standards and allows students to engage with content they might not otherwise experience until high school. Students in both programs must demonstrate mastery

of their grade-level standards and have access to intervention/enrichment as indicated by their data. Offering the accelerated program allows students who are prepared for that level of instruction to engage in content that is on their level and promote the achievement of MAP growth goals.

### **1c. Science:**

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are addressed at Barret through the implementation of a three-dimensional curriculum that was designed by district leaders in collaboration with our staff. It is three-dimensional because it engages students in the disciplinary core ideas (DCI) by having them actively engage in the science and engineering practices (SEP) while using the crosscutting concepts (CCC) as a sensemaking lens. Units are designed for students to investigate real-world phenomena and discover ways in which the various sciences are interconnected.

Students are assessed in a variety of ways including both formative and summative tasks that evaluate students in all three instructional dimensions and ask them to think beyond simple recall of facts. For example, instead of asking students to recall facts about Newton's Laws, students could be asked to design and conduct an investigation in order to collect data, develop a claim, support the claim with evidence from their work, and connect the evidence to the claim using reasoning about Newton's Laws. This emphasis on conceptual understanding has led Barret students to not only receive one of the highest scores in the state for the new NGSS statewide assessment but to also be able to demonstrate their knowledge via performance assessments.

Students work collaboratively in science, either with partners or in small groups. Developing teamwork skills in an academic setting is an essential part of the work that students demonstrate with their digital portfolio, and the artifacts they create as part of their learning in science are frequent selections for student defense presentations. Science teachers collaborate to develop meaningful, authentic projects that will result in high levels of student engagement. For example, students are currently working on developing models of energy transfer at the atomic level in sixth grade, a design challenge to build a better electromagnet in order to explore fields in seventh grade, and designing public service announcements about human impact on the environment in eighth grade.

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

The state of Kentucky adopted new Social Studies standards within the last 30 days that focus on students' ability to investigate a compelling question (in which there may not be one clear answer) in order to better understand history, the impact of geography on history, civics, and government. There is a heavy emphasis on students' ability to use evidence from sources in order to engage in argument with their peers to defend their thinking. While this represents a seismic shift for many Social Studies teachers, it is a change that Barret teachers welcome. Social Studies at Barret has a longstanding emphasis on the Socratic method and developing instructional strategies that promote opportunities for students to engage in the content in innovative ways. For example, instead of simply memorizing facts about the Revolutionary War, 8th grade students recently investigated the compelling question, "Could the Revolutionary War have been prevented?" Students were given a variety of sources and worked in pairs or small groups in order to support their position. As a result of their research, students still needed all of the facts about the war that a typical test may assess, but this instructional approach requires them to go a step further and apply that knowledge in order to defend their argument.

Students are regularly asked to make presentations to one another or to the whole class and engage in peer feedback loops. Participating in this work on a regular basis not only helps students master the Social Studies content, but also prepares them for their culminating student defense of learning presentations in 8th grade.

Like the other contents, Social Studies teachers work together weekly in PLC groups in order to develop CFAs and analyze student work samples in order to identify trends and modify instruction. Teachers use student data to plan for instruction and to identify students who need small-group instruction to review missed concepts.

**1e. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Barret offers a robust selection of opportunities in the other curriculum areas. In order to promote opportunity and access, all students take introductory semester-long courses in Visual Art, Physical Education, Health, Music, and World Language at some point. Students are then able to opt to participate in an advanced course for topics that interest them.

Our award-winning Visual Art program allows students to explore a variety of media and focuses not only on the creation of art but also on essential elements and cultural relevance. Students often choose artifacts from Art class for their digital portfolio because of the high quality of the products they create. The Art program incorporates interdisciplinary themes as often as possible. For example, students extended their study of angles in math to the creation of clay whistles in Art, measuring and adjusting the angles in order to get the whistle to play. Student creations are proudly displayed in the hallway, cafeteria, and are also celebrated on the running slideshow that plays on television screens throughout the building.

Students participate in a traditional Physical Education (PE) class in which they must dress out, be active each day, and learn the fundamental aspects of a variety of games. There is a strong emphasis on sportsmanship and teamwork during competition. In addition to PE, 8th grade students take a semester of Health class. Successful completion of the class results in a high school Health credit for our students. Perhaps the most practical of all content areas, Health class uses a variety of highly engaging instructional strategies to explore body systems, reproductive health, nutrition, stress management, and mental health. The course is student-centered and features options like flexible seating and the incorporation of Everfi, an online wellness curriculum. During the class, students participate in a health fair in which representatives from universities, community partners, and local businesses come to school to share information about health and wellness topics and interact with students as well as promote healthy activities through a variety of exercise programs such as yoga, cross fit, and jazzercise.

