

U.S. Department of Education
2017 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. Richard Charles Renninger

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

Official School Name Patch Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address Unit 30401

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

City APO State DD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 09107-0005

County _____

Telephone (711) 680-7191 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.dodea.edu/PatchMS/ E-mail Rick.Renninger@eu.dodea.edu

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. Elizabeth Dunham E-mail Liz.Dunham@eu.dodea.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Europe East Tel. (631) 536-5905

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. Amy Newkirk
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 10 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 32 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, 2016 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 | 104 | 139 | 243 |
| 7 | 118 | 105 | 223 |
| 8 | 119 | 136 | 255 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 or higher | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Students | 341 | 380 | 721 |

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 62 % White
 - 10 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 22%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year | 69 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year | 74 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 143 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015 | 650 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.220 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 22 |

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, German, Tagalog, Japanese, Icelandic, Turkish, Italian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %
Total number students who qualify: 91

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
65 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.

- 11 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 2 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 3 Mental Retardation
- 20 Multiple Disabilities
- 7 Orthopedic Impairment
- 13 Other Health Impaired
- 65 Specific Learning Disability
- 42 Speech or Language Impairment
- 1 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:

| | Number of Staff |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators | 2 |
| Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects | 33 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc. | 21 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 8 |
| Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 6 |

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 22:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

| Required Information | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 | 2012-2013 | 2011-2012 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 94% | 97% | 95% | 95% | 98% |
| 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 2016.

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

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.

To educate, engage, and empower each student to succeed in a dynamic 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

Patch Middle School (Patch MS) is one of five Department of Defense (DoDEA) schools serving the middle grade (6-8) students of military and civilian personnel living and working in Stuttgart, Germany. Located in the German state of Baden-Württemberg, USAG Stuttgart is the size of an average municipality in the U.S. comprised of a population of over 24,000 community members. The command is home to several U.S. joint personnel readiness forces that support the mission of protecting and serving U.S. interests abroad. Recently the Stuttgart garrison was awarded the 2017 Army Communities of Excellence (ACOE) Gold Award, which honors communities that have been consistent in providing excellent support services and facilities in a quality environment. As a part of this exceptional community Patch MS is committed to ensuring the same exemplary service to the families and student we serve. Patch MS has a student demographic that is representative of most U.S. schools. Our student population is made up of 62% white, 10% Mixed Race, 14% Hispanic/Latino, 8% Black/African-American, and 4% Asian. Included within our general population are students identified with special needs (13%) and those serviced under the 504 – students with disabilities act (4.6%). The mission of DoDEA schools is to ensure an environment of academic excellence as we prepare students for success in an expanding global community, and the Patch MS community has accepted the challenge. In our efforts to remain ever mindful of our mission it is our belief that everyone has a role in ensuring the success of our students. Patch MS believes that it is our mission to engage students in active learning, provide both academic and social-emotional learning opportunities, and to empower students as they grow into productive global citizens. We work closely with our district and community partners to ensure that each student is prepared to succeed in a dynamic world and we remain culturally responsive to our community of learners and the stakeholders who support their development.

As approximately 30% of our students are new to our community each year, it is our commitment to providing programs to ensure that our school is a stabilizing force. Our Ambassador's Club, small teams, divers after school activities, vast counseling services and direct mentoring allows our unique population to navigate the often stressful life of the military child. The staff's commitment to their team and the advisory program ensures that every child's social and academic development is directly monitored and serviced by at least two adults in the school.

Patch MS was born out of two area schools, Böeblingen EMS and Robinson Barracks EMS with the express purpose of addressing the specific needs of intermediate learners. After several years of planning, in 2015 district and garrison partners introduced the first free standing middle school in the Stuttgart community. The teachers assigned to the school had been serving the same population of students from separate locations and the move was made in order to centralize resources and course offerings in order to provide a richer educational experience for the students. Teachers now enjoy the opportunity to expand course offerings due to a larger base of core teachers to better serve the unique and traditional needs of our students. This merger has enabled the middle school program to add high levels of technical courses such as Environmental Science, Robotics and Computer Programming and to provide small learning communities to personalize the relationships between students and teachers.

