

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Susan L. Genco

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

Official School Name Cranbury School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 23 North Main Street

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

City Cranbury    State NJ    Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 08512-3257

County Middlesex County

Telephone (609) 395-1700    Fax (609) 860-9655

Web site/URL http://www.cranburyschool.org    E-mail sgenco@cranburyschool.org

Twitter Handle \_\_\_\_\_ Facebook Page \_\_\_\_\_ 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\*Dr. Susan Genco    E-mail sgenco@cranburyschool.org

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

District Name Cranbury School District    Tel. (609) 395-1700

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 Mrs. Jennifer Cooke

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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

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

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

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. 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

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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
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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	8	6	8
K	11	20	31
1	23	14	37
2	25	33	58
3	26	15	41
4	17	22	39
5	35	25	60
6	42	27	69
7	40	29	69
8	35	42	77
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	262	233	495

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 21 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 69 % 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 2014 – 2015 school year: 4%

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	515
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.037
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
4 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %  
Total number students who qualify: 24

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %  
87 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>0</u> Autism                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>16</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>32</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>32</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>4</u> Developmentally Delayed               |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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	27
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	28
Paraprofessionals	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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 18:1
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	96%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2009

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

The Cranbury School, the heart of our community, offers every student an opportunity to shine. We inspire each other to build lives of intellectual curiosity and purpose. While learning timeless skills, students develop character and confidence to lead by example in a diverse and changing world.

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

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As you enter Cranbury School, you will see the student-designed Cranbury Viking school logo adorned on carpets purchased by our Parent-Teacher Organization. Office staff welcomes you by name. You enter hallways and classrooms that shine as our maintenance team pays attention to the small details. Students participate in a “morning meeting” where they strengthen their relationships with one another and prepare for a productive day. Educators are working with students on challenging and engaging content, such as Aquaculture, in our cafeteria. The Smart television adjacent to the Aquaponics system is a tool for local, national, and international communication as well as a data collection tool. Take a walk over to historic town hall, connected to our school, where you will view selected pieces of student artwork from kindergarten through eighth grade at the Gourgaud Gallery in celebration of National Youth Art Month. On your way back from the art gallery, you see students enjoying the new playground equipment designed with committee input and funded by the Cranbury Education Foundation. Back at school, female student leaders in grade five have just returned from a “business meeting” with the Chief School Administrator/Principal where they discussed inventory, sales, pricing, and new items they would like to sell at the student-created school store. Funds from the store are used for a school-wide assembly voted on by the student body.

These are just a few key examples of a “day in the life” at Cranbury School. Cranbury is located in Middlesex County and is one of the oldest towns in New Jersey. Cranbury Township was entered on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places on August 9, 1979, and on the National Register of Historic Places on September 18, 1980. The Cranbury School District serves students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade and is located in the epicenter of town. The school also houses the Cranbury Public Library and the township municipal building, making it a unique educational setting and the “heart of the community.” Upon graduation from middle school, students attend Princeton High School through our send-receive relationship.

Since the school’s inception in 1896, tradition and innovation have been equally valued. Students are afforded every opportunity to discover their unique strengths and talents in a small, supportive learning community. Our teachers demonstrate a passion for their chosen profession and possess strong educational backgrounds. Teachers create learning environments that are engaging and motivating to students by modeling their own willingness to experiment, collaborating with others, taking risks and embracing lifelong learning.

Cranbury School uses a comprehensive, standards-based core curriculum consisting of English language arts, world language, mathematics, science and social studies. These subjects are taught in a thoughtful progression from kindergarten through eighth grade. In addition to the core curriculum, students are also instructed in art, vocal music, instrumental music (grades 4-8), computer literacy, physical education, health/family life, study skills, and media science. Supplemental supports and services are available before, during, and after school hours.

There are a number of key strategies used within the school that encourage and challenge all students to develop their full potential. Instruction is child-centered and based on current research. Multi-sensory learning strategies and materials, progress monitoring through a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework and a flexible continuum of enrichment and acceleration opportunities are designed to actively challenge and engage students within the learning continuum while also building their competence and confidence.

