

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Dan O'Rourke
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 1500 Boyce Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Pittsburgh State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 15241-2903

County Allegheny County

Telephone (412) 833-1600 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.uscsd.k12.pa.us/Domain/322 E-mail dorourke@uscsd.k12.pa.us

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. John Rozzo E-mail jrozzo@uscsd.k12.pa.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Upper Saint Clair School District Tel. (412) 833-1600

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Dr. Daphna Gans
(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.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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 (2022-2023) 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)
2 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 6 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, 2022 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 Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	309
6	321
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	630

*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
 - 12 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	592
(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):

Arabic, Spanish, Tamil, Persian, Turkish, Malayalam, Chinese (Mandarin), Akan, German, Bengali, Nepali, Russian, Portuguese, Uzbek, Telugu, Urdu, Kannada, Indonesian, Korean, Marathi, French, English (Barbados), Japanese, Vietnamese, Italian, Gujarati, Hindi, Kikuyu, Serbian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
26 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 2 %

Total number students who qualify: 10

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 15 %
Total number of students served 93

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 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>10</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>17</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>17</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 6 %
Total number of students served: 39

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 7

11. 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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	23
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

12. 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 26:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	95%	98%	96%	97%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

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

Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1992

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

At Boyce Middle School, our goal is to provide students with a world-class educational experience that supports their academic, social and emotional growth within an environment that is safe and comfortable. We aim to foster an environment where each student can become the best version of themselves. The Boyce Middle School community shares a common goal that strives to provide educational, social, and emotional excellence for all students.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.uscsd.k12.pa.us/Page/13274>

18. **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

Boyce Middle School, located in Upper St. Clair Township, is situated in a beautiful, family-friendly suburb of Pittsburgh, Pa. Many families move to the township due to the award-winning school district. The combination of families who value education, hard-working and driven students, and a talented and creative staff are what make the school district extraordinary. In fact, the Upper St. Clair School District ranked No. 1 among Pennsylvania's 500 public school districts, according to the 2022 School Guide published by the Pittsburgh Business Times, and Boyce Middle School was the featured school within the publication. Additionally, U.S. News and World Report recently ranked Boyce Middle School as the No. 5 middle school in Pennsylvania.

The Boyce Middle School Vision Statement - "To provide students with a world-class educational experience that supports their academic, social and emotional growth within an environment that is safe and comfortable" is strived for and focused on each day by all faculty and staff. While high academic standards with a strong emphasis on curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student support are certainly upheld, the staff focuses equally on fostering an environment that develops the "whole-child" academically, developmentally, socially, and emotionally. At Boyce Middle School, we aim to teach all children to work and grow together in a mutually respectful school environment. Students are expected to "Be respectful, responsible, prepared, productive, and safe" in their daily interactions with adults, peers, and each other. With a strong emphasis on the middle school philosophy, a team-centered approach is taken when creating student schedules. Research has shown that teaming helps middle school students feel connected to their teachers, teammates, and school. During the first week of school, teams participate in team-building activities to allow the teachers and students to get to know each other. Through the teaming format, students form close relationships with their teachers and are given the chance to find a "go to person" with whom the student will form another connection. School counselors get to know students during various transition experiences when they are in elementary school, and "loop" with them throughout their time at Boyce Middle School. This model enables the school counselors to establish and maintain a relationship and support system for each child and family.

At Boyce Middle School, the staff strives to ensure academic excellence for all students. Teachers engage students in a variety of activities, projects, and assessments to assess their knowledge of the academic standards. Various instructional strategies are used to challenge students. In ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science the curriculum is designed to be rigorous, provide students with a variety of methods of authentic assessment, and deepen students' understanding of important concepts and skills. All teachers collaborate in professional learning communities that focus on learning outcomes, academic expectations, resources, assessments, enrichment, and student support. Oftentimes, professional learning community dialogue can lead to curricular modification recommendations, a review process that happens twice per year in the district.