Patch MS has embraced the DoDEA commitment to providing students with the most authentic educational experiences. All faculty and staff members are committed to providing support for both the academic and social-emotional growth of our students. Our core values focus on engaging in learning activities designed to enhance and excite the learning process for our students. All of our educational programs integrate into a learning structure that encourages cross-curricular exploration of subject matter while working with students as they formulate connections to the greater global community. DoDEA has introduced new college and career readiness (CCRS) standards in Literacy and Mathematics. This has provided our staff with an instructional roadmap designed to develop deeper levels of subject matter knowledge while at the same time expanding learning into new contexts and cross curricular endeavors. Though rigorous classroom instruction is an essential part of our practices, we are also acutely aware of the need for students to develop the social-emotional skills necessary for future success. Our students also engage in applied learning experiences that provide them with opportunities to expand and apply the learning in non-traditional ways. From our partnerships with local schools, to our integration of everyday living skills and community outreach for our exceptional learners, the students of Patch MS are consistently challenged to develop into well-rounded

members of society.

Patch Middle School is designed around the collaborative teaming model and all teachers are committed to this model. By establishing grade level teams of core subject area teachers we work to ensure engagement and the active participation of students in the learning process. The teams are designed to ensure that students are well known and actively supported throughout their time at Patch MS. The school master schedule supports common planning and teaming time for each grade level team while providing additional time for extended teams to meet bi-weekly. This team structure helps to assist parents with the challenges of transitioning from the single teacher model of elementary school to a multiple teacher secondary structure. By developing this community of support we are able to provide students and parent's the opportunity to engage with an instructional team who are committed to helping all students realize success in school while providing students with a solid team of mentors to support them as they grow.

Student success at Patch Middle School is not only measured by academic growth but by our commitment to helping our students become well-rounded and responsible citizens of our global community. The most important part of a student's schedule is the 80 minute block of time every other day for advisory families to work on social and academic growth. Our philosophy is best articulated through our expectation that students develop as responsible young adults who aspire to learn from challenges and grow through rigorous learning opportunities while engaging in cultural and developmental interactions within the local community. Faculty works to ensure that students participate in an equal level of academic development and global application of skills to help in supporting holistic growth. Students strengthen their civic responsibilities and leadership abilities through central school governance and community involvement designed to enhance their understanding of world cultures and how they are an integral part of social change.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The core curriculum for Patch MS has undergone a significant change in the past year as the school system has embarked on a strategic implementation of the College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) for Mathematics and Literacy. The CCRSM are closely aligned to the Common Core State Standards and are designed to ensure that students progressively gain the depth of knowledge necessary to ensure college and career readiness upon graduation. Patch MS core teachers have embraced the changes with vigor and work in close collaboration with content area colleagues on our campus and throughout the district to ensure the standards are implemented with fidelity.

Patch Middle School is committed to the DoDEA mission to Educate, Engage and Empower each student to succeed in a dynamic world. Our curriculum begins with the principle that to be successful, a student must feel safe, cared for, and welcomed. Patch Middle School teachers take great care to create and maintain positive personal relationships with students while adhering to high, obtainable standards.

Critical to the school's success have been the collaborative efforts of teachers to engage students in the curriculum and ensuring that learning is personal and meaningful. Through classroom debates, laboratory experiments, STEM activities, study trips, research papers and many other classroom activities, students engage directly with their learning. This allows teachers to harness background knowledge, provide additional experiences and maximize student interest.

Patch MS ensures that all students are placed in appropriate mathematics classes with the support they need. As part of the course selection process, counselors gather teacher recommendations, nationally normed testing data and student requests to help make decisions on student placement. Advanced classes are provided in seventh and eighth grade as well as high school credit courses in Algebra and Geometry. Support is given for students who score in the bottom quartile of nationally normed tests through Math Support classes. Resource Mathematics is also provided for the special needs population.

The mathematics curriculum at Patch MS relies heavily on problem solving and as a result the classes include reading strategies and vocabulary development as key components of instruction. Additionally, Standards of Mathematical Practice such as modeling and critiquing the reasoning of others are a regular part of mathematics instruction. At Patch Middle School, math classes are student centered. Students struggle and persevere, collaborate with others, and participate in active learning lessons. Students engage in mathematics with manipulatives, graphing calculators, mathematics software and real life problem solving experiences such as our nine week cross curricular CU4reality financial program for all of our ninth graders.