In 1996 and again in 2009, our school was recognized as “A National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.” Most recently, we were named a “High Progress Reward School” and a Title I exemplar by the New Jersey Department of Education for demonstrating a remarkable rate of progress as measured by the Student Growth Percentile (SGP) methodology. These recognitions have served our school and community well by affirming the value we place on data-driven instruction, flexible grouping, professional learning communities, and continuous improvement in order to provide the best possible educational experience for every child.

An exciting educational initiative that connects tradition with innovation is our Aquaponics program.

Cranbury Township is a participant in the New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program and has placed over 2,000 acres in permanently preserved farmland. Aquaponics, the combination of Aquaculture and Hydroponics, provides opportunities for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) education through integrated active learning in a continually evolving learning laboratory. Through this project-based experience, our students have become environmental stewards by connecting with their peers around the world and exploring a variety of ecosystems as well as gaining a deep understanding of food deserts where fresh produce is difficult to grow.

We offer a wide variety of activities for students to develop their full potential. Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities include intramural and interscholastic sports, improvisation, music composition, Art Club, Culture Club, Literary Magazine, Viking Voice newsletter investigative reporters, Kindness Club, mathematics competitions and clubs, National History Day, Science Olympiad, Odyssey of the Mind, and the annual school musical. Student leadership and initiative is developed through these and other opportunities.

Through collaborative decision-making, high standards of performance are established and maintained. Our students flourish under the guidance of outstanding teachers and supportive parents and community members. The support of the Board of Education, parents, volunteers, community, and staff is truly appreciated and integral to the continued success of the Cranbury School District.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

Primary education is devoted to developing literacy and numeracy through an interdisciplinary approach in a joyful, collaborative, and social environment. Elementary classes are self-contained and Middle School classes are departmentalized with extended periods for core disciplines built into the weekly schedule.

The core curriculum is standards-based and instructional approaches are influenced by student age and developmental stage and are grounded in effectiveness research. The Connected Action Roadmap (CAR), a coherent process for school improvement, directs all curriculum development. The CAR model guides the work of teacher teams - collaborative planning; conversations about student learning; classroom-based assessment development; and the monitoring of student learning results. All curriculum is maintained in a searchable database that allows for on-going analysis and revision and enables the public to view our program of studies.

#### Reading/English language arts

The internalization of language concepts and skills occurs through an integrated program of writing, vocabulary enrichment, reading comprehension, technology use, and oral expression. Primary literacy instruction is devoted to teaching students to read using scientifically proven methods to ensure that all students are reading at grade level. Writer's workshop, guided reading, phonics and word study are employed for all Tier I instruction. Elementary instruction shifts from learning to read to reading to learn with an increase in the range and complexity of texts studied. In the Middle School, students study both classic and modern core exemplar texts. Students engage in monthly forums, debates and Socratic Seminars to promote dialogue, deep comprehension of texts, and evidence-based conclusions. Digital conversations extend the classroom. Students produce formal essays and engage in daily informal writing, utilizing the "Writer's Notebook." Teachers are committed to building metacognitive practices into their repertoire. Writing portfolios engage students in ongoing, meaningful self-assessment; permanent student writing folders provide a snapshot of every writer entering the next grade level. Student ideas are valued in an environment where questions stimulate thought and provoke inquiry. Argument-based benchmark writing assessments result in plans to individually address compositional skills through direct instruction and conferencing. Writing centers in every classroom foster the concept that every student is a writer.

#### Mathematics

The Cranbury School math program seeks to teach all students to reason; strategize; comprehend mathematical concepts, operations and relations; carry out procedures flexibly and accurately; and to have a productive disposition and growth mindset. The work of Dr. Jo Boaler has had a significant impact on all aspects of our math program- from our expectation that all people can learn math at high levels to our belief in the value of making mistakes, the power of visual math strategies and the counter-productivity of speed and time pressure. Primary math instruction centers on developing number sense using visual and tactile models. Elementary math instruction is delivered through a most innovative practice (See Part VI, Indicators of Academic Success). Middle School students are placed into math courses that meet their highest level of developmental ability based upon multiple measures which include the five strands of math proficiency for developing mathematicians (National Research Council, 2001) - conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, strategic competence, adaptive reasoning, and productive disposition.