The Panther Program, part School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports model and part social-emotional learning, is a successful school-wide program that was implemented about five years ago. Part of the program enables staff members to issue "panther paws" (recognition slips) to students for demonstrating one of the core values of the school. When students receive a panther paw, an email is automatically sent to the student, the parents, and the principal, and the students report to the office for a small award to recognize their positive actions. Their names are then entered into a drawing for the opportunity for a larger award (e.g., tickets to a Pittsburgh Pirate game or Boyce Middle School apparel). In order to support the social and emotional learning of the students, team teachers teach SEL lessons one time per six day rotation during Team Time. These lessons allow the students to collaborate as a team and continue to build on their team relationships as well as build on their own individual social/emotional skills. In addition, all students participate in Club/Activity Time on a rotating basis. Examples of clubs/ activities include: board games, chess, engineering, intramurals, logic puzzles, K/Nex, art, and origami.

For seven consecutive years, Upper St. Clair School District has been recognized among the nation's Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation. Whether a student loves to sing, already plays a band or string instrument, or desires the chance to try an instrument for the first time, Boyce is the

place to be! Participating in music class, band, chorus and orchestra provides our children with important experiences that can help them develop physical coordination, timing, memory, visual, aural and language skills that are applicable in all content areas.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

At Boyce Middle School, the fifth and sixth grade English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, which is aligned with PA Core Standards, focuses on skills taught through a multi-text approach to reading, utilizing fiction and non-fiction texts. In order to reach high academic standards and provide rigor, students read engaging, age-appropriate novels. Differentiated support materials such as articles, paired readings, and supplemental materials provide students with the necessary background and resources to fully understand and analyze the novels. Poetry, short stories, dramas, and nonfiction readings are also used to provide direct instruction of reading skills. Writing tasks, comprehension work, and various other activities are designed to develop the students' skills and processes, as well as their higher-order thinking skills. Grammar, usage, and mechanics of the language are taught in an integrated manner within writing and reading tasks.

All units of reading and ELA contain objectives and skills that are evaluated using multiple assessment tools each nine weeks. Online learning games, such as Kahoot, Blooket, and Gimkit, in addition to Canvas quick-checks (formative assessment tools) for grammar and comprehension allow teachers to provide immediate feedback to students and to adjust instructional practices to best meet the needs of the students at their readiness level. The NWEA MAP test is administered to all students in fall, winter, and spring in ELA. This assessment allows teachers and student families to monitor achievement and growth throughout the year. The assessment provides teachers with information regarding students' Lexile level and specific areas of growth and strength. ELA teachers are able to use this information when matching students to texts and tasks. Data from assessment results is used in planning for second chance learning and enrichment opportunities.

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

The math department at Boyce operates under the three foundational principles of continuous progress, mastery learning, and differentiation. The mission of our department is to equip students to be ready, resilient, responsible, and resourceful. To this end, teachers in all classes differentiate instruction and assessment to meet the current needs of each student. This ensures that all students, regardless of their mathematical ability, continue to grow and learn new concepts.

Instructionally, skills are spiraled as students continue to develop mastery of operations with rational numbers. Algebra, data analysis, measurement, and geometry are all part of the curriculum at Boyce. Fifth graders work to master decimal and fraction operations and also broaden their understanding of Geometry and Data concepts. Sixth graders review operations with rational numbers and are introduced to integers. Algebraic concepts are interwoven throughout 6th grade as well. Students are also introduced to proportional reasoning skills through units on ratios, proportions, and percents.

In all classrooms, both a discovery and direct instructional methods are employed to ensure that students have multiple modalities for mastering learning targets. Data collected from MAP Growth Testing as well as locally developed pre-assessments allow teachers to determine needs prior to the start of each unit and lesson. Teachers then utilize a 70-minute learning period for delivering instructional and learning activities, assessing student progress toward learning objectives, reinforcing and reteaching when students struggle, and providing enrichment opportunities when students demonstrate mastery of the content quickly. These enrichment activities can be project-based for an entire unit, individual activities for individual lessons, or even content from the future courses for those students who complete all enrichment activities for grade-level standards.

To customize a learning path for our strongest math students we offer opportunities for acceleration, in addition to daily opportunities for enrichment. At the end of their fourth, fifth, and sixth grade years, all students are given the opportunity to take a content-based assessment over the next year's course. Students

who demonstrate mastery of those objectives through the assessment, show a high rate of acquisition each day in class, and receive their current teacher's recommendation are accelerated to the next course. For instance, those students who qualify at the end of fourth grade are placed in Math 6 for their fifth grade math course.

