

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Michael A. Miliote

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

Official School Name Jay M. Robinson Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5925 Ballantyne Commons Parkway

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

City Charlotte State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28277-0575

County Mecklenburg County

Telephone (980) 343-6944

Fax (980) 343-6947

Web site/URL

<http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/jaymrobinsonMS/Pages/Default.aspx>

E-mail p431@cms.k12.nc.us

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/jmr\_ms Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/JayMRobinsonMiddle/

Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL \_\_\_\_\_ Blog \_\_\_\_\_ Other Social Media Link \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Ms. Ann Clark E-mail a.clark@cms.k12.nc.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Tel. (980) 343-6270

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. Mary McCray  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

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

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

---

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

1. 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.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

---

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 102 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 31 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 34 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools
- 168 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 with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 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	191	175	366
7	194	170	364
8	186	182	368
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	571	527	1098

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 17 % Asian
  - 8 % Black or African American
  - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 66 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 3%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	22
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	36
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	1102
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.033
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%  
22 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Chinese, Chinese-Mandarin, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Egyptian, Lebanese Syrian, Vietnamese, Gujarati, Marathi, Tai, Korean

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8%  
Total number students who qualify: 83
8. Students receiving special education services: 9%  
94 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.

- 18 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 5 Hearing Impairment
- 8 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 30 Other Health Impaired
- 30 Specific Learning Disability
- 2 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
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	4
Classroom teachers	39
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	18
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	95%	94%	95%
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 2015.

<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 X

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.

Along with our school community, we create lifelong learners by providing challenging learning experiences that engage all students in a safe environment.

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

## PART III – SUMMARY

---

Jay M. Robinson Middle School (Robinson) is part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and located in the southern portion of Mecklenburg County in the city of Charlotte, North Carolina. CMS is one the largest school districts in the country with approximately 146,000 students in 168 schools. The tremendous growth in southern Mecklenburg County attracts families from all over the world who are being relocated to Charlotte thereby creating a diverse population and opportunity to learn about other cultures.

Robinson's foundation for success begins with high expectations from the staff and are shared by parents and students alike. Teachers are committed to the belief that all students are capable of learning at high levels and do whatever it takes to support students in their academic growth. Our highly qualified faculty includes 17 National Board Certified staff members and 47% with Master's degrees. Robinson was named a N.C. School of Excellence after its first year and N.C. Honor School of Excellence in subsequent years. In 2004 Robinson was designated a National School to Watch and was re-designated in 2008, 2012, and 2014. While levels of academic proficiency remain high, Robinson students consistently achieve high growth and meet Adequate Yearly Progress criteria. In 2015 Robinson earned a grade of "A" for the North Carolina School Report Card.

Utilizing the middle school teaming philosophy, Robinson students are grouped by grade level and then organized by interdisciplinary teams with classrooms located near each other. This places students and teachers with a smaller core group of students, thus providing the opportunity to know students and peers better. One counselor and one assistant principal are assigned to each grade level and move with the students throughout their middle school experience. Students follow a block schedule, 3 blocks for core subjects and 1 elective block. Science/social studies and electives are on an A-B day schedule.

The students at Robinson bring a wide range of interests, talents, and backgrounds making our school diverse on many levels. Robinson offers a variety of extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports that brings students together and provides opportunities to learn from each other. Seventh and eighth-grade students are allowed to play for the school sponsored sports teams. All students are eligible to participate in the numerous extracurricular clubs focused on academics, technology, and performing arts.

Robinson is home to a premiere exceptional children's program which includes two autism classrooms and one Specialized Adapted Curriculum (SAC) classroom of students. The teachers and assistants in these classrooms go above and beyond to support their students and have high expectations for all of them. Students have a curriculum designed specifically for their academic, social, and life skills. These students are in every way an integral part of the Robinson family. Each one of these students is assigned one or two Peer Buddies that partners with them during their elective schedule each day and on special field trips. The Peer Buddies develop strong trusting relationships with their partners and look forward to spending time together.