Music is one of our most popular programs and includes a full orchestra, band, and chorus. Each program consistently receives a distinguished rating which is the highest honor at the annual state performance assessment event. The courses, which are year-long and optional, are selected by 55% of our students. Students are given the option to withdraw from the courses at the end of each year and very few choose to opt out. The music program places an emphasis on both collective and individual success. Students participate in solo and ensemble festivals in order to demonstrate both areas of concentration. All three programs perform for the entire student body regularly, including a Winter Concert, a special Veteran's Day patriotic concert, and a Spring concert. These concerts contribute to our family and community engagement, providing an opportunity for students in orchestra, band, and chorus to demonstrate their abilities to an authentic audience and community members to enjoy the noteworthy performances.

Students take a semester Spanish course in 6th grade that focuses on basic language concepts and an introduction to Hispanic culture. Students practice reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in the class. Seventh-grade students take a semester Latin class that is focused on helping students use Latin roots to increase their ability to decode complex words and improve their vocabulary skills. Latin students also study ancient Greek and Roman mythology. Both courses contribute to students' overall ability to understand the world around them.

While each of the courses in our other curriculum areas focuses on their individual content, one theme that is common across all of them is the emphasis of the success skills that students must master as part of their 8th grade student defense of learning. The success skills include being prepared and resilient learners,

productive collaborators, effective communicators, emerging innovators, and globally and culturally competent citizens. Students frequently choose artifacts generated in these courses for their digital portfolio, and ultimately their 8th grade defense because these courses naturally lend themselves to the application of these skills. Whether they are being productive collaborators by working together in the band to perform a piece of music or becoming more culturally competent by exploring the cultural traditions of Dia de Los Muertos in Spanish class, they are demonstrating their growth in the success skills.

### **3. Special Populations:**

Barret staff utilize a systematic approach to identifying students who are performing below and/or above grade level and providing the appropriate interventions and enrichment. One key data point that is used for this purpose is the MAP Universal Screener assessment results for reading and math. Students who are performing below the 50th percentile for achievement on the MAP test are identified by the school's Academic Instructional Coach (AIC) and an acceleration plan is developed for each individual by the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Team. The acceleration plan identifies interventions that would address the identified concerns. For example, a student who is struggling in math may be missing some key foundational skills that could be reviewed in small-group instruction with the teacher during class. Acceleration plans may also identify other interventions such as extended tutoring after school or custom lessons that can be completed online at home.

Each acceleration plan is reviewed regularly to measure the efficacy of the interventions and determine if new measures must be put in place. Student progress is monitored at the classroom level, in department PLCs by teams of teachers, and at the school leadership level in order to ensure continuous improvement.

Similarly, students who are performing above grade-level are provided with opportunities for enrichment in order to continue to challenge them to grow academically. Students who are performing above grade level in math have the opportunity to test into the accelerated math program, which moves at a faster pace and works on coursework that is a full year ahead of their current grade. Students who are gifted in other areas have the opportunity to seek enrichment through special projects, access to more complex texts, and custom learning options.

One example of differentiation is the development of a personalized learning path within Study Island, our online learning platform, that is built from each student's MAP scores for reading and math. Many Barret students score at the high school level on topics in both reading and math and are able to focus on that high-level instruction through their online work. Conversely, if a student is struggling with a specific topic the program will design lessons to fill in the gaps. By reaching mastery level on their customized goals, students are moving closer to being on grade level.

Our strong performance on state assessments indicates that our interventions are working for many students. Despite this success, we continue to work to reduce the achievement gap between our Black students and their White peers. Our most recent state test scores indicate that 84.8% of White students met proficiency in reading and math, as opposed to 62.5% of Black students. In order to address this disparity, we have adopted a Racial Equity Improvement plan that was developed by teachers on our Equity and Inclusion Committee with the sole focus of eliminating the achievement gap. The primary strategy within the plan is the adoption of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) throughout the school. All staff members have participated in extensive professional development regarding CRT this year and are committed to adopting its philosophies in their classrooms.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

When Barret hosts visitors, one of the most common pieces of feedback we receive include positive remarks about the climate and culture. Through the implementation of strong systems and consistent leadership, we have cultivated a very positive climate that provides students and teachers with a school environment that is safe, friendly, and fosters a strong sense of belonging.