The Patch Middle School science departments prides themselves on ensuring that all topics discussed include hands on learning. Half of the science teachers at Patch MS have participated in STEM training provided by the Naval Academy. Every day students are engaged in activities such as measuring waves, dissecting rats, extracting DNA, building catapults, and testing rockets. Lessons in astronomy include classes in the STARLAB, water labs test local ground water and genetics lessons involve family members. Students have access to and use oxygen, current, pressure, light, motion, pH, magnetic, temperature and heart rate sensors, as well as portable weather stations. Additionally, students make use of study trips to local museums, farms, and factories to further experience the curriculum. Science teachers also have a focus on building vocabulary in order for students to engage in discussions and communicate their learning. Students regularly present their lab findings to their classmates using the language of science in their communication. Close reading strategies used to assist students in reading and making sense of content in their textbook or online resources.

In the area of English/ language arts (ELA) teachers received not only new standards but also a new curriculum designed to support learning goals which emphasize depth of knowledge in the areas of critical reading, academic vocabulary development and text based evidentiary responses. Embedded in the CCRSL

instructional training modules are sample instructional plans designed to support teachers as they begin working to integrate the standards into their instructional practices. As collegial discussions began, teachers quickly concluded that they were no longer limited to proving basic skill mastery and could work to assist students as they learned to express their perceptions of the world through their voice and words. The most common change noticed is how students are now developing reading, writing, and analysis skills in context, which allows for a deeper understanding of how best to communicate personal thoughts and Ideas. Teachers support students as they develop strategies to help them improve in developing vocabulary in context, extracting evidence from both fiction and non-fiction text, developing and engaging in the development of evidence based questions to increase interaction with the text.

Students who score in the bottom quartile of nationally normed tests are recommended to take Read support classes to assist them as they develop skills to address deficits comprehension and identifying contextual clues for meaning among other strategies to attack challenging text. The Scholastic Reading Index is given to our students twice a year and we have seen remarkable improvements in scores from students in the lower quarter through instruction and support embedded in the Read 180 Next Generation program which is directly aligned with 21st-century reading comprehension skills. Cross curricular activities occur regularly between social studies and language arts, and include topics such as the Holocaust, the civil rights movement, the nuclear arms race and the environment. Students participate in writing competitions such as the Patriot's Pen, the DoDDS Illuminations Project and the Month of the Military Child initiative. Cross-curricular planning during weekly team meetings helps teachers integrate their lessons.

The social studies curriculum in grades six through eight covers world history, U.S. history, and geography. A common strategy with all Patch MS social studies teachers is text dependent questioning. Students also learn to communicate their knowledge verbally and in their written arguments by citing textual evidence from their textbook or primary source documents. Social Studies classrooms are very active at Patch MS. Socratic seminars, mock trials, political debates, and philosophical chair activities help students engage, think critically and communicate their ideas.

Every social studies class at Patch MS begins by viewing a short news segment followed by a classroom discussing of current events. The vast majority of the topics discussed during this time are not tested, but student engagement is extremely high. Debates and discussions of current social and political events help students relate to the world and develop an understanding of their civic responsibilities and their potential influence. The eighth grade social studies classes organized a highly spirited whole school mock election in October of this year, with debates on school topics that closely mirrored the national campaigns.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students are offered a diverse selection of courses to complement the core curriculum at Path MS. Elective classes are intentionally chosen by the scheduling team to promote 21st Century Skills as outlined by P21 – The Partnership for 21st Century Learning. All of these classes support the mission to Educate, Engage and Empower.

Each grade level has a required set of wheel classes that includes at least 9 weeks of PE and Health. Health and PE are required to ensure that students develop healthy habits and gain teamwork, social and emotional skills that are needed to navigate the stressful life of the military child. In addition all sixth graders take nine weeks of Study Skills and nine weeks of Computer Applications. Through these classes students learn research methods, media literacy, organizational skills, note taking and AVID strategies as well as essential computer skills. The required wheel for seventh graders consists of Health, PE, Art and Computer Programming. These courses were selected to promote creativity and innovation as well as critical thinking skills. The required wheel for eight grade students consists of PE, Pathways to Career and eighteen weeks of Health Education. A greater amount of time in Health class for eight graders was added after hearing from high school parents that students need more tools to deal with the stress, relationships and peer pressure of high school.