Technology is an integral part of the learning process at Robinson and provides students with access to a variety of resources to match a variety of needs. In 2014, Robinson applied to be part of the CMS "Digital Learning Conversion." As a result, Robinson became one of the first schools in the district to go 1:1, every student was issued a Chromebook to utilize during the school day. Computer labs were redesigned into collaborative work spaces, providing teachers and students with a place to engage in group study or projects to supporting collaboration and critical thinking. Working with technology requires that students and teachers follow guidelines for appropriate and safe online behavior. Digital citizenship skills are taught along with character education year round.

Robinson staff members believe that each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs capable of learning at high levels. Teachers regularly use a variety of effective differentiated instructional practices that engage the learner in acquiring knowledge and skills and demonstrate understanding through critical thinking and problem solving. After teachers determine the needs of students through pre-assessments, lessons and activities are created that will meet the learning needs of the students.

In order to create a safe atmosphere at school and within each classroom, all staff members make it a priority to build positive relationships with students. Teachers spend the first month of school fostering these relationships with and among students and their peers. Teachers work with students to establish norms that define classroom procedures, student to student interactions, and academic expectations. Norms are posted in classrooms and utilized on a regular basis by teachers and students as students engage in independent, small group, and whole-class activities.

Physical well-being is a vital part of educating the whole student. Understanding the importance that physical activity plays in increasing positive brain function, students are scheduled for a 30 minute activity time each day in conjunction with their lunch time. Teachers also incorporate movement during lessons by having students move around the room to work collaboratively with peers.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

---

### 1. Core Curriculum:

Robinson teachers are committed to providing challenging and equitable learning experiences so all students achieve academic growth and develop higher-level thinking skills necessary for college and career readiness. The school has adopted the philosophy that we “teach to the top and differentiate down.” Teachers facilitate lessons that engage students in instructional practices focusing on deep understanding and application of knowledge and skills. The North Carolina Common Core Standards for math and language arts and the Essential Standards for science and social studies serve as the key instructional frameworks. Each teacher is an expert within his/her content and provides support as students develop their understanding and apply new learning across all content areas.

The English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum focuses on the fundamental importance of reading, writing, speaking, and listening in all subjects and genres. Teachers utilize the SpringBoard pre-AP program for ELA, providing a rigorous framework to challenge all students. Teachers select novels that align with grade-level themes and incorporate a variety of texts that include film, articles, poetry, art, plays, short stories, biographies, speeches, advertisements, and editorials. Writing, speaking, and listening are an integral part of the reading process, as students write about the texts they are reading and engage in speaking within small or whole group activities. Robinson teachers believe the movements between reading, writing, listening, and speaking should be seamless and strive to integrate these areas continuously. Additionally, teachers model the writing process, while having students write with peers to provide additional support. Modeling and developing norms also provides support for students as they grow in their application of these skills.

Math instruction focuses on real-world problem-solving, requiring students to reason logically while supporting the appropriate standards for each course. Robinson offers Standard Math in grades 6-8, Honors Math in grades 6-7, Math I in grades 7-8, Math II, and Math III. Math I-III are high school courses in which students earn credit and are provided for students that require this academic challenge. Specific math strands covered in math classes are Ratios and Proportional Relationships, Number System, Expressions and Equations, Geometry, Statistics and Probability, and Functions. Teachers integrate technology in numerous ways, such as flipped instruction, blended learning, and student-generated video lessons. Instruction is designed to build conceptual understanding of mathematical principles, creating a foundation for students to tackle problem-solving situations. Also, walls in the math classrooms are lined with whiteboards for students to work collaboratively. Along with other daily formatives, the boards allow teachers to differentiate instruction on the spot.

Science curriculum is aligned with state essential standards, incorporating Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, and provides appropriate rigor for every student. Additionally, life, earth, and physical sciences are covered at each grade level. Students acquire their skills / concept knowledge through inquiry-based lessons, hands-on experiences, and collaborative projects infused with the STEM techniques and scientific text. As experts in reading and thinking like scientists, teachers scaffold instruction and model metacognitive processes that scientists utilize. During authentic experiences, students observe, collect data, and begin their own analysis collaboratively with peers. Teachers utilize questioning strategies that support students in fine-tuning these investigative skills through a scientific “lens.” Differentiation is evident in a variety of ways to ensure that every student experiences success.