#### Science

Foundational knowledge and skills in science are acquired through an inquiry-centered approach to science instruction that focuses students on natural phenomena, allows students to explore with materials and ideas, reflect upon their learning through reading and writing and then apply and test their own ideas. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) guide our focus on the integration of three dimensions of science: the disciplinary core ideas, science and engineering practices, and the themes and patterns that connect all of science. Google Classroom and Tools have changed the nature of student to student and student to teacher communication and deepened the science/literacy connection.

## Social Studies/history

The K-8 social studies curriculum focuses developing a student's sense of self within the communities to which they belong- first, their family, and then as local, regional, national, and global citizens. Students are ultimately prepared for active participation within all of these levels of community. The primary and elementary grades focus on developing a historical, geographical, and personal understanding of local, regional, and national communities, their history, governmental structures and individual identities. Middle School students study geography and culture as factors shaping U.S. and world history and policy. Students encounter people and places toward understanding how the past shapes our present and future, and respect for individuals and cultures of the world. Current events and world issues are examined and critical reading of primary documents is emphasized. Co-curricular electives include Mini-Model Congress, National History Day, the National Geography Bee and the National Current Events League. Class trips promote enthusiasm for social studies learning.

The Cranbuddies program aims to provide students a positive early school experience through the research-based and child-focused HighScope Curriculum. The focus of the preschool daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which students make choices about what they will do in their high-interest classroom, carry out their plans and ideas for the materials provided, and reflect upon their activities with their teachers and the other students. The teacher supports student play, uses encouragement instead of praise, and takes a problem-solving approach to conflict. The preschool day is balanced with both individual and social play. Students assist with cleanup, socialize during meals, develop self-care skills, and develop fine and gross motor skills in preparation for the primary grades. The Cranbury School preschool students learn and grow in a rich environment of both challenge and support.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Please Note: All Elementary students (K-5) experience a weekly rotation of the following curriculum areas (\*exception- World language). Middle School students take semester-long courses in the following curriculum areas:

### General Music and Art

The Cranbury School Arts program is a hallmark of the school. General Music and Art classes promote student creation, performance and presentation of art and music. The arts are an ideal vehicle for higher order thinking skills, such as evaluation and critique in response to art and music. We aim for each student to develop a personal connection to art and music. Toward this end, students study a wide range of music/art from historical, cultural and analytical perspectives. Art projects integrate research and connect to the work of Master artists.

In addition to general level music courses, students may join the Instrumental Music program and receive instruction in the woodwind, brass or percussion instrument of their choice. Grade level participation is as high as 95% and remains well above 50% at every grade level. Our Viking (Grade 4), Cadet (Grade 5), Colonial (Grade 6) and Concert (Grades 7-8) bands perform in concert and for other functions, including charity and community events. Elective jazz and percussion ensemble groups apply skills acquired during instrumental lessons to create these traditional and popular music styles with their peers.

### Vocal Music

Vocal music instruction enables students to analyze and understand the world around them through song performance. A wide range of vocal repertoire is explored as students gain knowledge of healthy vocal technique, music literacy, song analysis and the history of music. Choirs perform in concerts. Over 75% of 4th and 5th graders elect to participate in an extracurricular choir. Over 80% of 6th - 8th graders participate in a vocal music elective and one in every three Middle School students participate in the extracurricular choir.

### Physical Education and Health

Health and Physical Education (PE) instruction focus on developing lifelong skills and habits to cultivate and maintain healthy minds and bodies. In PE, students learn how to play individual and team sports and develop an appreciation of cooperation, coordination, and competition. The PE program strives to provide

an environment that promotes self-confidence through meaningful, challenging, and varied athletic experiences. The health program focuses on wellness and encourages students to take responsibility and make informed choices about their health. Family Life Education is taught as part of the health curriculum. Responsible personal behavior, interpersonal relationships, family, and growth and development are addressed.