To ensure mastery for all students, regardless of the class they are taking, a period called "Team Time" is built into the daily schedule for teachers to provide second chance learning opportunities to students for whom they deem it necessary based on both local and MAP assessment data. These students receive additional practice and instruction from the classroom teacher and, when appropriate, from our math resource teacher. Programs like Buzzmath, Sumdog, and Khan Academy are also utilized in school and at home to provide extra practice for students who need additional reinforcement. These practices and programs work in concert to ensure that all students grow in their mathematical ability and are well equipped for the next phase of their mathematical studies.

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

Students today face unique challenges in our changing global society. To prepare for the evolving world, the Boyce Middle School science curriculum focuses on developing the skills of communication, problem-solving, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. The science program strives to stimulate and foster student interest and excitement for a subject that has become part of daily living in an expanding technological society.

The Upper St. Clair objectives are spiraled and integrated with earth, life, and physical science disciplines. A curriculum review process is completed twice a year; the program is evaluated and developed, and necessary revisions are implemented. Teacher input, student needs, and new research and standards drive the curriculum evolution.

The 5-6 science program uses an inquiry-based approach. The fifth-grade science units are Variables (FOSS), Chemistry, Space Science, and Earth. Our sixth-grade science units are Investigating Plants (STC), Weather and Meteorology, Magnets, Motors and Electricity (STC), and Ecology. The Boyce science experience includes a trip to Deer Valley YMCA Camp. Deer Valley is an award-winning environmental educational opportunity. The program is teacher-developed and includes a three-day experience for parents and students.

Each child at Boyce Middle School possesses unique qualities, so customizing learning and assessment are vital to each educator's instruction. The science department particularly sets high standards for all of the students while recognizing that each needs to be nurtured and engaged to allow for success and growth. One way the teachers can customize learning is by incorporating student-centered labs, authentic assessments, and topic and assignment choices based on the interests and abilities of the students. Formative assessment is used to drive the pace and content of the lessons.

The science program connects with the world while preparing the students for the 21st century.

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

The social studies curriculum at Boyce Middle school is intended to introduce students to key elements of the social sciences and to develop critical skills, particularly reading, writing, and analytical thinking. It is formed in conjunction with the subsequent grade levels in order to deliver a seamless, cohesive learning experience. Students are assessed both formatively and summatively, and teachers deploy various assessment models, such as projects, models, written responses, and more.

Boyce's fifth-grade social studies curriculum introduces students to four major disciplines: civics, geography, economics and history. These disciplines, which are taught with a focus on early American history, serve as a foundation for all future social studies courses in the district. The civics unit centers on understanding different forms of government, primarily democracy and the American constitution. In their study of geography, students learn essential mapping skills and the essential geography of North America

and the Colonial region. The economics unit examines elements of supply/demand, trade, opportunity cost, and other concepts through the lens of American Colonial history, while the students' learning experience culminates with a study of American history up to and including the Civil War.

The sixth-grade curriculum shifts to a study of the ancient world with a particular emphasis placed on making connections to the modern world. Students apply their prior learning and skills to study significant cultures and civilizations across the globe, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, Medieval Europe, and more. Each unit of study allows students to make clear connections between the ancient past and the world around them today, fostering an interest in Social Studies and providing a clear purpose for understanding history as recommended by the National Council for the Social Studies.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Within our expressive arts program, Boyce students gain valuable experiences rotating through library, art, STEAM design, and music every quarter. Additionally, students participate in guidance class, advisory time and Team Time throughout the six-day rotation schedule.

Art projects in the fifth grade are geared toward enabling students to experience a variety of artistic techniques and skills, while sixth grade students have opportunities to explore those media and skills in more depth. Creative experiences include two and three-dimensional projects in drawing, painting, fiber arts, design, ceramics and construction.

Boyce students study the fundamental elements of music: beat, melody, rhythm, harmony, tempo, form, articulation, tone color and dynamics through singing, moving, listening and Orff instruments. In addition to their nine-week music rotation, students also have an opportunity to join chorus, band and/or orchestra. Beyond the classroom, students have the opportunity to perform in the fifth grade and sixth grade musicals. These opportunities are offered each spring.