Social studies content is viewed through a content expert’s lens and knowledge is applied to new ideas and understandings. Each course is based on five strands: history, geography / environmental literacy, economics / financial literacy, civics / government, and culture. Each course includes standards that identify the skills, knowledge and understanding that students will acquire by year’s end. Students acquire such skills through engagement with text, including primary and secondary sources, and using supports such as talking to the text, vocabulary analysis, summation, individual think time, collaboration, investigations, and group discussions. Teachers deliver questioning strategies that scaffold deeper, higher level thinking, while allowing opportunities to practice skills with immediate feedback and support.

With college and career readiness as the instructional core, all subject areas infuse disciplinary literacy and 21st-century skills into their content areas. All students engage in close reading of complex texts as they tie to each discipline. Even in such courses as art, Spanish, and P.E., students are exposed to diverse texts and tasks that challenge and prepare them for college and careers. For example, science students are explicitly taught to read and explore like scientists, while social studies students read and investigate source material like historians. Additionally, students engage in problem-based learning through collaborative endeavors each day.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students are required to take Health and Physical Education each year. These courses are taught in alternating nine-week sections, one in health education and one in physical education. Students focus on making responsible and healthy choices about what they eat, relationships with peers and family, life-long physical activity, and consumer information. It is vital that students learn how manage their physical, social, and emotional health.

Band and Orchestra are year-long A-B day electives for students in grades 6-8. Currently 383 students are engaged in learning through musical literature. Students work collaboratively to prepare for a variety of performances in and out of school as well as competitions at the local and state levels. Practice along with self-reflection and peer review help students to reach personal goals with their musical skills.

Drama is a semester, A-B day, elective class for 376 students in grades 6-8, with 6th graders rotating this class with Dance. This course helps students develop self-confidence, critical listening and thinking, and promotes enjoyment and an awareness of many aspects of theater. Students discover a variety of dramatic elements through the lens of the actor, playwright, designer, and director.

Dance is a semester, A-B day, elective class for 286 students in grades 6-8, with 6th graders rotating this class with Drama. This course provides instruction in dance as personal expression and a form of communication. Students learn to create compositions, become aware of the cultural and gender roles of dance history, and develop an appreciation of dance in its many styles as an art form.

Art is a semester, A-B day, elective class for 198 students in grades 6-8. Students use and develop creative and critical thinking skills as they study the purpose and function, history, artists styles and techniques, and the impact of art in cultures. Creative-thinking and problem-solving skills are developed as they explore and produce original art including drawing, painting, printmaking, crafting, and sculpting.

Media Arts is an elective semester, A-B day class for 99 students in grades 7-8. Media Arts provides students with the opportunity to collaborate on interdisciplinary, technology-rich arts projects in a variety of fields including digital art and design, photography, animation, film making, and electronic music. They read, analyze and discuss texts related to the emerging field of media arts and participate in peer and self-critique. They produce a digital portfolio sharing their work to establish an online presence.

Foreign language classes are A-B day semester-long for 6th-graders and year-long for grades 7-8. There are 159 students in 6th-grade taking Exploratory Spanish. The high school level Spanish I course is broken up into Spanish IA for 84-7th-grade students and Spanish IB for 69-8th-graders. There are also 18 students taking French I, 1 student taking French II, and 1 student taking Japanese II through the North Carolina Virtual Public School.

Journalism is an A-B day semester elective with 67, 6th-grade students. Students analyze a variety of publications to determine specific strategies used to inform the reader. Students will evaluate the conventions, grammar, mechanics, and author's style to determine how these aspects affect the audience. Students work collaboratively develop criteria for creating a school newsletter, newspaper, online school resources, and a yearbook.

Computer Skills and Applications 1 is an A-B day semester class. The 367, 6th and 7th-grade students are provided hands-on instruction in basic keyboarding skills, computer concepts, and software applications.

Cyber Safety and Security is also addressed for their continued growth as a cyber-citizen.

