

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 Dr. Lorelee A. Hill

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

Official School Name Dodgen Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1725 Bill Murdock Road

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

City Marietta State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30062-5959

County Cobb County

Telephone (770) 578-2726 Fax (770) 578-2728

Web site/URL http://www.cobbk12.org/Dodgen E-mail loralee.hill@cobbk12.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Chris Ragsdale E-mail Chris.Ragsdale@cobbk12.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cobb County School District Tel. (770) 426-3300

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. David Chastain
(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):
- 68 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 25 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 16 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 109 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	208	195	403
7	209	227	436
8	198	228	426
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	615	650	1265

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 20 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 66 % White
 - 3 % 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: 6%

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	42
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	31
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	73
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	1226
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.060
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5 %
57 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Gujarti, Hebrew, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %
Total number students who qualify: 63
8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
155 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.

- 9 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 9 Emotional Disturbance
- 2 Hearing Impairment
- 8 Mental Retardation
- 73 Multiple Disabilities
- 4 Orthopedic Impairment
- 45 Other Health Impaired
- 68 Specific Learning Disability
- 5 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 4 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	5
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	42
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	27
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.	3

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 30:1
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	97%	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 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 X
If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Dodgen Middle School's mission is to promote academic excellence, individual responsibility, resourcefulness, creativity, mutual respect, and self-esteem in a healthy, nurturing environment.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Dodgen Middle School is a public middle school serving sixth through eighth grade students in Cobb County, Georgia. We are a suburban community located twenty minutes from downtown Atlanta. To state it simply, families seek to be a part of this community because of Dodgen’s reputation as a high-performing school that prepares students for future success in either their zoned high school, magnet school, and beyond. Our students are high-achieving, with over 50% qualifying each year for gifted services. We are fortunate to have the support of community and business stakeholders who are a vested part of our decision making process. With high expectations for student success, parents, teachers, and the community are actively involved – donating the resources of time, energy, and financial support in abundance. Our Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) prides itself on high member participation of 1,879 community, staff, parents, and students. Our faculty continually seeks opportunities for staff development and engages in ongoing school-based professional learning, participates in district-level trainings, and regularly attends national seminars.

collaborate with others. It is a transformative physical space where furniture and areas are used creatively to support learning and increase access to technology. Our Media Specialist ensures the space is welcoming to all, as it is the nucleus of the school. Multiple classes utilize the space for a variety of instructional purposes throughout the day, while serving students' needs for a high daily circulation. Our students love to read as evidenced by recognition received as the number one middle school in Georgia for reading over one million hours in a four-month period in the 2016 Scholastic's Summer Reading Program.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Dodgen’s greatest challenge lies in how we balance rigor, relevance, and engagement for high achievement while ensuring progression and growth.

Our school improvement plan is centered on our use of Professional Learning Communities (PLC). PLC’s are guided by three questions: What do we want our students to know? How will WE know when they have learned it? What is our response when they have AND have not? Teachers document their discussion using a school-wide form, “Collaborative Planning for Instructional Units and Data Collection.” This form provides teachers with the ability to log qualitative and quantitative data and document student performance to plan quality instructional experiences and support learning. One focus this year has been to integrate the use of PLC’s with the Cobb Teaching and Learning System (CTLs). CTLs is a new initiative in our county that places data collection, standards-based assessments, content resources, and professional learning in one central location. Data is used to drive instruction and is gathered through a variety of assessments in all content areas, including universal screeners for math, reading, and standardized testing. Data analysis allows us to identify students throughout the year for enrichment and to offer instructional programs tailored to the needs of our students. Curriculum for academic subjects is based on the Georgia Performance Standards and the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Literacy is valued as one of the most essential skills required for school success. All sixth and seventh grade students are enrolled in a daily reading class. Students read a variety of texts related to current and historical events and use these connections to understand the relevance of these events to their own lives and the world around them.