STEAM Design takes students through the design cycle, and offers them opportunities to create, program, code, fly drones, design, and much more! These classes focus on innovation, creativity, research, social/emotional learning, and other important skills.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Boyce Middle School's health and physical education curriculum is designed to empower students to gain confidence in their skills and knowledge needed to live a happy, healthy lifestyle. We strive to instill the importance of a positive attitude toward physical activity. Our physical education program focuses on developing health-related fitness, physical competence and cognitive understanding about physical activity so that students can adopt healthy behaviors. Our various activities enhance each individual's physical, mental, emotional, and social health. At Boyce Middle School, our physical education teachers strive to design and implement activities that are inclusive to all learners regardless of any physical limitations or challenges. Adapted physical education class is offered during our rotation schedule to provide an additional, robust physical education experience to our learners with complex special needs. Overall, the physical education program at Boyce promotes self-discipline, strengthens peer relationships, and exposes students to a variety of experiences to encourage life-long participation in physical activities.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

Upper St. Clair has a long history of providing a foundation of proficiency-based world language instruction to students in the fifth and sixth grades.

Fully certified world language teachers provide instruction as our fifth graders rotate through French, German and Spanish courses. Courses highlight cultures and customs, while developing listening and speaking skills at a novice level. At the conclusion of fifth grade, students will have had 12 weeks of communicative instruction in each language, which provides a strong foundation for language selection.

Sixth grade marks the beginning of focused language study. Fifty-minute classes are held every other day. Effective instruction for lasting acquisition uses rich language for meaningful, engaging communication. This approach, referred to as Comprehensible Input (CI), is the foundation for world language instruction throughout the middle school years in Upper St. Clair. The priority is the development of spontaneous use of the language rather than rote memorization and explicit grammar instruction, and a unique and customized curriculum has been developed for our students. A similar, high quality experience for every child, regardless of language choice, is offered and includes listening and reading opportunities, which use engaging input that students are able to understand in the target language.

2d. Technology/library/media

Students at Boyce Middle School have a library class as part of the Expressive Arts rotation. Fifth and sixth graders meet for a 50-minute class every other day for a nine-week grading period. Fifth grade library focuses on exposing students to a wide-variety of genres to help develop a love of literature and allow students to find leisure reading materials that suit their individual interests. Sixth graders learn and then apply research skills to complete a research project on a topic of their choice.

In addition to library classes, the Boyce library offers a variety of enrichment opportunities throughout the year such as Battle of the Books and Author's Day. The library is open to students at the beginning of the day and the end of the day for students to check out books or gather with classmates to work on projects, create in the Maker Space, or read. The Makerspace is a hands-on area in the library where students can work on STEAM activities. Portable STEAM carts are also housed in the library; students can work with the materials in the library, and teachers can also take them to their classrooms for projects. The library also maintains an extensive collection of books and resources that support all curricular areas throughout the school.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

At Boyce Middle School, we have a large population of students with a variety of disabilities and special needs, including autism, down syndrome, emotional disturbances, reading/ math disabilities, as well as students with mobility challenges. At Boyce, we have created an innovative program – SHOP @ USC (Showing How Opportunities Pays) – where students with disabilities are partnered with typical peers from the general education setting. Together, they work on various projects throughout the school year.

The grant-funded initiative includes a space that has been specially designed with flexible furniture, t-shirt makers, button creators, magnet design devices, and more. Our SHOP program is facilitated by a learning support teacher and our STEAM teacher. Students participate in hand-on learning experiences by creating Upper St. Clair products and merchandise for sale throughout the school year. Examples include Boyce coffee mugs, shirts for various charitable events, greeting cards, invitations, buttons, and stickers. All items are designed and produced entirely by students. The SHOP @ USC experience begins at Boyce Middle School and extends to Fort Couch Middle School and Upper St. Clair High School.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

The Boyce Middle School staff utilizes formal and informal, internal and external data to help drive instruction and support student learning. The administration and school counselors meet with each elementary school staff prior to the new school year to discuss each student's individual needs, and individually-schedule each student in an effort to maximize support and meet the needs of each learner.

