

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. Johnnie Dale Ostermeyer

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

Official School Name Crofton Jr./Sr. High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 89048 North Highway 121 P.O. Box 429

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

City Crofton State NE Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 68730-3256

County Knox

Telephone (402) 388-2440 Fax (402) 388-4265

Web site/URL http://www.croftonschools.org E-mail jostermeyer@croftonwarriors.org

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/Crofton-

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/croftonwarriors 1627645147515622/ 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*Mr Corey Dahl E-mail cdahl@esu1.org

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

District Name Crofton High School Tel. (402) 388-2440

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr Bob Evans

(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	0	0	0
7	12	12	24
8	15	10	25
9	16	21	37
10	14	14	28
11	21	14	35
12 or higher	15	15	30
Total Students	93	86	179

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 0 % Asian
 0 % Black or African American
 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 96 % White
 0 % 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: 2%

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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	179
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.022
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %
 Total number students who qualify: 23

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
 18 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	19
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 10:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	98%	96%	99%	98%	97%
High school graduation rate	94%	100%	97%	100%	100%

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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	30
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	74%
Enrolled in a community college	20%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	3%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No

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

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

Provide opportunities for all students to achieve their personal best, become responsible and productive citizens, and embrace lifelong learning in a safe, positive 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

Crofton is a rural community located on the east border of Knox County in Northeast Nebraska. Crofton is 10 miles south of the Lewis and Clark Lake and the Missouri River. The close proximity to these recreation areas provides many outdoor experiences for the local community as well as for visitors.

Crofton Community School is a K-12 school system fully accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education. The school participates in the Nebraska School Activities Association at a C-2 classification and with the Mid-States Conference. The school system covers approximately 175 square miles and supports a student enrollment of 340 students in grades K-12.

Crofton Community School is proud of its excellent school facilities having built a Jr./Sr. High School in 1992. With this excellent facility, our school exhibits a lot of pride in everything we do. The learning environment at Crofton Community School is very positive. The students feel supported by their teachers. Several key strategies are in place to help students be successful academically. One key strategy is the practice of utilizing a program called “Encore”. This Encore program is available to any student who may be struggling with their lessons. Encore provides time for students to meet with their teachers in order to receive extra assistance or tutoring. For some students, Encore is mandatory. This one-on-one time with teachers has proven to be successful.

The “Warrior Room” is another initiative implemented at our school. The Warrior Room is an after school program. This after school program is essential for our students who may not have the resources or parental support at home to receive help with homework. The Warrior Room provides time with a certificated teacher, if necessary, and a quiet place to do homework. Parents may request for their child to attend this after-school session. A teacher or administration may recommend a student for help as well. This program is not mandatory and is never used as punishment. By using this positive strategy to provide students with the extra assistance they need, our students perform better and therefore gain confidence socially, emotionally, and academically.

Crofton Community School promotes a rigorous academic and extracurricular program, and is proud to be recognized throughout the state for excellence. We require that students achieve 280 credits to graduate. This is the highest standard in Nebraska with perhaps only one or two other schools who share this requirement. Because of our high level of required credits, students work hard and do not have room for failure. Students continually rise to meet the high expectations.

Not only does Crofton Community School have high achievement scores and high expectations academically, we also achieve in other areas as well. Our athletic programs continue to perform exceedingly well every year. Our Girls Cross Country team has won ten State Championships in a row while our Girls Basketball team just completed its fifth straight high school State Championship. Last year, our Speech team brought home a State Championship and is looking to meet the same goal this year. Crofton also continually receives high accolades for its artwork. Our Art teacher has students who not only do well in high school but have achieved the status of becoming professional artists. The band at Crofton is second to none. The marching band has won several years in a row at marching competitions and just recently won a “Battle of the Bands” competition. Living in a rural community, our FFA program has a well-known reputation for high achievements at the local, state and national level. No matter the program, our sponsors and students are dedicated and conscientious.

The combined efforts and successes of each area or activity is proof of the high level of performance and dedication our students, teachers and coaches possess.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Crofton Jr./Sr. High School's core curriculum is the foundation for our academic success. At CHS there is a natural progression within the core curriculum areas that ensures our students a high-quality well-rounded education. Teachers are constantly assessing and evaluating students to identify any deficits. When needed, these concerns are addressed whether the reteaching is necessary for large or small groups or individual students. Below is an overview of the structure which allows students of various abilities acquire the essential knowledge for proficiency of state and national standards.