Computer Skills and Applications 2 is an A-B day semester class. The 192, 7th and 8th-grade students are provided hands-on instruction in basic software applications. This course also contributes to the development of character-building traits such as strong work ethic, teamwork, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

#### Microsoft IT Academy

51 8th-grade students are enrolled in the year-long, A-B day course which teaches MS Word and MS PowerPoint 2013. This is a highly technological course using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint to revise, edit, manipulate, create, and improve documents or presentations according to the assignment directions.

Entrepreneurship is a semester course with 186, 7th and 8th-grade students.

This course is designed to explore the nature of business in an international economy. Problem-solving, analytical and critical-thinking skills, economics, and business etiquette/ethics is integrated, allowing opportunities to develop personal connections while designing and later operating a student-led classroom retail store.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

In order to meet the needs of all students, teachers collaborate within their Professional Learning Community (PLC) to identify learning goals, align assessments with grade-level standards, and establish support structures. Essential questions and learning goals are posted in classrooms and are reviewed by teachers so that student learning is purposeful. As mentioned, Robinson's instructional philosophy is "Teach to the top and differentiate our way down." This philosophy is essential, as more than 90% of our students come to us at or above grade level. Our key instructional approach is utilizing text to teach content, rather than teachers delivering notes or lecture in a traditional format. Every student is expected to read appropriately challenging text to glean difficult content and concepts. Subject-area teachers model discipline-specific reading strategies and offer targeted supports so that students embrace the challenge of difficult text / content. Minimal instructional "frontloading" is offered to students to ensure that each student is appropriately challenged. Once students are actively engaged in discipline-specific reading / metacognition, teachers use formative data to decide if, when, and what types of supports are necessary. Such data is utilized to create tiered groups of learners through modified text selections, differentiated activities, problem-based learning, or independent projects to enrich and challenge students across the mastery spectrum. Robinson also offers online courses through the North Carolina Virtual Public School. Currently, we have students taking high school level courses Math II, Math III, French I, French II, and Japanese II.

Additionally, Robinson ensures that all students are receiving the interventions they need in order to be successful. Using a "Multi-Tiered System of Support" (MTSS), our Intervention Team meets weekly to develop interventions and strategies for our most struggling learners. A counselor facilitates MTSS protocols, coordinating a tiered intervention process. When the team determines that a student would benefit from targeted support, our trained Intervention Specialist assesses each student and provides differentiated instruction in a 1:1 or small group setting. Progress monitoring data is collected weekly using a variety of assessment tools. This data is compiled and shared with the Intervention Team during weekly and monthly team meetings that include the child's parents, teachers, administration, school counselors and interventionist to ensure each student's goals are being met through such interventions or alternative programming.

In order to support our English Language Learners (ELLs), Robinson has a part-time ESL teacher who utilizes an inclusion model within ELA classrooms to provide access to content through differentiation strategies and scaffolded instruction. This support is also provided to teachers in other content areas during planning times and scheduled meetings so they are able to continue to provide similar supports in their classrooms. Scaffolded instruction focuses on academic vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

#### 4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

The North Carolina End of Grade (EOG) tests serve as one source of summative data to measure student proficiency and growth. Teachers utilize this data to inform their practice and establish instructional goals for the upcoming school year. The EOGs also provide one data point to inform teachers of student academic achievement as a new year begins. Parents are provided a copy of their child's EOG results along with details that explain what each measurement represents. Guidance counselors, teachers, and administration are also available to guide parents through understanding the EOG report. Overall school performance data is shared with parents through conferences as needed, SLT (School Leadership Team), PTA (Parent Teacher Association), and a letter from the principal.

All students engage in the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test three times per year to measure growth and readiness. Support staff work with teachers to analyze, interpret, and reflect upon the student data. Teachers meet with students to share data after each test and work with students to set academic growth goals.