For students who struggle to meet math or ELA standards, teachers provide data-based recommendations to the Response to Intervention (RTI) specialists, who deliver targeted interventions. The math and ELA resource teachers analyze student data and provide in-class as well as small group instruction and remediation.

The Boyce Math department recently adopted the MAP Accelerator Program, which creates individualized learning paths to help students meet the identified math standards. The math RTI teacher supports students within the classroom during class instruction; therefore, students are receiving additional instruction for both current and previous learning topics. Similarly, the reading specialist provides small group reading instruction to identified students. Support is based on individual students' area of need, but often includes foundation skills, writing support, novel differentiation, and reading comprehension.

In addition, student schedules include two blocks of times for students to receive supplemental instruction, review and/or support from core content teachers – Team Time and PrideTime. As an additional layer to monitor student needs, Professional Learning Community meetings provide teachers an opportunity to collaborate, address student needs, and implement intervention strategies.

Finally, all teams meet with the grade level school counselors once every other six day rotation to discuss student supports. Students who are in need of additional interventions may be referred to the Student Assistance Program. The Student Support Services Team (S3) works with students in need of a more creative, intensive, and systematic approach in overcoming barriers to their learning.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Boyce Middle School provides differentiated instruction, intervention, and enrichment in order to meet the needs of all learners. Using a variety of data (NWEA MAP scores, PSSA data, pretest data, summative, and formative assessments) allows teachers to customize learning by skill, process or product. For example, in math, students are given a pretest at the beginning of every unit. Teachers review the pretest data and develop individual learning paths for those who have already mastered the content within the unit. At the conclusion of the unit, teachers again review the post test data to determine if any students need intervention or second chance learning in order to master the concepts taught during the unit. Similarly, in ELA, student data is analyzed by the teachers and the Reading Specialist, in order to create targeted skill interventions. In addition to curriculum specific enrichment, a School Wide Enrichment program has been established and is available to all students. With the school's one-to-one technology, every student is given access to the School Wide Enrichment Canvas page, which allows students to complete enrichment opportunities that are aligned with the curriculum of various subject areas.

Many students are excited to participate in experiences beyond the traditional classroom setting. To extend math knowledge, Boyce offers multiple math competitions to all students at both grade levels (PA Math League, Calcu-Solve, '24' tournament, and a MatchCounts competition). Accelerated math students also have the opportunity to compete in the Math Olympiad. Students identified as gifted are given the opportunity to join the Noetic Learning Math Contest (NLMC), which is a semiannual problem-solving contest. Furthermore, all students have the opportunity to participate in local and regional competitions such as the Spelling Bee, Battle of the Books Competition, qualifying round of the History Bee, Geography Bee, and Science Bee, as well as the annual Shakespeare competition that is offered by the Pittsburgh Public Theater.

3c. Students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities are included in the regular education setting for core subject areas and specials, to the extent possible based on the least restrictive environment. All students with special needs participate in

the general education curriculum for science, social studies, and expressive arts. For these classes, paraprofessional support is provided to assist students with reading, writing, social, and/ or behavioral skills. For ELA and mathematics, some students participate in the inclusion setting with a special education teacher co-teaching and other students have paraprofessional support monitoring. For students that require more intensive support, small group instruction within the resource setting is available for 5th and 6th grade mathematics and ELA. Data collected from curriculum-based assessments, MAP data, and PSSA data indicate that students in both the inclusion and resource setting have made academic progress and growth in both subjects. In addition, having the students included in the general education setting has enabled these students to build social skills and problem-solving skills, because intervention can occur in the moment.

For students requiring behavioral, emotional, and social support, an emotional support program is available. These students receive individual emotional support services from the emotional support teacher and may receive individualized check-ins with the school counselors one time per week. Our team of learning support teachers have a variety of specialized skills, which allow them to accommodate a number of students with a variety of disabilities including intellectual disability, autism, emotional disturbance, academic learning support, and vision/hearing support.

For students who are not identified as needing special education services, but have 504 or other identified needs, two resource teachers are available to support the students in the areas of ELA, math, science, and social studies. These teachers have designated time in their schedule to support students throughout the day.