Dodgen’s language arts curriculum includes domains of reading literature, reading informational text, language, speaking and listening skills, and writing. The department uses a wide range of engagement strategies to support student success including: problem-based learning, debate, higher-order questioning, real-world application of knowledge, and physical movement. Scaffolded lessons on expository, narrative, and argumentative writing are taught using a consistent framework throughout each grade level. Standards are unpacked into smaller, manageable skills and learning targets. The foundational skills acquired in prior grade levels are further reinforced through a selection of cross-curricular texts and vocabulary, guided practice, and modeling. Rigor and relevance coupled with connections to real-world information provide rich learning opportunities focusing on critical thinking skills.

The underlying foundation for each mathematics course is guided by the Standards for Mathematical Practice which challenge students to reason abstractly, attend to precision, model, make viable arguments, and look for patterns. Math instruction includes activities and real-world applications to prepare our students to become informed and responsible members of society. For example, students incorporate inferencing, statistics, data analysis, and scale factor through modeling, blue prints and photography. Backward design is utilized to ensure that the activities, formative assessments, and technology enable student to reach our learning targets. Assessments such as math inventories, Nearpod, i-Respond, district-created Touchstones, Edmodo, and Weebly, in conjunction with tiered assignments, gauge student learning. Advanced math classes are taught at all three grade levels. A variety of interventions are used, such as flexible grouping, math placement changes, math support. Additional before/after school and Beta Club tutoring are used to support students. We offer small group classes with a reduced student-teacher ratio, team taught and coaching models, and math support classes which allows struggling students two math segments per day.

Science instruction uses Problem-Based Learning (PBL's), a student-centered pedagogy in which students learn a concept through the experience of solving an open-ended problem. In addition, science instruction includes hands-on, real world activities and labs, multiple guest speakers, balanced assessments, and differentiated instruction. We offer advanced classes at all three levels including high school credit Physical Science. A variety of clubs and activities that extend science learning through participation in Environmental Club, Science Olympiad, Coding Night, and Java Coding Club are available.

The social studies department teaches civic learning content through the categories of government and economics. Through simulation activities, students are engaged in real-world applications allowing them to experience mock elections, personal finance, and current events. With an emphasis on a collaborative, student-centered approach, students with a variety of learning styles showcase their understanding. Teachers work collaboratively to plan standards-based lessons that promote higher-order thinking, include real-world relevance, and differentiation to meet the needs of all learners. Students build upon prior knowledge through vocabulary development, map skills, and study tools. The curriculum supports this effort by emphasizing civic understandings, critical reading analysis, personal finance skills, and collaboration. Through the Document-Based Questions (DBQ) process, students have the opportunity to hone reading comprehension, primary and secondary source analysis, identification of textual evidence, and use of inferencing skills. Students access a number of online resources, applications, and software, including: TouchCast with green screen technology to present news events, Quizlet Live, Kahoot and Quizizz as online reviews, and Thinglink, and Prezi to present information about religious or ethnic groups. Field trips to Savannah, Atlanta, and the Center for Civil and Human Rights are planned for this school year.

1a. College and Career Readiness

The College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) measures the effectiveness of schools in three areas: progress, achievement, and achievement gap. Our 2016 CCRPI score of 98.4 increased to 99.6 in 2017—the highest middle school score in Cobb County. It is evident that we implement the goals contained in our School Strategic Plan (SSP) deliberately and intentionally. The Governor’s Office of Student Achievement has recognized Dodgen as a recipient of the Gold Award for Greatest Gains and for the Highest Performance school categories. Our SSP includes focused priorities in college and career pathways by increasing reading levels, algebra readiness, and the number of students competing academically at every grade level. College and career readiness is reinforced through a variety of experiences including: STEM Nights, Lockheed Generation Beyond Bus, Hour of Code Night, and fieldtrips to Lockheed Martin and Cobb EMC to connect classroom instruction with real-world applications. With the incorporation of technology, students learn critical 21st century skills necessary to compete and succeed in a global society. As a certified Advanced Placement (AP) school, we use a variety of pre-AP strategies to challenge students and prepare them for future success in college courses.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Dodgen Middle School is committed to providing students with a well-rounded education that allows exploration into areas outside of the core content and a means for expression of their creativity and interests. The courses include the Fine Arts, Visual Arts, Technology, Business, World Languages, and Physical Education and Health classes.