#### \*World Language

Research documents the power of immersion education to help students attain high levels of world language proficiency. World language instruction is as close to 100% immersion in the target language as feasible. Three modes of communication are addressed- interpretive, interpersonal and presentational. Assessment tasks reflect the manner in which students naturally acquire and use the language. French instruction begins in grades K and 1 once per week and continues twice per week for grade 2. Grades 3 and 4 receive an introduction to Spanish twice per week. Grade 5 students select French or Spanish and receive world language instruction twice per week and may continue to study this language for the next three years, up to five times per week.

#### Library/Media Skills (Educational Technology)

All students participate in an instructional library skills program to emphasize the enjoyment of reading while learning to become effective users and developers of information. Award-winning databases, the CranburyReads! blog, and digital books are available for students. K-2 students visit the library once per week and elementary students receive library/media instruction once per week for a semester. Grades 6-7 students examine the legal and ethical issues of computer technology and use in Computer and Information Technology class once per week.

#### Computer Literacy (Educational Technology)

All students K-8 are instructed in the use of educational technology and digital citizenship. Elementary students experience a weekly rotation and Middle School students take semester long courses in using digital tools, social media and research technology. Computer labs and mobile carts are available for students in grades K-8. Primary school students use iPad technology, students in grades 3-8 use laptops. Students have access to desktop computers in all classrooms.

#### Industrial Arts and Technology Education

Industrial arts and technology students research, design, develop, and utilize technological systems such as communication, transportation, manufacturing, and construction technologies. They learn cognitive, manipulative, and affective learning strategies by performing open-ended, problem-based design activities. Students use technology for research, planning and design, and data collection; build and control robotic systems; construct original projects, and explore 21st Century career opportunities. A maker space encourages creative collaboration.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Since the National Blue Ribbon recognition in 2009, considerable effort has been made to continue to develop, align, and improve our systems of Academic and Behavioral Supports. We have adopted the tiered instruction and intervention framework Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI, National Center for Learning Disabilities, RTI Network). This model ensures high levels of student learning and achievement through the lens of learning as a continuum, where most needs are met through the high quality, standards-based, research-centered instructional strategies and materials of the general education program. First and foremost, we seek to provide high-quality, research-based, prevention oriented instruction (Tier I) for all students in the general education classroom and continually identify strengths and areas for growth. Some student needs are found on each end of the learning continuum, requiring at times additional enrichment, academic support, or both. Student interventions and enrichment supports are based upon individual student needs in individual disciplines, substantiated by student performance data. A computer-based, nationally-normed, adaptive assessment, along with classroom-based assessments and teacher feedback determine student eligibility for RTI supports.

Once found eligible, Academic Support teachers work with students on content and skills identified through

grade level and classroom-based assessment results. Student interventions are employed on an increasing scale of frequency and intensity as necessary. Tier II services follows Tier I to support needs observed during classroom instruction or identified through classroom-based or grade-level based assessment measures. Tier II services occur either within or outside of the general education classroom and always employ additional resources and strategies to those in the Tier I setting. Tier III services are more intensive and occur outside of the general education classroom in a separate setting. Academic Support teachers use their scheduled class assignments flexibly to meet changing student needs. Instructional technologies such as SMARTBoards, Audio Enhancement devices, and Audiobooks are prevalent. Academic Support (during the school day) and Supplemental Support (before and after school) are available to meet the varying needs of students.

Students who are identified as “twice-exceptional” may have learning disabilities that mask their giftedness. These students require different identification methods and program modifications to reach their full potential. We do not assume that students with disabilities cannot participate in enrichment education. Rather, we identify their special learning needs as well as areas of talent and develop both sides of the continuum.