Counselors work diligently to ensure that their students' interests and needs are met. Sixth grade students can choose from support classes in math or reading, year-long Beginning or Intermediate Band classes,

semester classes in German or Spanish Conversation and/or quarter classes in Video Communication, Ceramics, Piano, Drawing and Environmental Science - STEM. All of these courses are designed to be fun, engaging and inspire students to become life-time learners.

Two elective periods in addition to the required wheel classes are available to 7th and 8th graders. Year-long courses in Band and Choir as well as semester courses in Drama, Art, Video Communication, Creative Thinking, Journalism, Humanities, Yearbook, Photography and Piano allow students to develop the essential skills of creativity, communication and critical thinking. Semester courses in Robotics, Computer Science, Computer Programming and Video Communication provide an opportunity for students to work with 21st century technology.

The electives at Patch MS require a great deal of technology and resources. Three computer labs, a robotics room, a STEM room, four music rooms and two art studios are just some of the spaces available to students.

Year-long Math Support and Read 180 classes are available to assist students. Over 9% of our students take a support class and over 6% are enrolled in AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination). 100% of sixth grade students take Study Skills for at least nine weeks and approximately 5% of seventh and eighth grade students take Study Skills for a semester. These courses are specifically designed to give struggling students the skills to succeed.

High School Foreign Language courses in German I and II, Spanish I and II are very popular courses at Patch Middle School. Over 60% of 7th and 8th grade students are taking a credit bearing Foreign Language courses and 38% of 6th graders are taking non-credit bearing Foreign Language courses this year.

Patch MS currently has the largest band program in DoDDS-Europe with 30% of students taking a full year of band or chorus and another 20% taking 9-18 weeks of Piano. In all, over 75% of students take at least one class in the visual or performing arts this year.

Nearly all elective classes are enhanced by after school clubs. Every Tuesday and Thursday, many students regularly stay after school and work on projects in drama, art, video, yearbook, journalism, band and robotics. Competitions and performances exist for these students throughout the year.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Patch Middle School is committed to providing all students with a rigorous, challenging and engaging educational experience. The move to college and career readiness standards has provided our teachers with an opportunity to illustrate the principles of lifelong learning within our community. As teachers engage in a professional development cycle they learn inventive ways to assist students in accessing rigorous learning goals while employing 21st century learning skills to increase depth of knowledge. Instructional practices are designed to support each child as they develop the skills necessary to actively engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and working collaboratively with others. To assist students with the transition to middle school all incoming 6th grade students are assigned a study skills course, designed around the best practices of AVID. Note taking and organizational strategies taught in this class are used throughout the school at every level.

General education classroom teachers employ multiple student support practices such as differentiated instruction, note-taking, cooperative learning, and systemic organizational strategies agreed upon by the team to ensure consistency for each student. As an example one team uses the Answer-Cite-Explain writing strategy in all core classes. Other teams use the reading for meaning strategy to increase student's ability to read more complex texts. In general, when a team decides on a particular intervention, that intervention is echoed with that teams core teachers.

Engaging students in collaborative activities fosters an environment where peer evaluations and modeling occur within learning groups. Students work collaboratively in nearly all classrooms. Science labs, health projects, social studies debates, math arguments and art projects all provide student's opportunities to synthesize information and make cross categorical connections for improved learning. With these

collaborative assignments, differentiation occurs by grouping students by topics and abilities.

As we have adopted College and Career Ready Standards for mathematics, those classrooms are now very busy. Students work in small groups to think through and discuss complex problems. Teachers encourage students to engage in a productive struggle, construct arguments and critique their peers reasoning. In these classes, teachers are seen asking far more questions and rarely providing answers. Students are encouraged to develop their own understanding of a problem and its solutions.

Team teachers gather at least once every two weeks during their team time and reflect upon student data collected from classroom assignments, system wide assessments and formative observations in order to address student needs both individually and through cross curricular instructional activities. The locally developed data locker also enables teams to quickly acquire Scholastic Reading Inventory data, current grades, attendance information and nationally normed test scores. This data along with student work samples is used to establish plans for remediation, and enrichment within the classroom and during advisory sessions.