Approximately 70% of eighth grade students meet qualifying criteria on standardized tests and academic achievement to enroll in high school level French and Spanish World Language. World Language explores a variety of topics including use of conversation, grammar, culture, greetings, family, food, and pastimes. World Language provides a thorough review of language structures that students may apply in language arts and other content areas. Students gain knowledge and skills that allow them to communicate with other language speakers in a broader global community. World Language skills enhance students' competitiveness in their educational and professional pursuits. Selected students participate in the annual Foreign Language Association of Georgia Spoken Language Contest. Our students are well-prepared and enjoy a high acceptance rate at specialized foreign language programs at their feeder schools. Students not enrolled in World Languages are enrolled in Origins of Language which provides introductory lessons on the history, literature, and culture of the Latin, Spanish, French, and German languages. The course is designed to give students a glimpse of each culture to provide them with a basis for choosing a world or classical language in their feeder high schools.

Music performance classes include band, chorus, and orchestra. These classes meet daily in all three grade levels with over 96% of the total school population involved in a music program. All groups learn aspects of music reading and performance and offer many opportunities to perform on and off campus, including adjudicated performances. Additionally, each group has consistently excelled in every ensemble, receiving

excellent and superior ratings at the annual Large Group Performance Evaluation (LGPE). Each discipline uses varied grouping in rehearsals to develop critical thinking skills, procedural learning, and the ability to work as a cohesive team. Opportunities for differentiation occur in rehearsals and performances. Students from each group audition and are awarded positions in local, state, and national events. Our Chamber Orchestra recently earned the distinction of National Champions at the National Orchestra Festival.

The Physical Education and Health curriculum focuses on two components: fitness and team/individual sports with an emphasis on sportsmanship. Fitnessgram assessment scores are evaluated to guide instruction on health-related components of fitness (muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, and body mass index). Additionally, students utilize the fitness center to promote lifelong habits. Introductions to a variety of units include volleyball, basketball, flag football, gymnastics, dance, wrestling, team handball, floor hockey, and paddle sports. Units begin with skill development and progress to game play. Topics in Health include nutrition, ATOD (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs), fitness/anatomy, and CPR. Students enroll in one quarter of Physical Education and one quarter of Health per school year. Additionally, many students use time before school for the Badminton Club or intramural activities.

The Technology connections class is a true STEM curriculum. Work is real-world, collaborative, hands-on, and project-driven. Standards covered include the design process with the use of professional design software and 3-D printing for rapid prototyping. Additional standards include manufacturing processes, the concepts of invention and innovation, the Universal Systems Model, a thorough exploration of career fields, and the impact of integrated systems.

In Business Education connection class students gain knowledge about the present-day economy and their role as informed consumers. Additionally, key emphasis is placed on computer literacy as students become proficient in keyboarding, as well as, learning basics of word processing, spreadsheet applications, desktop publishing, and presentation software.

As a connections class, Dodgen's Art program prepares students to be visually creative by providing opportunities to create unique and individualized art projects. Art experiences are designed to provide greater depth and rigor, to refine observational drawing skills, and to develop mastery with a variety of media. Students learn how to use various mediums from 2-D projects in drawing, painting, Batik, and printmaking to 3-D projects in clay, sculpture, and Art installations. STEAM projects provide additional opportunities for the use of technology, cross-curriculum, and collaborative work within the art program.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Each teacher is a member of a Professional Learning Committee (PLC) which analyzes data to guide instructional practices. Teachers have strong pedagogical skills that are relevant and specific to each subject area and use best practices on current research methodologies to increase the student engagement of all learners.