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

The goal of the Cranbury School Assessment Program is to improve student achievement. Toward that end, we use assessment to serve many purposes - to plan for learning; support learning; monitor learning; verify that learning has occurred; and investigate the cause of any learning difficulties. Assessment that informs instruction and learning is a priority. The school maintains a well-articulated schedule of formative and summative assessments that communicates the balance of types and purposes of assessment strategies employed. Classroom assessments include authentic assessment, such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) for Grades K-5; integrated assessment, such as the “Wax Museum” for Middle School English language arts and social studies; and performance-based assessment, such as a lab practical in science or art critique in visual art. Multiple measures are used to inform all decision-making, such as flexible grouping for K-5 math instruction and participation in both the academic enrichment and instructional support programs. Assessment is used to systematically improve instruction and student learning. Each school year begins with formative assessment for the purpose of student and teacher goal-setting. A web-based assessment is used to create a personalized assessment experience for each student by adapting to each student’s learning level. This assessment provides essential information about what each student knows and is ready to learn in reading, language, and mathematics. These assessment results, along with the information gained from classroom-based assessment, inform instruction for each student. Student learning is assessed again mid-year and end of the year in order to monitor both student proficiency and growth. Accountability assessment data are also analyzed by the administration, grade-level and discipline-specific professional learning groups and are valued for the individual, classroom, grade-level, and program-level feedback that they provide.

Assessment results are shared with parents in whole group, small group, and in individual settings. In addition to formal Board of Education assessment reports, we offer parent evenings in many disciplines to discuss best practices in curriculum, instruction and assessment. Parent conferences center on student learning progress and annotated reports are sent home for all available assessments. Parents, students and the community are informed of students academic achievement. We maintain high levels of achievement by continually benchmarking our curriculum and student results against similar high performing school districts. One of the best ways we “pace ourselves” is to keep an eye on other excellent classrooms in excellent schools and to compare our students’ progress with that of the students in other programs. As a pre-K-8 school, we have regular articulation and electronic Professional Learning Communities through our curriculum mapping tool Rubicon Atlas and Google Classrooms with our sending high school in order to monitor results and effectively prepare them for high school transition.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Cranbury School cultivates an engaging and motivating learning environment through student leadership at all ages. Provided a safe and comfortable atmosphere, students will take risks and engage in trial and error. Leadership can be as small as taking a moment to encourage and support a classmate, or as far reaching as spearheading an initiative that sparks an entire school to rally behind a cause. “Kindness Club,” founded in 2012 by a Middle School teacher with a passion for the humanities, was created in response to students who wanted to make a difference in the school and broader community. This club fosters kindness, compassion, empathy, and generosity during the formative years of adolescence. Through the development of service learning projects, students understand the importance of leadership, collaboration, flexibility, and the spirit of giving. The on-going open enrollment policy affords every student the opportunity to emerge as a leader and provides a safe haven for initiative. One example of an outstanding student-inspired and student led service learning opportunity is our annual Cranbury Idol, which benefits a student-selected local or national charity/organization. Charities that have been selected include Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, One Simple Wish Foundation, Children’s Pediatric Hydrocephalus Foundation, and Habitat for Humanity. Middle School students volunteer to share their musical talents on stage in a friendly competition for the school and larger community. In addition to the monetary donations made to the charity, the “winner’s” prize is the gift of giving.

Civic leadership is emphasized throughout the school year. Our Student Council serves as the voice for our student body, offering suggestions, brainstorming solutions to school-wide issues, and organizing community service projects. Students also have numerous opportunities to develop their leadership skills through peer leadership, peer mediation, buddy classes, character education and diversity programs. Cranbury School utilizes a proactive approach to character education, fostering the social, emotional, and academic development of all students. Both Positive Behavioral Support and the Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design models support the academic engagement and achievement of students using an inclusive, proactive and interactive approach. All students at Cranbury School are expected to be “Respectful” “Responsible” and “Ready” to learn each day. These school-wide expectations promote a safe and secure learning environment and a common language throughout the school. The guidelines also ensure a safe, orderly and cooperative environment and foster good citizenship and self-discipline.