Students' academic and emotional growth are supported by the Counselor Looping Model described in the School Summary that provides each student with one consistent adult in the building who knows them well for each of their three years at Barret. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities in order to foster social growth and the development of their interests. Consequently, more than half of all students participate in an extracurricular activity.

Several incentive programs are in place to celebrate student success. Semester award programs are presented to each grade and recognize both academic and non-academic achievement. Monthly Hilltopper awards are given to students selected by teachers for outstanding citizenship, effort, acts of kindness, or other attributes and are presented at a breakfast ceremony where families are invited to come and celebrate their students. By the end of the year, more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the student body has been recognized as a Hilltopper Award winner.

In addition to celebrating the students, Barret emphasizes the importance of serving others. The Barret Cares program is designed to engage students in service learning opportunities, increase understanding of the community, and promote empathy. Students are challenged to not only participate in schoolwide projects like Burrito Riders, in which they prepare breakfast burritos to be delivered to homeless people across the city, but also design their own service projects. Students log their service hours online and are celebrated as they reach milestones.

Teachers contribute to and benefit from the positive culture too. They are celebrated multiple times throughout the year with special recognitions, luncheons, and gifts from our Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA). Teachers are also supported by the administration with a common understanding that school leadership will provide teachers with whatever they need to be successful.

Each year students and teachers participate in a districtwide survey and our results indicate that sense of belonging metrics for every group of students is far above the district average and among the highest scores of all schools. Similarly, teachers report high levels of satisfaction at school. These indicators point to the positive culture and climate that we continue to maintain.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Another key to Barret's success is the support we receive from our families and the community. We benefit from an active Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) that is always ready to provide time, effort, and funding for anything from supplies, reading materials, and furniture to school socials and field trips. Teachers are able to make requests directly to the PTA when they have a need. School leadership works closely with the PTSA in order to maintain positive relationships and receive feedback from the parent perspective.

We recognize that communication is a key component of successful family engagement. Recently we purchased an online program that makes it easier for caregivers to schedule appointment times to conference with teachers and discuss student progress. We also send information home via the SchoolMessenger system so that families can receive messages through email and/or text. Making sure that families are receiving consistent messages in an efficient manner has resulted in less confusion, fewer missed due dates and more involvement. We also communicate with parents through "Coffee Talks," which set aside time for family members to have a cup of coffee at school and talk with administrators and school

leaders about common issues and questions they may have. This is a great opportunity to communicate expectations and prepare parents so they are better able to help students at home.

Another unique way we engage families and the community is through the invitation to serve as a panelist for our 8th grade Defense of Learning presentations. Students select artifacts from their digital portfolio that demonstrate their growth as a learner. They use the artifacts to defend their claim that they are ready for the transition to high school in front of a panel of community members who evaluate their presentation and provide them with feedback. All Barret families are invited to serve as panelists as well as community members, business leaders, district staff, or anyone else who is interested in helping with the process. The response has been tremendous and we have been able to engage with a wider range of volunteers than ever before. This is a particularly powerful partnership because it is centered on student's reflection on their own learning. Because of this work students are able to receive powerful feedback from an authentic audience extending beyond their teachers and peers and achieve a critical milestone that demonstrates their transition readiness.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Professional development (PD) at Barret is long-term, focused, research-based, job-embedded, and data-driven. It is directly tied to student success and the support of our school's goals and challenges. There are multiple layers to the PD plan, starting with schoolwide sessions to build capacity across the entire staff and narrowing in focus to custom sessions designed to support teachers' individual professional growth plans.

This year our schoolwide PD was designed to support two initiatives: our Racial Equity Improvement Plan (REIP) and Student Defense of Learning Presentations. The REIP is focused on eliminating the achievement gap between Black and White students. All staff attended an Equity Institute and administrators followed up with a book study in order to lead additional work in PLC groups. We collaborated with district support personnel to develop a Cultural Proficiency walkthrough protocol so that we could look for and celebrate successful examples of CRT as a staff. As a result, observation of successful indicators of CRT increased consistently throughout the year and our formative data (MAP results) indicates that our Black students have demonstrated more growth this year than in the past.

Teachers and administrators also participated in three days of PD in support of our Student Defenses and their mastery of the success skills. The sessions led teachers in identifying instructional shifts to promote deeper learning opportunities that students need in order to produce high-quality work to serve as artifacts for their Defenses. Much of the session was spent facilitating collaborative work time for teachers to plan for project-based learning opportunities. As a result, teachers made significant shifts in instruction, students uploaded over 14,000 artifacts this year into their digital portfolios and every 8th grade student successfully presented their Defense.