During PLC meetings teachers create and regularly review common formal assessments based on content standards of a given unit of study. Exit tickets, entrance tickets, anecdotal notes, and quizzes that serve as formative assessments are also created. Once data is collected, teachers meet weekly in their PLCs to analyze multiple sources of data and make adjustments to their instruction or assessments as needed. A support staff member is present at most data meetings to guide the conversation as teachers learn how to interpret multiple data points. Students that consistently show high academic proficiency are provided with extension activities that support their learning needs. Teachers work together to develop these content enrichment goals that will challenge these students and keep them actively engaged. Content departments meet monthly to examine vertical alignment in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Teaching students to analyze their own assessments is an important part of becoming a reflective learner. Meeting with individual and small groups of students to model this process is the protocol after all major classroom assessments. Students make test corrections and provide an analysis of their original work after meeting with their teacher. Teachers also schedule conferences to discuss important assessment results with parents and provide general directions regarding the interpretation of assessment results on class website and parent emails.

Systematic processes and procedures for collecting, analyzing, and applying learning from multiple data sources are used consistently by professional and support staff. Data sources include comparison and trend data that provide a complete picture of student learning, instruction, the effectiveness of programs, and the conditions that support learning. School personnel use data to design, implement, and evaluate continuous improvement plans to improve student learning, instruction, and the effectiveness of instructional programs.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

---

### 1. School Climate/Culture:

During the school year, all staff members look for students demonstrating leadership and citizenship. Staff members fill out “positive referral” slips for grade level administrators when events are witnessed. Phone calls are made to parents and students are recognized at their grade levels. Each month grade level teams identify one student as the Student of the Month. Students are recognized on the morning news and provided with gift certificates and coupons donated from local businesses. Recognizing and rewarding positive behaviors provides model behaviors for students and acknowledges the great work students are doing to support members of the school community.

The “Monday Matters” team delivers inspirational announcements every Monday, offering awareness about bully prevention, diverse cultures, coping with life as a teen, self-love, and overall general words of wisdom geared towards motivating the entire school. The “Too Cool to Bully Leadership Team” teaches, motivates, and educates groups of students every semester on how to promote positivity, bully awareness, and cultural awareness. The organization’s vision is to motivate students to develop strong anti-bullying voices, encourage conversations about resisting stereotypes, and hold each other accountable for practicing positive conversations with peers. The Too Cool to Bully Leadership Team participates in and promotes random acts of kindness, has a website, creates bully-awareness videos and public service announcements, creates a multicultural quilt, and designed a Bully Awareness Banner that hangs in our school.

Fostering a love of learning is the key to Robinson’s continuous academic growth. Students are provided multiple opportunities to engage with curriculum that aligns with their interests and encourages new interests. During the instructional day, students have a 30-minute block called ReCharge. Students sign-up for a short enrichment course based on their interests. The ReCharge class is ungraded and is purely for the enjoyment of the students. Students are also able to engage themselves academically through the elective classes offered such as band/orchestra, foreign language, drama, art, media arts, technology, among other choices.

Administration, teachers, and support staff also spend time building relationships and trust with each other at the beginning and throughout the year. Each year teachers in CMS participate in The New Teacher Project (TNTP) Insight survey. Data from this recent survey indicates that Robinson ranks in the 95th percentile of CMS with our cultural index and 90% of staff feel as though they have strong professional relationships with colleagues.

Staff leaders provide training on the traits of effective PLCs which provides the framework for these groups to begin working together to develop norms and guideline for their weekly meetings. All staff members feel that they have a valued and valuable voice in their daily interactions with their peers. PLCs are encouraged to meet outside of school and each lunch together during the school day and on workdays. Staff members are also provided with staff spirit wear and celebrate school spirit every Friday by wearing jeans and school colors.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Robinson has enjoyed strong support from families and community since opening in 2002 and continues to value all stakeholders as they are an integral part of the school’s success. The SLT, composed of staff members and parents, works to develop the yearly School Improvement Plan outlining specific goals and strategies to promote academic growth and create a positive school climate. SLT monthly meetings are open to all stakeholders and the meeting dates/times are posted on the school website. Parents and staff working together to identify goals and develop strategies to reach these goals makes a positive impact on student growth and strengthen the parent-school bond. Parents feel their opinions are valued and are a part of the school’s overall success.