3d. English Language Learners:

The Upper St. Clair School District has developed a formal English as a Second Language (ESL) Program policy to ensure quality educational services to all students. To accomplish this goal, the district's objectives are to provide appropriately planned instructional services for identified students whose primary language is not English. Students are identified through completion of a Home Language Survey for each student who enrolls in the district and an established screening process using standardized assessments.

At Boyce Middle School, there are two ESL teachers who work closely with the administrative staff and classroom teachers to assist students in developing English proficiency. All students are integrated with their peers except when it is necessary to pull them out of class to provide specific English Language Development instruction and services. In most cases, this is for one class period each day. English Learners are provided with necessary supports in all coursework, including aids such as translation devices and accommodations such as extended time or alternate forms of assessment that match the students' needs.

All English Learners are assessed yearly on their English Language Development progress via the required ACCESS for ELs assessment. Based on assessment results and teacher input, students who continue to qualify for ESL services are appropriately notified. Students who qualify to exit from English Language Development services based on their English proficiency do so through an established Pennsylvania Department of Education reclassification process. Former English Learners are actively monitored for two years after exiting.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Boyce offers various engaging opportunities and challenges for students, including chorus, band, orchestra, musicals, robotics club, leadership academy, chess club, club 24, among other offerings.

The Boyce Middle School Panther Program is a school-wide endeavor to encourage positive behavior of all students. The program is designed to foster the social and emotional growth of our middle school learners, and focuses on our school-wide behavioral expectations: Be respectful, responsible, prepared, productive, and safe. Although social-emotional learning skills are taught in all settings, Advisor Time lessons have been created for teachers to implement in their classroom or team setting. Some of the topics include kindness, safety, anti-bullying, empathy, mindfulness, growth mindset, social skills, and many more. Students are recognized for their positive behaviors and contributions to our school environment by receiving a “Panther Paw” and a small incentive token (pencil topper, bracelet, pin, etc.). The Panther Paw is then entered into a larger drawing so that students have the opportunity to earn larger rewards. Most importantly, the Panther Program encourages and recognizes positivity in the moment.

There are many opportunities during the school day for students to explore and engage in a variety of topics and interests. All students have the opportunity to participate in clubs during PrideTime every other week. Clubs include intramural sports, engineering club, K/nex, board games, art club, and more. All students also have the opportunity to engage in Boyce Student Council and be part of activities such as Fourth Grade Move-Up Day and Valentine Grams. Student Council also helps to organize Socktober, Red Ribbon Week, Random Acts of Kindness Week and theme days. Students have the option to take part in Battle of the Books in the spring, where students form teams with their classmates, read several books, meet with a sponsor, and prepare for a fun competition. Author’s Day is another opportunity provided to all students to learn and hear first-hand experiences from a published author.

The school counselors at Boyce provide a career readiness unit to all students during guidance class. In addition, they coordinate several service projects throughout the school year to illustrate how students can positively impact their community. Projects include food drives, holiday gift bags for foster care children, sock drives, and more. These initiatives help students become more empathetic, kind and generous toward others.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Upper St. Clair School District has a long-standing history and culture of community involvement. Boyce Middle School, and the district as a whole, includes its various stakeholders in both major and minor initiatives, including the strategic planning process, curriculum development, building and classroom celebrations, and events. Staff at Boyce Middle School work tirelessly to provide students and families with a supportive, engaging, and rigorous learning environment to prepare our students to contribute to their education and engage in their community. Family involvement and interest in a student’s education is both encouraged and appreciated.

Parent communication, conferences, and collaboration happen frequently at Boyce. Parents receive various communications from staff members daily and weekly, and from the administration, as needed. The district uses the Canvas Learning Management System, which provides parents with a common website to find all student learning materials and homework assignments for their children. Report cards are posted on FOCUS at the end of each nine-week period. Various events are held throughout the school year, including transition presentations for parents and students, back-to-school events, open house presentations delivered by teachers for parents, and spring Celebration of Learning.

Boyce Middle School also has a well-established and highly collaborative Parent Teacher Organization. The PTO, which includes the principal on the executive committee, meets at least once per month, and a meeting open to the public occurs bi-monthly. PTO members also serve on various committees to support students

and staff as well as provide unique opportunities for students throughout the school year. In addition, a districtwide Parent Teacher Council, which brings together parents from all six district schools, holds a monthly virtual public meeting. The superintendent and several other administrators attend, share information and address questions/concerns. This open and accessible dialogue results in a high level of engagement and trust.