Other examples of PD are not schoolwide. Instead, it is developed in response to the needs of small groups of teachers based on surveys and learning walk observation data. For example, when surveys indicated that staff members wanted to learn more about Google for Education, we developed a PD cohort that met regularly in order to learn more about the use of Google tools and share ideas for innovative strategies for the classroom. As a result, multiple teachers successfully achieved Google certification and are using what they learned to improve instruction. All of this is in addition to PD that the school's instructional coach recommends based on teacher needs. The combination of these multilayered strategies for PD results in a highly trained, highly skilled faculty of lifelong learners.

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

The leadership philosophy at Barret is simple: Excellence in everything. This includes high expectations for every stakeholder and in every facet of the operation of the school. By identifying and leveraging the strengths of the staff, school leadership is constantly pushing for growth and increased levels of success. At Barret, we are always striving to go from good to great, or great to greater, never settling for the status quo. In all aspects of our work with students, we persistently seek opportunities for improvement and strategies

that will bring the work to a point of true excellence.

The expectation of excellence begins with the leadership team which includes our Principal, 1 Assistant Principal (AP), 3 School Counselors, 1 Academic Instructional Coach (AIC), 1 Transition Center Teacher (TCT), 1 Athletic Director (AD), 5 Department Chairs, and 3 Team Leaders. Each role group functions as a critical component of the leadership system by performing their own duties, as well as collaborating with others to create a cohesive push towards academic excellence.

The role groups are clearly defined and have substantial responsibilities that directly impact student success. Team leaders function as representatives for their grade-level and work with school leadership on climate and culture issues. Department Chairs serve as leaders for their content area and are the lead facilitators of the PLCs. They meet and collaborate regularly with the AIC to plan for instructional improvements. The AD coordinates athletic events that contribute to Barret's mission to educate the whole child and strive for excellence in competition. The TCT provides both academic and behavioral supports throughout the school in coordination with the AIC and Counselors. The AIC coordinates the instructional program including PLCs, data analysis for intervention/enrichment, and coaching conversations with teachers. School Counselors serve as the most consistent point of contact for students and their families for academic and social needs. The AP handles disciplinary issues, manages building safety, and evaluates staff members. The Principal manages hiring, budget, enrollment, evaluations, and coordinates and oversees all other members of the leadership team. By serving in their roles at a high level of excellence and maintaining strong communication with one another, the leadership team is consistently unified and well-functioning, which contributes to the strong culture and climate of the building and the school's pursuit of excellence in everything.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The strategy most instrumental to our school's success is the use of Professional Learning Communities to improve instruction. Teachers participate in PLCs with their departmental colleagues. PLCs function in a cycle that is focused on four guiding questions: What do we want students to know and be able to do? How will we know when they have learned it? How will we respond if a student experiences difficulty in learning? How will we respond if a student already knows the material? By maintaining a focus on these questions, teachers are engaged in a cycle of deconstructing standards at the beginning of an instructional sequence, developing and administering common formative assessments, analyzing student work, identifying students in need of intervention/enrichment, and planning for next steps for instruction.

Each step of this process improves outcomes for students. When addressing the first question, teachers consider the standards for the upcoming instructional sequence. This provides teacher clarity and an opportunity to consider what should be in the foreground vs. background during instruction. It also provides consistency across classrooms because teachers have a common understanding of the desired outcome. When teachers develop common formative assessments it guarantees that, while the instructional strategies may vary, expectations are equitable for all students. When analyzing student work and/or student data, teachers use a trends-needs-strategies protocol to identify commonalities in the work and interpret them to identify what needs they reveal, and then select strategies to address those needs.

While all of these components have value, the most powerful aspect of PLCs lies in the ability to consistently engage in progress monitoring at the student level. Teachers are able to identify students' level of mastery by standard and plan for intervention or enrichment. Many times the intervention can be addressed at the classroom level through reteaching, small group instruction, extra practice, or other strategies. However, when additional intervention is needed, the PLC is often the first group to recognize an area of need and collaborate with the Academic Instructional Coach and School Counselors in order to create an acceleration plan to help the student reach mastery.

Over time, PLCs have improved instruction across the school, making teachers more focused on understanding student progress. Since we began implementing PLCs, our percentage of students scoring at proficiency or better in reading and math has increased by 18.8%. We continue to refine our processes each year knowing the clear results PLCs yield.