Dodgen has a strong Response to Intervention (RTI) process, facilitated by the school counseling department and led by grade level teacher leaders. The RTI team works in conjunction with the special education department, school psychologist, and social worker meeting monthly to examine student growth and progress. The RTI process removes barriers to learning and identifies specific learning disabilities. This flexible problem-solving model provides assistance to match struggling learners' needs and to develop a plan of action to assist students. In support of the school district's strategic goals to increase student achievement in math and reading while simultaneously closing our achievement gap, we provide specific, targeted instruction to scaffold learning. Math Support classes have a low student-teacher ratio and provide targeted assistance for grade level math standards and foundational skills. The class is taught in tandem with the student's math class and identifies specific deficits that impede acquisition of the curriculum. Flexible grouping, math placement changes, multiple tutoring options, and interventions are used to support students. The Read 180 program offers a blended model of online and face-to-face reading interventions with comprehensive strategies, tools, and assessments to accelerate learning for struggling readers.

Dodgen Middle School employs academic progress monitoring to consistently evaluate students' quarterly

academic performance, state benchmark performance, and historical state testing trends. Students who fail to show mastery and progress in these areas are offered before and after school tutoring, facilitated by teachers and Beta Club students.

Students performing above grade level are served through our Advanced Content program which supports instruction in all academic content areas. The goal of the program is to promote rigorous curricular content in conjunction with critical inquiry, creativity, communication of complex thoughts, and an authentic approach to learning. The balance of curricular depth and breadth are promoted while fostering the development of academic habits and skills. Qualifying students take classes that are more rigorous by enrolling in high school classes offered online or at our local feeder high school, in mathematics, Latin, and science.

Our faculty consists of 29 teachers who have earned Gifted Endorsement Certification. This additional preparation ensures that students receive increased rigor and engagement by using methods, materials, and curriculum appropriate for individuals identified as gifted. The instructional strategies used can be applied universally with the end goal we that assist each student in reaching his or her academic potential.

The CCRPI is Georgia's comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform that promotes college and career readiness for all Georgia public schools. Part of this accountability is measuring the effectiveness of instruction based on student growth. The focus on student growth is a very unique challenge for schools such as Dodgen with a high score in the achievement component of the total CCRPI score. The maximum number of points that a school can earn in this area is 40. In 2017, Dodgen received all 40 points, demonstrating that our teachers prepare all students to meet and exceed standards and targets.

In seventh grade, the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) and the Iowa Test are administered in each subject area. These tests are used as one of the criteria for gifted eligibility and to identify programs to ensure upcoming success on the Georgia Milestones End of Grade Test (EOG). Dodgen scores on these assessments have been the highest in the district for the past two years.

Each year, all students take the EOG assessment. This criterion-referenced test measures how well students have mastered the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. For the 2016-2017 school year, all students are assessed in ELA and math, and eighth grade students are also assessed in science and social studies.

Daily, teachers assess students in a variety of ways including traditional paper and pencil tests, computer-based assessments, face-to-face academic formative assessments, digital portfolios, and presentations. These assessments are used to group students for differentiation purposes, to plan instruction, to pace curriculum, and to gauge student growth. Assessments are also differentiated by content, product, and process. Students have the opportunity to show mastery in a variety of ways. Teachers use the CLTS platform to create standards-based assessments which students take online to provide teachers with immediate feedback about student achievement. Use of the CTLS platform allows for the sharing of assessments among the PLC and with other professionals in the county.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Dodgen Middle School has earned a five-star rating for School Climate, a CCRPI component, based upon survey data for the past two years. Co-workers are family, and the rich, forty plus year tradition of excellence has produced what is referred to in the community as the “Dodgen Way”. Students understand that the staff nurtures them in a safe and supportive environment as they transition from childhood into their teens. Teachers engage students in conversation and show genuine interest in students’ lives, inside and outside of the classroom.