Information is regularly posted on the Boyce Middle School and Upper St. Clair School District websites www.uscsd.k12.pa.us as well as the district's social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. A weekly email, titled "Weekly Recap," is sent to all district families via email every Friday. This publication includes the latest district headlines, athletic information, media coverage, upcoming events, job listings, and community event information.

Staff members also coordinate several fundraising opportunities for students to participate in throughout the year that benefit the community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The focus on teacher support, growth, and professional development is a cornerstone of our school district's new teacher induction and mentoring programs. When a new teacher is hired in the district, the principal assigns a veteran teacher to serve as a mentor. The district encourages the two teachers to meet quarterly to have time together to plan, to observe other teachers, and to help the teacher acclimate to the school and district's culture. The district's induction program is a highly-successful program that educates new staff on best practices, district philosophies and implementations, instruction, technology, assessment, and more.

Teachers have the opportunity to serve on various committees, including the professional development committee, which collaborates on and plans training and professional development offerings. In addition, our teachers qualify for tuition reimbursement for continuing education.

The staff is organized into various departments based on grade level and content area. Our teachers meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLC). One teacher is assigned as the PLC facilitator, who is responsible for attending facilitator meetings that are held by administration. During these meetings, the administrators share information and elicit feedback on current building needs. The facilitator is then charged with taking the information back to their PLC team.

Each PLC team meets weekly. In addition to reviewing information that was shared during the facilitators' meeting, the teams work collaboratively to plan lessons, materials, and discuss areas of need or improvement. The facilitator keeps the minutes of the meetings and often an additional shared document is used for pacing and common planning and preparation.

In addition to the weekly PLC meetings, a monthly curriculum meeting is also held. During these meetings Boyce staff members meet with their department counterparts at Fort Couch Middle School, which serves grades seven and eight. These collaborative meetings allow the teachers to discuss current practices, reflect upon what strategies are working best and make the ever-evolving changes to scope and sequence, differentiated instruction, student opportunities for further individual growth, and development of new programs. These changes are constantly evolving and revisited as teachers are provided with data from various sources including PSSAs, MAP testing, local assessments, and anecdotal teacher input. Furthermore, the district supports professional development by regularly sending ELA teachers to various trainings and workshops offered by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit. The teachers who attend share any new learning and materials that they experienced.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at Boyce Middle School is focused on creating a culture and atmosphere that promotes relationships, positivity, collaboration, comfort, support, continuous growth, and excellence. The school principals feel strongly that creating a positive learning environment and staying focused on this approach creates a workplace where staff enjoy working, which spreads to the students' learning from

positive instructors, and ultimately benefits the community. Academic excellence is the foundation for which everything is focused. Additionally, we promote community service, positive relationships, and whole-self development that spans beyond academics. At the building level, the leadership model includes a principal and an assistant principal, supported by two school counselors. An assistant superintendent oversees all operations for grades K-8 throughout the District, and curriculum leaders or department chairs provide support for each subject area. Building teachers also serve as professional learning community facilitators, which are leadership roles within their grade-level subject areas and teams. The building leaders share administrative duties and responsibilities, and work together to supervise various school matters (e.g., staff supervision and evaluation, professional development, communication, scheduling, staffing, student support, discipline, etc.). The principals at Boyce maintain a focus on establishing and sustaining a strong culture of excellence by hiring the highest-quality candidates, building strong relationships with all key stakeholders, utilizing data to drive instruction and educational decisions, supporting staff growth, providing resources that teachers desire, and providing the best experience possible for all students.