Cranbury School creates a foundation for teachers to feel valued and supported in their profession through innovative scheduling. Embedded PLC time is scheduled throughout the week for grade level and content area teams to analyze data, develop or refine curricula and keep abreast of current research. Formal and informal recognition for teacher leadership includes, but is not limited to Board of Education meetings, “Weekly Bulletins,” personal cards, and letters. Our school counselor offers weekly Yoga sessions for staff members to support health and wellness.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Board of Education, parents, community, and staff are integral to the success of Cranbury School students. We strongly believe in connecting parents and community through authentic curricular and extracurricular experiences. The Cranbury School recognizes that when parents participate in the educational process, students do better in school, and students benefit greatly from the involvement of the larger community. Parent involvement comes in different forms, such as helping children at home with schoolwork and projects; attending school events; and volunteering and participating directly in school. Teachers welcome the assistance and expertise of parents and there are many significant and gratifying opportunities for community members to contribute to the school. The District hosts workshops on academic programs and learning strategies aimed at helping parents help their children. Our students benefit from the feedback, questions and interest of volunteer judges at the annual school-wide Science Exposition. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) sponsors motivational speakers and Artist in Residence programs. The Odyssey of the Mind and Science Olympiad enrichment programs are supported by parent coaches. The Township Environmental Commission supports our Aquaponics initiative and

wellness committee. Annual school events for the community to enjoy include the school musical, Field Day, and visual and performing arts events. “Cranbury Day” Main Street Fair, the Municipal Alliance Drug Free Fair, and the Education Foundation Craft Show bring families together after school hours. The Cranbury Arts Council provides STEAM workshops for students during the summer months, and host a student-produced theatrical performance. The Municipal Alliance, Women’s Club and Environmental Commission provide student events and sponsor annual awards for graduates. These events help to build relationships between all members of the school community and develop a sense of affiliation and purpose.

Service learning partnerships have a significant presence in the Cranbury School and serve to motivate students and extend learning. For example, “Grandpals” is a partnership with the Cranbury Public Library in which senior community members and kindergarten students enjoy the love of reading together. Scouting service award projects have resulted in a science courtyard makeover; hydration stations; school store; a “Buddy Bench” to foster kindness and conflict resolution; garden beds to integrate gardening into the curriculum; and the “Quarters for Water” campaign to bring clean drinking water to students in Migyera, Uganda.

Communication is vital to the home-school partnership. We use a variety of tools to communicate with our parents and community, including our school district website, monthly school newsletter, and our School Messenger email and telephone communication system. Our Parent Portal allows parents to view teacher feedback on assignments and monitor academic progress and attendance. Google Tools distribute and collect information from students and parents. 2015 Strategic Plan survey data indicated that the Cranbury School community favored Facebook as a means of communication. As a result, our music department is piloting a closed Facebook page.

### 3. Professional Development:

Cranbury School provides a sound professional development program that is data-driven, based on best instructional practices, collaborative in nature, and reflective. Through the use of online surveys, our professional development team begins by developing a plan intended to respond to the areas of greatest interest and need among the teaching staff. Once the administrative team has analyzed the data from the online survey in committee with teachers, we have focused on engaging teachers in exciting new educational initiatives/tools such as Google Classroom, as well as the process of analyzing student performance data to develop curriculum and to improve instruction. For example, teachers expressed trepidation in response to the shifts represented in the national Common Core adoption. In direct response, between 2012-2014, the district engaged in a two-year initiative to deepen the teaching staff’s understanding of the English language arts Common Core State Standards and to ensure that curriculum was aligned by utilizing the Connected Action Roadmap (CAR) framework, providing extensive staff development in the framework, as well as giving teachers time to “unpack” the standards and develop lesson plans to support standards based instruction. Subsequently, teachers were provided Professional Learning Community time to analyze the newest online Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) resources, explore PARCC aligned resources, study newly published student work samples, and design fully integrated and engaging lesson plans to effectively prepare students for this rigorous, mandated assessment in both English language arts and mathematics. Our plan stems from the belief that if teachers have a clear and deep understanding of student learning goals derived from the standards, it will provide a solid foundation that leads to higher student achievement. Through targeting student deficiencies and responding proactively to data and observable trends, we are currently evaluating the need for a district-wide approach to instruction in the area of academic vocabulary and developing a plan for interdisciplinary subject area vocabulary enrichment.

Teachers are given many opportunities to gain comprehensive professional development and networking experiences through their participation in challenging and stimulating seminars and workshops at the local, state, and national level. Most recently, teachers have attended the ‘Teachers as Scholars’ seminars at Princeton University, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) annual meeting and exposition in Boston, Massachusetts, and the International Technology Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) national conference in Washington, D.C. Upon return to the district, these educators provided turn-key training workshops for their colleagues, reported a sense of professional renewal, and incorporated

new and innovative instructional strategies into their content area subjects. The district also provides financial support toward graduate level programs.