The basic progression for Reading, English/Language Arts would be English 7, English 8, English 9, English 10, English 11, and English 12. Throughout these classes, standards are systematically addressed and build upon one another. Along with the course material, students are required to read three accelerated reading books per year. This outside reading requirement strengthens reading fluency and reading comprehension. Crofton requires students to earn forty high school English credits. Other English electives that are offered but do not count toward the 40 credit English requirement include: Creative Writing, Introduction to Speech, Advanced Speech, Novels, and Journalism.

The mathematics program at CHS has multiple progressions depending upon students' abilities. Crofton requires that each student earns thirty high school math credits. The typical progression begins in seventh grade: Math 7, Pre-algebra, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II. Crofton does offer a pathway for struggling students. These students have the option to take Basic Algebra, Algebra I, then Standards Math. Many students who started in Basic Algebra were able to transition to the Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II track. Students that excel in math can take College Math and Calculus. Most CHS students earn more than the required 30 math credits.

Students are also required to earn thirty high school science credits. All students take Earth Science in 7th grade, Life Science as eighth graders, and Physical Science or Basic Physical Science freshman year. Sophomores students can choose between Basic Biology and Biology. The 'Basic' versions of both courses cover the identical content but are structured to assist students with organization skills and the development of science-related study techniques. As juniors and seniors, CHS students can choose from Chemistry, Physics, Biology 2, and Anatomy. Most CHS students earn more than the minimum 30 science credits.

Thirty high school Social Studies/History credits are required. All students take Social Studies 7 and Social Studies 8. During the four years of high school students must take World History, American History, and American Government. Other Social Studies classes that are available include Cultural Geography, Modern Problems, and Psychology.

Crofton believes that all students can learn but some will need extra assistance. Toward this end, there are multiple interventions to help struggling students. Encore is a program for students that have a C- or lower in any class. Encore is a 25-minute period starting every school day. Students on the Encore list must report to that class or classes for reteaching, homework help or extra practice. Students not assigned to Encore can choose to access teachers for extra help as needed during that time. Encore has helped to reduce our academic ineligibility list since its implementation.

Warrior Room, an after-school program designed for students that are struggling with completing homework, is another intervention. At CHS we recognize that some students do not have the support at home necessary for academic success. Warrior Room allows the extra time some students may need to complete homework and takes place in the Library for an hour after school Monday through Thursday. The high school teacher supervisor is available for students that have homework questions.

College and Career readiness is supported throughout the core curriculum. The rigor required for students to achieve at high levels is evident with ninety-five percent of our students achievement at the proficient level or above on standardized tests. The implementation of twenty-first century skills embedded throughout the

curriculum, the incorporation of technology in the classroom (smart boards, computers, graphing calculators, ipads, and smartphones) all reflect this commitment. Furthermore, Crofton High School is a block schedule school which prepares students for a college style learning environment.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Crofton Jr./Sr. High School offers a wide range of curricular opportunities that comply with state and federal regulations while supporting and meeting the values and needs of our district. CHS takes pride in the ability to offer a well-rounded education outside of the core areas.

Crofton offers exploratory classes designed to expose 7th and 8th grade students to a wide variety of experiences, skill develop opportunities and career exploration. Exploratory courses include art, keyboarding, family and consumer science, career and technical education, agriculture, music and guidance. These classes meet for ninety minutes and rotate every four and a half weeks. Junior high students have Physical Education/ Health all year long. Junior high students are also able to participate in band Mondays and Wednesdays for forty-five minutes and/or chorus Tuesdays and Thursdays for forty-five minutes.

A variety of visual and performing art options are available at CHS and the district has earned a reputation for excelling in all areas due to the dedication of our students and teachers. Visual arts students can enroll in Introduction to Art, Drawing/Painting I, Drawing/Painting II, Drawing/Painting III, or Honors Art. These classes are semester class that meet for ninety minutes daily and students are required to complete a minimum of two hours of outside work each week.

Crofton offers Band, Choir and Speech for performing arts. Band and Choir are year-long 90-minute classes. In order to encourage extensive participation, performing arts teachers work together to share students when needed. Students can elect to take both music courses and spend 45 minutes in band then 45 minutes in choir. Students can also participate for a semester instead of the full year. Band consists of marching band in the fall and concert band in the winter and spring. Speech is a very popular spring semester class and provides all students exposure to theatrical presentation techniques as well as the more traditional informative and persuasive types of speeches. Crofton students and programs excel in all of these areas.