Additional support classes are available at every grade level to assist struggling students within the instructional day. Programs such as Read 180, Math Support, AVID and resource classes provide a tiered system to keep students engaged and moving forward with their learning. Core teams develop plans for students to take part in lunch groups and after school homework clubs to provide just in time assistance when needed. Students access technology-based support through Schoology, Google Apps, Kahn Academy, and Unique which provide students and parents with continual access to instructional materials, video links, and student collaboration. Teachers and counselors work together to identify students in need of academic support based on data. Differentiation occurs in the classroom for students who excel. When teams identify students who are not being challenged by the activities in the classroom, more rigorous tasks or alternate rubrics are provided and advanced classes in mathematics and foreign language are offered.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Patch MS strives to ensure that all students are treated fairly, respectfully and feel welcomed each day. All stakeholders embrace and live our district's mission of working toward the maximum academic and social-emotional potential of each child. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to creating and sustaining an environment where learning and growth will flourish. Patch MS has a highly transient military and civilian population. From the time a student enrolls in the school, we take great care to ensure that each child feels at home. New students are teamed with a student ambassador who assists with the peer-to-peer transition. Students are also placed into a small grade level team and assigned an advisory family to provide the support of an educational advocate within their new learning community. For many of our students, this is their first experience in an international community. So along with the challenges of transitioning from an elementary academic environment to a secondary setting our students are consistently presented with new challenges and growth opportunities. The faculty at Patch MS is dedicated to ensuring that no student is left without a safety net when faced with these challenges.

Upon enrollment, every child is assigned an advisory class, and our work begins by establishing a mentoring relationship within the class structure to assist the student in developing active and nurturing relationships within the class. Advisors regularly use team building activities and open conversations to build a supportive and empowering relationship with and among their students. From the monitoring of grades to assisting with social challenges and interactions, advisory teachers are in close contact with parents so that no student is left unsupported. Each advisory period affords students an opportunity to engage in open conversations about the challenges they are facing, work one-on-one with teachers on challenging assignments and develop the organizational and problem-solving skills needed for continued success. When concerns arise, advisors are often the first line of defense in identifying the problem. These advisors work directly with parents, school counselors and team teachers to support the student as they face these challenges.

At Patch MS, we work together and play together. Purposeful consideration of the daily schedule allows us to have separate forty-five-minute lunch/recess periods according to grade level. We have converted our traditional cafeteria into a student union where students can socialize and relax with peers while engaging in chess, board games and card games which help to develop strategic skills in a fun way. Supervised games such as football, soccer, four square and other physical activities provide students with opportunities to release stress and develop tools for resolving conflicts. Overall we strive to ensure a time for kids to be kids and set the stage for an enjoyable school experience. School dances, pep assemblies, after school clubs, study trips, field days and lock-ins provide opportunities for Patch MS students to engage with one another outside of the traditional school day and develop positive communication and social skills in a safe environment. Throughout the year, school counselor and community representatives develop activities to support and engage students in recognition of national social programs such as random acts of kindness week, Autism awareness, and month of the military child. During these times students are challenged to look outside of themselves and identify ways to support and encourage those around them.

The positive spirit exemplified at Patch MS stems from the parents, teachers, and staff members who are valued and supported by the administration and military community. The school administration is dedicated to promoting shared leadership by providing opportunities within our daily schedule to allow teams to function as "schools within a school." All teachers have ownership in the success of the school and are committed to ensuring that our school stands out as an example of how to define middle school success in our system. Patch MS students love coming to school. The school day is filled with fun, positive and engaging academic and social activities and this safe and enjoyable environment sets the stage for tremendous academic growth.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Patch MS espouses the foundational belief that relationships develop through open communication and continuous collaboration. Faculty and staff engage families and community stakeholders in a variety of ways including traditional methods such as e-mail correspondence, regular team conferences with parents and parent-teacher conference days. Also, through our commitment to transparency, we utilize several technological communication resources to keep parents up to date on what is happening in our school and how their student is progressing academically. These resources include our online grading portal (Gradespeed), the online learning management system (Schoology), teacher websites and our Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Facebook page. As a military school, information placed on our websites is limited, and much of the school curriculum is protected. With the need for password protected web environments, we provide parents the necessary assistance in navigating the new online environments. Weekly newsletters keep parents informed of calendared events, school initiatives, extra-curricular activities; annual assessment dates and provides insight into ways they can support their children's learning goals. Teacher websites and team newsletters are also a robust source of information for parents and provide a source of open communication from the classroom. Parents of struggling students are invited to attend team meetings to discuss the challenges their student is facing. This practice creates an environment where everyone works together to develop a plan to ensure student success. Additionally, each team holds quarterly honors celebrations that emphasize academic and social achievements.