Robinson’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA), composed of parents and staff, provides a strategic and

valuable link between the community, parents, and staff members. PTA members are visible every day at school and are vital to everyday routines at school such as the Welcome Desk, selling PE uniforms, and working in the library. Volunteering opportunities are available for parents that are unable to come to school during the day so all parents are able to participate. Along with the daily volunteer schedule, the PTA is diligent about raising money to support students, programs, staff morale, and physical structures to improve our school in every way.

Building relationships with parents begins before school starts in August with a Back to School Night, teacher phone calls / letters to welcome students, and Step-Up Nights for rising 6th graders. Curriculum Nights are held in September to provide parents the opportunity to walk their child's schedule and meet his/her teachers. All teachers have scheduled tutoring times and are available for parent-student conferences as needed. Making time for parents and students through tutoring times and parent conferences is essential to building positive community engagement and contributes greatly to student success.

Every Friday, Robinson delivers an electronic newsletter, The Charger Chatter, to parents and students about important events at school and in the community. The Robinson website, Facebook page, and Twitter account keep community members informed about important school events and all teachers have websites to keep parents and students updated about upcoming units, quizzes or tests, projects, helpful websites, links to instructional videos, and class notes. In order to support parents, teachers, and students with 21st-century technology, Robinson has sponsored several technology safety nights. FBI agents provide online safety tips and cautions for parents and teachers. These meetings are open to the community and always draw a large audience.

### 3. Professional Development:

All staff members participate in a rigorous continuum of professional learning aligned with the school's vision. Professional development is based on an assessment of school and individual needs, while building measurable capacity among professional and support staff. The program is routinely evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction and impacting student learning.

Professional development is a critical time for staff to learn new ideas and strategies, refine current practices, and support new and experienced teachers in their professional growth. Meeting the professional development needs of every staff member is challenging; therefore, Robinson has utilized differentiated training for professional learning opportunities. While staff members are able to sign up for district-level training, time for professional development is built into the district's school calendar. This year, the district identified four "Early Release" days for school-level professional development and will continue this practice next year. Also, Robinson staff members utilize Wednesday afternoons for staff functions, mentor/mentee sessions, department planning, and staff development. Grade level PLCs meet regularly to focus on deepening understanding of standards, as well as best practices. Professional growth opportunities are also provided as each PLC records its outcome-based minutes in a shared, digital folder and receive support from academic facilitators.

Based on an instructional staff survey, school leaders created a teacher-to-teacher walk-through protocol. Each teacher created a literacy-based "focus question" to guide his/her peers to drive observation feedback. After the walk-throughs are completed, teachers spend time debriefing with their peers, sharing observations and new ideas to use in their practice. The process of opening up practice is only productive if the staff feels safe and comfortable with taking professional feedback from colleagues. The leadership at Robinson works continuously to create a climate for professional dialogue free from criticism, understanding the ultimate goal is to maximize student learning.

CMS has designated literacy as our "North Star", placing tremendous importance on the value of reading for all students. Robinson staff members consistently place literacy at the forefront and believe that every teacher is a reading teacher. Much of our professional development has focused on supporting disciplinary literacy, as teachers and staff have participated in Balanced Literacy training, focused on incorporating all aspects of literacy in the classroom through strategies that engage adolescent learners before, during, and

after reading. Robinson teachers and staff engage in outside professional development, as well as in-house training provided by expert academic support staff in utilizing metacognitive strategies, close reading, apprenticing adolescent readers in content areas, and fiction / nonfiction signposts. Teachers have a new appreciation for the role that they play in sharing content knowledge through text with students who now understand that text is everywhere and, in order to become experts in any content, they must engage with a variety of text.

All teachers receive regular technology training in order to support staff and students as they continue to utilize Chromebooks as a significant learning tool in the classroom. Time is set aside during grade-level meetings to introduce and review a variety of technology tools and procedures along with digital citizenship guidelines. Teachers receive ongoing training and support with Google Apps for Education, NC PowerSchool and SchoolNet, and other online learning programs that support instruction. It is important that teachers feel confident with their skills and knowledge as they provide training and support for their students.