Dodgen students are offered many opportunities to enhance their educational experience. Students are given superb instruction in the Arts and have opportunities to participate in field trips and competitions across the United States. Grade level representatives serve on the Panther Action Committee (PAC) to provide updates on student interest to the administration and perform service projects in the school and community. Local senior living facilities have hosted PAC students, and they are always excited for the next visit from our students. Tutoring and school service hours are provided through our Beta Club. Additionally, students have opportunities to learn more about the world through the Environmental Club, Awareness Club, Lunch Buddies, and civic activities such as, providing meals, shoes, or coats for the less fortunate, and raising money for cancer research. We reestablished the Student Council to serve as a liaison to increase student voice between students and administration. Self-worth, self-respect, and personal responsibility are stressed as well as the need to be understanding, thoughtful and supportive of others. Students are reminded they are in a safe place where they can always ask for help of any kind. Counselors meet with student groups to address student concerns about important issues such as bullying.

Academic success comes through committed teachers, supportive parents, and determined students. Together, we share a vision for academic excellence. Students work diligently in a rigorous academic setting in preparation for their future. Grade level teachers have allotted time for mutual planning, and subjects are vertically planned for student success. Teachers are offered professional development activities and collaborative time for individual professional growth. New staff members are supported through our mentor program, and individual and team milestones are celebrated. Our hospitality committee initiates Friday “Grab-n-Go”, as well as, celebrating birthdays, weddings, births, engagements, and graduations. Meals, gifts, cards, and letters provide support for those who are bereaved or experiencing personal illness. Each teacher is appreciated and supported in every way. In this manner, we feel that our teachers pass on that caring nurture and support to our incredible students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Dodgen Middle School PTSA and administration work to create a well-rounded environment for our parents, community, students, and teachers. The familial and community atmosphere are a substantial part of what makes Dodgen special. The PTSA continually works with the administration with the express purpose and intention of providing the best environment for our students and supporting their educational success.

The Dodgen PTSA membership increased from 1,673 last year to 1,879 this year. This increase is due in large part to an innovative system implemented through our school bookkeeper to transition from paper-based collection of fees to collection via an online toolkit for items such as memberships, student vocabulary books, and event t-shirts.

The participation rate in weekly e-news communications increased from 503 weekly recipients in 2014-2015 to 1,942. In order to support student success we enable our highly trained teachers to focus on the classroom by providing the resources and supplies they need to excel. The Appropriations Committee has approved funds to purchase a broad range of resources to support student success, ranging from water bottle filling stations and science classroom supplies to online curriculum tools and training for our speech-language pathologist and media specialist. PTSA volunteers work tirelessly to provide daily support to the

school staff in the Copy Crew, Learning Commons, and the front office. On an average day, volunteers provide a minimum of 21 hours of support in these three areas. Volunteer recruitment, training, support, and recognition is constantly a priority. PTSA strives to welcome all rising sixth graders who come from five different feeder elementary schools through our rising sixth grade program, a welcome letter, and Dodgen 101. Support is continued through activities such as Panther Day and Open House.

Established in 2015, the Dodgen Foundation funds initiatives for all grade levels and staff that are not typically covered within a school budget. For three consecutive years, the foundation has raised over \$50,000 annually providing PE equipment in the fitness area, enhancements to our learning commons, the purchase of instructional technology, funding for professional learning, and classroom supplies for our teachers.

Local business partners generously support our mission and vision by providing opportunities for student and teacher recognition, field trips, and guest speakers.

Each of these organizations has been instrumental in our many successes and have offered involvement, support, and generosity.

3. Professional Development:

Dodgen Middle School sets the professional growth of its teachers as a priority. We believe that in order to facilitate instruction to students who are ready for 21st century learning, we must provide them with researched based instructional experiences that adequately prepare them. This year our Professional Development was focused on STEAM instruction and learning and Flexible Formative Assessment System (FFAS).