Patch MS has a robust Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) of which every teacher is an active member, and over 60% of parents are involved. The PTSA sponsors a monthly "Coffee with the Principal" where parents and community members come and enjoy open communication with the campus administration and discuss successes and challenges related to academics, extra-curricular activities, and school-wide initiatives. This forum is a less formal way to engage in an open dialogue with stakeholders and identify ways to improve our school climate and culture. PTSA members are visible daily in the school providing support for teachers, helping to monitor recess activities, chaperoning study trips and providing tutoring support during advisories. Twice a month PTSA holds "Popcorn Fridays" designed to motivate students as they continue to work toward their goals. Each semester the PTSA holds a book exchange. This popular event encourages students to engage in a lifelong habit of reading.

From inception, the culture of Patch MS embraced the essence of a community school. All stakeholders are invited to share their passions with our students. Volunteers assist with the organization and monitoring of clubs such as Ambassadors, Drama, Adventure, LGBT, Junior Leadership, Student Council, Literature, Newspaper, Debate, Chess, Robotics, Video, Jazz Band, Astronaut, Math Counts, and National Junior Honor Society (NJHS.) Examples of these partnerships include engineers who frequently assist in the development, instruction and implementation of challenges for our robotics team, local leaders sharing experiences and providing support for students interested in developing debate skills, and area musicians who help and tutor our Jazz band members. Organizations such as Community Bank, USAG Stuttgart, the Department of Public Works (DPW), and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) directly support the application of academic learning for our students. Examples of these integrated opportunities include CU4reality. This nine-week financial literacy challenge for our seventh grade students incorporates all core curricular areas. Throughout the project, students develop the skills necessary for managing the challenges of everyday life. By selecting a career path, planning for monthly home and transportation expenses, students begin to understand what living on their own will cost. Another program that provides students with an opportunity to express their ideas and view of the world is the Patriot's Pen writing competition sponsored by the VFW. In this essay contest, students respond to broad topics such as "What does it mean to serve" and their responses are judged for originality, clarity of thought and overall written expression. Additionally, our Science classes are provided support from DPW to beautify our school grounds with the planting of annuals each spring, to coordinate with the instruction of biological concepts. Along with our USAREUR partners, Patch MS students participate in a Warrior Competition Field day as a culminating activity for the entire student body in June.

To capitalize on the unique opportunity our students have in living abroad, Patch MS has developed ongoing partnerships with local German schools. Through these fellowships, facilitators organize student exchange programs several times a year. Students from local schools partner with our students who are

currently enrolled in German language or German Culture classes and are invited to shadow our students through their instructional day. The local schools reciprocate the process providing students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge of German in an authentic academic setting. Another great opportunity our students have to share culture with the local nationals is by performing choral and band concerts at Christmas Markets and Holiday Festivals in and around the county of Baden-Württemberg.

3. Professional Development:

At Patch MS embedded professional development is an essential part of our school structure. We believe that students become smarter if teachers embody the growth mindset. For this reason, we have developed a class schedule that provides daily opportunities for instructional and grade level teaching teams to collaborate. Because we recognize the power of teaming and the impact that collaboration has on developing instructional practices our school invites district instructional specialists as well as our campus teacher leaders to facilitate training sessions. Professional Development during collaboration is continuous and changes depending on the needs of the students and the talents of the team members.

Currently, our school system is undergoing a significant curricular shift in math and literacy, and a great deal of professional development is being provided to support the seamless integration of the newly adopted college and career readiness standards (similar to the Common Core State Standards). This year, DoDEA has provided professional development days to support the integration of Standards of Mathematical Practices (SMPs), close reading strategies and vocabulary development. To support teachers as they work to understand this new outline for learning our campus has identified a Literacy Teacher Leader and a Math Teacher Leader who receive ongoing training and support as local “experts” in the roll out of new curricular and instructional models. These teacher leaders have been very successful in building the entire school’s capacity to improve by providing resources, demonstrating lessons, mentoring novice teachers and modeling continuous learning.