#### 4. School Leadership:

At Jay M. Robinson, the principal's leadership philosophy is one of distributive leadership which empowers teacher leaders to lead their peers collaboratively. The principal has created an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) which is comprised of an assistant principal, dean of students, two academic facilitators, and five department chairs. This team engages in professional learning that aligns to data gathered from collaborative discussion, classroom visits, and peer observation. As this team learns and analyzes data trends together, they create plans of action in order to lead other teachers toward school improvement. Instead of utilizing a traditional model of top-down leadership, typically led by those in administration, the principal has created a model where teacher leaders lead their respective departments. Moreover, each department chairperson teaches team leaders (2 at each grade level) the essential work that is decided upon by the ILT. At this point, team leaders are responsible for training teachers within their PLC in order to build unity, foster independence, and promote teacher growth.

The Instructional Leadership Team has created systems for peer coaching, where teachers conduct classroom visits entitled Ghost Walks and Rolling Walks, whereby teachers observe teachers. Under such a system, each teacher being visited has created a focus question (or "lens") with which the observed teacher would like specific feedback. After the peer classroom visits are conducted, teachers gather together to engage in a meaningful feedback session where teachers coach, support, and provide next steps to support one another relative to the specified focus question. This has created a culture of open practice, where teamwork is essential to professional growth.

Overall, this practice has dramatically supported student success at Jay M. Robinson Middle School. During the 2015-16 school year, Jay M. Robinson students had a proficiency rate of 90.7%, which is the highest of any middle school in CMS. Additionally, this number represents a 2.3% increase from prior school year proficiency data. Moreover, through the work of the Instructional Leadership Team approach, which is the principal's vision for leadership within the school, Jay M. Robinson students grew at an astonishing rate according to Education Valued-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) data. Jay M. Robinson had a total growth composite of 7.5, which places it as school that "exceeds (state) growth expectations" for the third consecutive year. Overall, Jay M. Robinson is an "A" school, not just due to its high proficiency rating, but also due to high growth experienced by students.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

---

Robinson staff is committed to making learning experiences for all students positive and engaging, focusing on the belief that all students will experience success at school. The most powerful practice that continues to support, challenge, and engage all students is the process of metacognition and peer interaction, as students engage with all forms of text. Supporting adolescents in becoming comfortable in sharing their thoughts, insights, and academic struggles takes skilled and patient professionals. All of our staff members have participated in training dedicated to the practice of establishing routines and scaffolding procedures to provide students the support they need to be successful in a classroom driven by metacognitive practices. During training, teachers participated as if they were the students, experiencing first-hand what it looks and feels like to engage with complex text through metacognitive thinking and procedures.

Teachers begin this process with students by creating a safe environment. This promotes confidence and increases the likelihood that students will engage meaningfully with text and with one another. Teachers share personal reading successes and struggles, while also sharing text with which they feel confident reading and text that they struggle with regularly. This reinforces that everyone is good at reading something and everyone struggles with certain texts. In order to make sure that complex text is accessible to all students, teachers use modeling to demonstrate metacognitive supports that students can use when they read independently. Teachers scaffold this process to allow for peer modeling, followed by independent annotation and engagement with text. This is always followed up with purposeful peer discussions to provide more support and opportunities to grapple with diverse viewpoints and ideas pertaining to text.

This entire process has redefined how teachers and students view, understand, and access a variety of text at different levels of complexity. Students are engaged in learning complicated science concepts, different historical perspectives with primary and secondary documents, understanding multi-step, real-world problems that require mathematical thinking, and relating to others in different cultures as they struggle with joy and tragedy. Students have embraced these metacognitive processes and practices and utilize them as they interact with text without direct teacher instruction. Students are engaging in more meaningful discussions using text to support or denounce ideas and are confident when they struggle as they confront complex text, as evidenced through such products as metacognitive logs, text annotations, reading journals, and classroom discussions. Our students have become the heavy-lifters in the classroom through the use of metacognition without too much front-loading. They glean meaning on their own through the use of high-level essential questions related to a reading tasks, then demonstrate understanding through conversations or performance tasks.