Students transition to Boyce Middle School from their elementary school and attend for two-years (grades 5 and 6) before matriculating to Fort Couch Middle School for grades 7-8. This is a significant time of growth and development for students; therefore, great emphasis is placed on establishing smooth transitions for students. For example, the administrators attend and participate in Parent Teacher Organization meetings for all fourth grade parents, parent move-up night, fourth grade student move-up day, new family welcome events, and transition meetings with each elementary school. Our goal is to begin developing positive relationships with families and students, while providing adequate information and support to ease the transition from elementary, private or parochial schools, to Boyce Middle School.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Boyce Middle School continues to follow the middle school philosophy developed by Donald Eichorn. Students continue to have high-quality opportunities to connect with teachers, staff, peers, and curriculum. To the fullest extent possible, all students participate in heterogeneous classes with high academic and behavioral expectations. Learning experiences are customized for every student so each student has an opportunity to succeed based on their learning style. Students form connections with their teachers through activities during Team Time. For example, at the start of the year, every team of teachers conducts activities that allow students to get to know each other on a more personal level. As the year progresses, teachers have “check-in” times with students during Team Time. Having these activities built into the schedule allows students to develop closer relationships with their teachers so that they can develop a bond with a teacher who they feel is their advocate and supporter.

Boyce Middle School is an active participant in the Anti-Defamation League’s No Place for Hate Program. In fact, Boyce was honored with the Equity Award at the conclusion of the 2020 school year. This program requires that the schools design and implement activities that include students signing a pledge as well as participate in various anti-bias activities.

ESL students are also included in the regular education classroom and are provided support through two ESL teachers. ESL teachers’ schedules align with ELA classes so students can be pulled out for ESL instruction if needed. These teachers are also available during PrideTime to provide individualized support for those ESL students.

Several families who are economically disadvantaged are supported with “scholarships” to participate in events or opportunities such as our annual 6th grade Deer Valley Field trip.

Not only do staff members know the academic strengths and needs of the students, they also know, appreciate, and respect the social and emotional needs of each student. Boyce Middle School has two school counselors (one for each grade level) who not only help students emotionally, socially, and academically one-on-one, but also are included in the students’ schedule/curriculum and teach guidance class to all students on a regular basis (once every six days), and they instruct students on topics such as kindness, inclusion, diversity, respect, and more. This provides the opportunity for the counselors to connect with the students and get to know them outside of the counselor’s office.

All Boyce Middle School students learn about various cultures and languages throughout their world language experiences - students rotate between German, French, and Spanish in fifth grade, and choose one language for students beginning in sixth grade. The teachers also have students participate in various activities and traditions that are celebrated in various countries, as well as lead an International Education Week event. Boyce has hosted the Thai celebration as well as the German and Spanish exchange student programs.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Creating a culture for excellence has been instrumental to Boyce Middle School's success. We place a large emphasis on maintaining a school culture that focuses on relationships, positivity, communication, collaboration, character, values, leadership, excellence, support, and continuous growth. This combination is what leads to the success of any organization, but particularly for exemplary schools. We model and discuss culture and expectations on a frequent basis, and ensure that any new staff member that we hire is not only an outstanding educator, but also embodies these characteristics as a person. We have been very fortunate to welcome some outstanding new staff members that exemplify these qualities, and feel that this has spread to the other staff members, students, and the community. Many of our new staff members have been nominated for the Pennsylvania Association for Middle Level Education (PAMLE) Promising Practitioner Award. According to PAMLE's website, the Promising Practitioners Award "is presented to teachers who are just beginning their middle school careers. These beginning teachers have made a positive impact on both their school and community. They incorporate effective middle level practices in their everyday teaching." We also place a large emphasis on culture during faculty meetings, in-service training, and during both formal and informal meetings. Staff feel supported and are comfortable leading, learning, growing, and deploying new instructional methods that are good for students.

Another major component of the culture for excellence is a never-ending focus on improvement. While our school has very high achievement rates and academic results, we continuously look for ways to adapt and improve. For example, our curriculum is reviewed and revised twice per year, which is a very uncommon practice for school districts. The curriculum review process, which has various stages, includes input from teachers, curriculum leaders, principals, community members, central office administrators, and the school board. Additionally, all constituents work closely together to look for ways to enhance what we do instructionally, with our facilities, what we do in the community, opportunities we offer students and staff, and more. Additionally, we frequently analyze internal and external data sources to identify strengths, areas for growth, and potential opportunities for enhancement.

Included in our culture for excellence is participation in an external review process via the Schools-to-Watch designation. In December 2022, Boyce Middle School earned the Pennsylvania Don Eichhorn Schools to Watch (STW) designation for the fifth time. An initiative of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, STW requires schools to identify strengths, and to focus on areas for continuous improvement.