All CHS freshman take a semester-long physical education class that incorporates health-related topics. Currently a Healthy Life Styles class is available to sophomores, juniors and seniors combining life-long sports exposure along with overall wellness topics. Crofton will be adding a strength and fitness class for sophomores, juniors and seniors as well.

Crofton has a strong family and consumer science department. Introduction to Family and Consumer Science is a foundational course typically taken by freshmen. Other classes available for upper grades are Adult Living, Life Planning 101, Parenting Decisions, Culinary Skills I &, Human Growth and Development and Relationships.

Spanish is the only foreign language offered at CHS. Students take Spanish I typically during their sophomore year while some choose or scheduling demands they wait until their junior year. Most students will then take Spanish II as a junior or senior.

Technology and business classes at CHS share staff. Technology classes offered include Introduction to Digital Design, Digital Media I & II, and Advanced Software Applications. These classes are a semester in length meeting daily for ninety minutes. When students have a particular interest in computer programing, efforts are made to provide independent study opportunities. Business classes offered at Croton High School include Personal Finance, Accounting I, and Accounting II. These classes are also a semester in length meeting daily for ninety minutes.

Crofton High School also has an extensive and highly acclaimed agriculture program. Agriculture classes available are Introduction to Agriculture, Agriculture Business Management, Economics and Agriculture Management, Animal Science, Large Animal Management, Natural Resources, Advanced Natural

Resources, Plant Science, and Nursery and Landscaping. Introduction to Agriculture is a foundational semester class for freshmen to explore a wide variety of agricultural topics. The other classes are term classes meeting for nine weeks ninety minutes daily.

Skilled and Technical Sciences is the final area in which Crofton High School offers classes. Students are able to enroll in Introduction to Technology, Small Engines, Building Trades, Welding, Machining, and Robotics. These classes are a semester in length meeting daily for ninety minutes. In STS classes, as with all Crofton's Career and Technical Education classes, students are provided hands-on experience to ensure the development of essential life and career skills.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Crofton Jr./Sr. High School teachers have received APL (which is the first letter of the last names of the developers) training. The APL instructional methods are a system of strategies for enhancing a teacher's delivery of content in a well-managed classroom. APL has also helped to develop a common instructional language throughout the Crofton School District. Some of the strategies include Bell Ringer, Agendas, Wait Time, Pair/ Share, and Reteach.

An agenda should be on the board to start the period informing students of the objectives for the day. An agenda eliminates students asking or wondering about the day's activities and objectives. A bell ringer is an activity for the students to work on as the bell rings beginning class. A bell ringer typically relates to the previous day's lesson serving as a review and allowing students that were absent to see what they missed. Wait time and Pair/Share are frequently used together. When asking questions, the teacher gives students time by themselves first to think about an answer. Then students are instructed to turn to a partner to share and discuss their answers. This allows all students in class to reflect upon the question.

Encore and Warrior Room were discussed above under the 'Core Curriculum' section and are just two examples of interventions at CHS. Additionally, teachers will keep students in for lunch or after school as needed. Frequent parent communications, both positive and with concerns, are common via phone, text or email. A weekly eligibility report alerts students, parents and activity sponsors when students are failing any classes through email, letters and hardcopy reports. Whether alerted to concerns by the eligibility report or in the classroom, Student Assistance Teams (SAT) can be initiated by classroom teachers or parents. SAT groups meet together to brainstorm and implement ways to improve student success.

CHS's special education department is an excellent example of our commitment to all students. Many types of technology are utilized to help students with disabilities. Students use iPads to relearn skills, take notes, type on worksheets (for those whose handwriting is unintelligible) and listen to audio books. We allow students with math disabilities to use calculators and those with writing disabilities to use spell checkers and computers to write. This allows students to stay in the classroom with their peers and become independent learners. Students are taught study skills so they know how to study and manage their time. They use assignment sheets to stay organized and have extended time of finish assignments or assignments are shortened to help reduce stress. All are encouraged to participate in school activities. Students are given natural and logical consequence for their actions and positively reinforced to help them gain self-esteem.

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

Crofton High School uses a variety of informal, formal, and standardized assessments to analyze student learning and the effectiveness of teacher instruction. Effective teachers are consistently assessing student comprehension in order to address any deficits and enhance student learning. Part of that process is a conscious effort to improve instruction. The CHS math department has incorporated essential learning knowledge assessments. Students know that they cannot learn a skill and then move on. Any past material covered is eligible to be on a future assessment thus ensuring that students learn and retain essential math skills. Similar approaches to key content are made in other departments as well.