#### 4. School Leadership:

Change is a process, not an event. Effectively sustaining change over time with the overarching goal of student achievement is both an art and a science requiring a combination of vision, intuition, and strategy. The Cranbury School administrative leadership team is comprised of a Chief School Administrator/Principal, Vice-Principal, two Supervisors of Curriculum and Instruction, and a Supervisor of Special Services who have a shared purpose and clearly defined goals for student achievement. Weekly leadership team meetings, both in-person and through Google Classroom provide the forums for determining priority action items, sharing ideas and self and team reflection. The CSA/Principal also recognizes the need for both team and individual development and meets once per week with each administrator to provide differentiated leadership and guidance.

Our leadership philosophy stems from the belief that all stakeholders should be involved in decision-making and in the development of a vision for the future, first by identifying areas of student need, and next through the collective efforts of faculty and staff, by identifying the best approaches to address those needs. As an example, the Strategic Planning Committee has been charged with creating a new district mission statement/beliefs and evaluating what we do well, identifying where we can improve, and using this information to develop a long-range plan based upon clear and measurable goals and objectives that will be used to advance our district. The committee is comprised of 60 participants from all aspects of the school community. As importantly, our belief is that our teachers should be involved in every facet of current educational policy, developing our vision for change, and articulating a response to needs that arise through collaboration, PLCs, and committee. Our teachers work collaboratively with administrators to spearhead new curriculum development, refine discipline policy, improve the physical facility, recommend new materials and resources, evaluate the need for innovative technology upgrades, and participate in all levels of student support services. Due to our small school size, there are many opportunities for faculty and staff involvement in all aspects of school life and decision-making. The practice of shared leadership is also yielding significant results. For example, a Middle School English teacher functions in the capacity of a literacy leader for the Middle School team and interfaces with K-5 teachers to provide professional development, mentoring, evaluate resources, and promote new literacy initiatives. As a teacher leader with a strong vision for the future of literacy instruction, she has also been encouraged to play a role in the development of enrichment opportunities for students based on real data gathered in response to student interests, talents, and potential. The Artist-in-Residence program offerings have made a wide range of rich artistic and literary experiences accessible to over 500 students during the past three years.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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The most notable best practice at Cranbury School is our approach to differentiated mathematics instruction for elementary school students. For the past ten years, Cranbury School has implemented a flexible grouping model known as the “Math Shuffle.” This unique approach provides for differentiated instruction, embedded, ongoing professional development, collaborative planning and curriculum design, decreased teacher-student ratio and student exposure to multiple teaching styles throughout the school year. Proactive planning and creative scheduling are the cornerstones of this model. The master schedule allows for a Secondary Mathematics certified teacher from the Middle School program to teach one section of students along with a grade level of elementary teachers. This approach fosters collaboration as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) develop shared instructional goals, strategies and related common assessments. Given this model, a pre-assessment is developed by the PLC and administered to all students prior to an upcoming unit of study. Assessment data is then analyzed as a PLC team and students are grouped based on data. Students who demonstrate mastery of the skills and concepts receive enrichment instruction for the duration of the unit of study. The balance of the students are homogeneously grouped and placed into small learning teams. Teachers use the pre-assessment data to meet the needs of their individual groups. This practice is repeated for each unit in mathematics over the course of the school year, resulting in students experiencing math instruction that meets their needs and levels of challenge “concept by concept.” Student strengths and areas for growth become the focus of instruction and professional dialogue among teachers. Students benefit from teachers who also have increased their understanding of math concepts and pedagogical content knowledge through this design. The flexible grouping model provides rigorous math instruction for all students- appropriately challenging and engaging along the learning continuum. Another benefit of this practice involves the transition of students from Elementary School to Middle School. Middle School math teachers witness student cognitive development in math and better understand the logical structure of mathematics and the progression of how math learning develops over time. Given that our school serves students K-8, the Middle School teachers are able to monitor student performance over time and use this information in determining Middle School math placement decisions.