Each year we build on the structures that support continuous improvement by focusing on one global aspect of best practices of middle-level instruction. Building on the previous year’s emphasis, which was to establish campus structures that support life-long learning, this year the emphasis has been on ensuring authentic, standards-based instruction designed to assist students as they deepen their applicable knowledge of content skills. In support of the CCRS Math and Literacy roll out, teaching teams conduct collaborative case studies on student success rates within their instructional groupings and compile strategies for improvement to share with colleagues. This level of action research provides the observational research necessary to identify struggling students and facilitate the process of identifying and providing strategic support .

At Patch MS all staff members participate in ongoing professional development. In our special education department, we have integrated a program to support the development of para professionals to assist them in expanding their role into that of team teachers. The sessions include basic training in pedagogy, behavioral management, and the development of instructional support strategies that provide these valued professionals with an arsenal of tools that enable them to support our special needs students both in and out of the classroom. Patch MS also provides AVID tutors, guest teachers and volunteers with a brief induction at the beginning of the school year to welcome them to our team and identify key personnel to support them as they serve.

4. School Leadership:

Patch Middle School has developed a collaborative leadership model rooted in culturally responsive management which emphasizes trust and high expectations for teaching and learning. The school is designed around shared leadership standards of practice to ensure that all stakeholders have an equal voice in the policies and procedures that govern our school.

The administrative team is made up of two dynamic leaders who share a commitment to ensuring that the faculty and staff are actively engaged in the decision-making processes and feel trusted and supported as they work to ensure the success of each child. The principal and assistant principal share responsibilities of

management and instructional leadership for the campus, by facilitating the development of focus groups to assist with the design of a school culture that focuses on the mission of engaging and preparing students for success in a global community. Each grade level team has an appointed team leader who meets with the principal once a month to discuss the challenges facing the teams and troubleshoot way to improve student engagement in the academic and social processes. The assistant principal works directly with the special education CSC to ensure that our campus structure well supports all students with disabilities.

Additionally, both administrators work with counselors and school psychologist to assist teams in identifying struggling students, both academically and socially, through Student Support Teams (SST). Through data obtained from daily observations of students within the departments and grade level teams, the SST process is used to design a clear plan for instructional and emotional support before referral for additional services. Team time is embedded into the instructional day, so that core members can meet regularly to discuss student progress and needs, while extended team meeting takes place either bi-weekly or virtually depending on the team. Teams use Schoology, Gradespeed and or parent newsletters to ensure that parents remain a vital part of the team and to ensure that their insights are always a part of the instructional process.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The wolf is the mascot of Patch Middle School and at Patch Middle School - there are no lone wolves. Our common goal in our school is that whether in the classroom or at recess, no student is left behind. To ensure that everyone has a mentor, our advisory teachers create trust, an emotional attachment, a guardianship and loyalty within their advisory groups at the beginning of the year. At Patch Middle School, Pack Leaders (advisers) are the loyal guardians of their pack (advisories). That bond is reinforced when they meet together every other day. As a pack, advisory students learn to work, grow, help and rely on each other. The students support each other as family members and no one is left alone.

Advisers ensure that every student in their advisory is individually cared for, mentored and supported. Pack Leaders watch their students carefully and support is given when students face challenges that they do not have the tools to deal with. Social, emotional, family or academic problems are usually first identified by the adviser but sometimes by other staff members. In either case, the person who is involved in every step of helping the child is the advisory teacher. The advisory teacher advocates for the student, ensures actions are appropriate and follows through with parents and team members. Counselors, teachers, psychologists, administrators and parents work together with the advisory teacher to individually help students develop tools that address discipline issues, missing assignments, social problems, stress, classroom behavior and any other obstacle a student is facing. Academically, the adviser also continuously monitors students academic progress and alerts fellow team members and parents when a student is falling behind or needs to be challenged.

This concept is also fundamental among teachers and administrators. Trusting, supporting and relying on the family of teachers helps create the positive climate vital to the success of Patch Middle School. Administrators work alongside teachers as they collectively engage in professional development and work to ensure that they are supported in their classrooms and that they can rely on their colleagues when they need assistance. The support extends to every member of the school community. There are no lone wolves. Our Pack philosophy, together with high expectations, creates a welcoming and safe environment for positive social growth and high academic achievement.