One of the standardized assessments utilized is Measure of Academic Progress (MAPs). This test asks a series of questions to narrow in on each students' academic progress. Cut scores are provided so teachers

are aware of the students readiness for content. MAP scores are used to identify at risk students as well as high ability learners. Scores are also used to place students in the proper core area classes. MAPs scores are sent home with report cards so parents can track their child's yearly progress.

The NeSA (Nebraska State Accountability) test is also utilized. NeSA tests four curricular areas: writing, reading, mathematics and science. These tests are a part of the Nebraska yearly accountability process. Crofton analyzes the data to determine if our curriculum is aligned with state and national standards and adjusts if needed. NeSA tests grades seven, eight, and eleven in writing, reading, and mathematics and eighth and eleventh grades in science. Currently, 95% of Crofton High School students are proficient in reading, mathematics, and science. We are working to improve on our current 85% proficiency in writing. Crofton is adding a journalism class for the next school year along with additional writing assignments in our English classes. NeSA results are sent home to parents annually.

In addition to encouraging college-bound students to take the national ACT exam, Crofton also provides the District Choice ACT test for all juniors annually in March. A comprehensive, video-based test preparation program is made available to all students free of charge. Students can either participate before school, during Encore time or invest their lunch/homeroom block in this opportunity. ACT prep. Is available two times in the fall and once in the spring before the District Choice ACT test.

Crofton utilizes various methods to inform parents and patrons of student academic achievement. Parent-teacher conferences are one-way teachers are able to communicate to parents their child's abilities and struggles. Each week parents are notified via mail if their son or daughter is failing any class. Teachers also send home progress reports every four and a half weeks. Report cards are sent home after each nine-week term. Also included are results from MAPs, NeSA and ACT exams. Crofton Community Schools also has a monthly newsletter where honor rolls, 30+ ACT recognition, and standardized test summary results are released. This publication is sent to parents and district patrons as well as being posted on our web page and on twitter.

A valuable tool for tracking student achievement is online through our district school management system. Through that system students and parents can log in to check student attendance and grades. A simple click on an individual class percentage will allow a more in-depth look at each grade which comprises the class percentage. Teachers are able to indicate whether an assignment was late or is missing. This information can be valuable to parents to help ensure their child takes advantage of educational opportunities and gains the needed organizational skills to be successful. Teachers can also utilize the contact information on each student which is available in this system to communicate with parents through email and phone.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Crofton High School motivates students immediately upon entering the door. The pride demonstrated in the school begins with a neat, clean and organized building. The school is bright and friendly which helps to create a positive environment in which to learn.

A common thread throughout the school is that students know our teachers genuinely care about the well being of our students. When students feel cared for, they achieve at a higher level. Teachers know their students and their families. It is that deep connection with students that make a school a safe environment. In addition to caring deeply about the students, our teachers love their specific content area.

Each teacher works in a subject area where they have an interest. When teachers are motivated and make learning fun for students, the students are therefore more likely to be engaged. Teachers make teaching and learning interesting through designing a variety of activities. When students have a chance to create or have a hands-on activity, the lesson takes on new meaning. Here at Crofton Community School, we also have a sense of camaraderie among the students because of the atmosphere that has been established. Because of this mutual trust and friendship, students are more likely to have their social and emotional needs met.

Teachers feel supported and valued by the community, administration, and the Board of Education. Teachers meet with the high school principal periodically to discuss concerns, issues, and other items. By meeting as a group and discussing concerns or upcoming changes, teachers have a chance to be heard by administration. Through ongoing, meaningful conversations, both teachers and administration can come to some level of understanding as changes are made.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our community of Crofton is extremely important to the success of our school. The involvement of the local businesses is evident when the school makes efforts to raise money for the many various groups within the school. Local businesses will donate money, time, materials and more when asked. The school in turn is conscious about using the local businesses for purchasing the many items needed for the school. For instance, the local grocery store helps to provide various items needed throughout the year. The local gas stations are utilized for refueling district vehicles. On occasion, the students and parents work at a local eating establishment serving food and waiting on tables as a part of a fundraising effort. Through this process the school benefits, as does the business. A local private business owner recently purchased a trailer for our school to use for hauling various items. Our band was often in need of a vehicle to carry instruments to a contest or our speech team needed one to carry tables and props for speech contests. This generous donation has been beneficial to our school and is evidence of our community support.

A variety of parent booster organizations support the many organizations here as well. Boosters help to raise money by working concession stands. The monies generated from groups might go to purchasing equipment, funding field trips or whatever the organization might require. Without the generous help and assistance of our Boosters, we would struggle to achieve all of our goals.

Currently we have an upcoming Q125 celebration in Crofton where the community is celebrating 125 years! Volunteering school personnel and school board members are involved and will share responsibilities as part of the planning committee. Many activities for the Q125 celebration will be hosted at or on the school grounds. The parking lot will also be vital in helping to showcase a variety of classic vehicles. The football field and track complex will be the home for the Q125 pageant.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is essential to the success of a school. We believe that by improving our instruction, our students will also improve.

Crofton is currently at the end of a school improvement 5-year cycle and beginning the process of planning our next course of action. To begin the process, we are involving the local Educational Service Unit (ESU) to help guide us through looking at our mission and vision statements. After completing the reassessment of our mission and vision, we will look at our data and determine an area to focus on for improvement.

Our approach to professional development begins with our achievement goals. The staff at Crofton analyze data from a variety of sources and then form building and district-wide goals. From those goals we create a professional development plan. The plan includes scheduling work toward achieving those goals on our professional development days, which are built into our calendar. We utilize the Educational Service Unit (ESU) staff and other resources to guide our efforts.

For instance: ESU staff help us analyze data from our assessments and then our teachers make better instructional decisions in their classrooms. In addition, we have made efforts to speak a “common language” as it comes to lesson design and therefore train all of our teachers to understand that common language that we desire. Instructional technology is an area we are also improving. In the area of technology, we are having teachers attend technology professional development at various times throughout the year. We have implemented the use of Google Apps for Education (G.A.F.E.). By using G.A.F.E., we are able to create, edit, and share documents, gather information, and collaborate more effectively as a district. We have added professional development time to our upcoming school calendar. Our increased efforts in professional development have created a need for additional days for this important work. The Board of Education and community have been accepting of these additional professional development days.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership philosophy is that we are here to help our school be successful in any way possible. Currently the high school has one superintendent, one principal and one athletic director. We function as a team, helping and supporting one another in a variety of ways. As situations arise, we approach them as a team by asking questions and gathering input when needed.

Our high school principal adorns many hats. One of the many roles of the high school principal is to support teachers and students. The principal is the evaluator of the certificated staff. His role is to have meaningful and ongoing conversations about teaching styles, assessments and practices within the classroom. He is an instructional leader. He is also supports teachers, if necessary, regarding discipline. Our principal also knows our student population as well as their parents. It is important to know our families and their home environments in order to help our students. Building relationships with students, teachers and community members is a key role to our ongoing success.

The athletic director has an important role as well in the school. Among her many duties, she is the evaluator of coaches. She is responsible for scheduling, hiring officials, ticket-takers and anything else needed to make our school activities function. She is tireless in her efforts to attend the many, many events.

The superintendent is tasked with making sure the teachers, administration, support staff and students have what they need in order to do their work in a highly effective manner. The superintendent is also an instructional leader for the district. As decisions are being made, the superintendent ensures that we have the resources of time, personnel and money in place. Working with the Board of Education and enforcing the policies of the Board are also an essential piece of his role.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One practice that Crofton utilizes effectively is our “Encore” program. This daily function of our school day provides opportunities for our students to have success by giving the students time to meet with teachers.

Every school has students who struggle academically. Here at Crofton we have a time set aside each day for our students to go into the classroom, before school, to get help or assistance as necessary. Teachers are required to be in their rooms and ready for any student who may come in for help. We believe that by providing this extra time for students that they will therefore receive better grades.

How does a student get into the Encore program? It starts by seeing the need by the classroom teacher. The student may have missed a day due to illness or school activity, fallen behind in their daily work, received a poor grade in an assignment or assessment or is generally struggling with the content. The teacher can then require that the student attend Encore. However, a student who is recognizing that they need assistance, they can attend Encore on their own. Many students take advantage of this time on their own to get themselves caught up with their work. By attending Encore, students have time in a safe, risk-free environment to ask questions about their content and receive the help that they need to be more successful.

Communication from teachers to the administration as to who is required to attend Encore is managed using technology. Google Apps for Education (G.A.F.E) has the ability to share documents online. Teachers log into the Encore Google document and update the student list. The high school principal then helps to remind students of their requirement to attend Encore and also enforce consequences when they are absent. Encore has become an invaluable part of the educational process here in Crofton. The academic, emotional and social benefits that we see in our students let us know that this program is essential to our school day.