Dodgen teachers explore problem and project-based learning which is one of the major components of STEM education. As we seek to increase STEM based education in Dodgen, we implemented several professional learning opportunities. Teachers in all content areas and grade levels were able to visit five schools selected based on the school's proficient STEM integration. Teachers visited classrooms, collaborated, and visited PLCs. Meetings were held monthly to share STEM strategies and opportunities locally. Teachers received additional professional development trainings with Cobb County STEM and Innovative Practice and with the feeder STEM certified high schools. Components of a STEM lesson were taught, and our Media Specialist provided resources and opportunities to "STEMIFY" their lesson.

Dodgen participated with a cohort of schools to receive professional development as part of a rollout of a new system known as the Flexible Formative Assessment System (FFAS) which provides data teams a tool for assessing student progress on the road to mastery. During monthly trainings, sound assessment practices for constructed and selected response items and effective feedback were presented from the Department of Assessment and Personalized Learning, along with training and support from the Department of Instructional Technology targeted at the use CLTS the assessment platform known as CTLS. With CTLS, teachers utilize a district-wide question bank to create standards-aligned assessments and analyze students based on standards, demographics, and other growth measures.

The Dodgen approach to professional development has been a tiered, differentiated model offering opportunities for teachers to grow in the area of their choice. This has been accomplished through several teacher-facilitated sessions focused on assessment, differentiation, instructional strategies, and effective use of technology. Teachers are required to complete one collaborative walk-through that is planned and intentionally designed to meet personal, professional learning goals. After the walk-through, teachers develop an action plan to incorporate one strategy gleaned from the observation into their instructional plans.

4. School Leadership:

Dodgen is fortunate to have an experienced leadership team that strives to promote an atmosphere of purpose, intention, fun, and family. The Principal's vision is to create opportunities for students to reach their full potential. The Principal believes in shared leadership working with staff and students to develop future leaders.

Our administrative leadership team consists of the Principal, two Assistant Principals (AP's), a Support and Service Administrator (SSA), and a half-time School Leadership Intern (SLI). The administrative team divides responsibilities. The principal is responsible for communication and relationships with our PTSA, Foundation, and the community. In addition, the principal sets the tone and vision for learning and short and long term professional development.

The AP's, SSA, and SLI divide responsibilities among the team. Each AP has the responsibility for curriculum oversight for two or more subject areas, and each has testing or scheduling duties. Discipline is divided by the alphabet according to students' last name. Other responsibilities such as STEM Activities, teacher evaluations, professional development, grades and report cards, FTE, community relations, and parent communication, are divided.

The administrative team collaborates in hiring teachers, creating opportunities for leadership among the staff, and ensuring positive morale. Grade levels, subject areas, and administration meet monthly to plan collaboratively and vertically. PLCs meet weekly during protected planning time to facilitate subject area and grade level meetings transmitting critical communication with administration. PLCs share decision making, ask questions, garner clarifications, and bring concerns to light. Dodgen also has a Leadership Team that consists of the administrators, counselors, teachers, and the Media Specialist which is open for all to attend. This team meets monthly or more often as needed to discuss upcoming events, schedules, school needs, curriculum, and student support.

Highly qualified teachers at Dodgen Middle School serve students with a spectrum of disabilities. The SSA works closely with teachers to monitor student growth and support, coordinate training and support personnel, and recruit district coaches to assist in providing specialized programs, assistive technology, or increasing visuals. The primary responsibility of the SSA is to oversee the large Special Education Department, ensure IEP compliance, mentor and assist teachers, write eligibilities, participate in the RTI Tier 3 process, and monitor all aspects of Special Education.

The SLI oversees textbooks, busses, and In School Suspension, as well as evaluations, scheduling, and testing for connections teachers.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Academic excellence is a hallmark of Dodgen Middle School. Our staff strives daily to provide our students with a well-rounded education that allows them to grow personally and to stretch intellectually under the guidance of a faculty that is completely committed to the care and education of each student.

Our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) have a laser focus on purposeful and prudent planning, instruction, and learning. Each student's performance is evaluated and addressed thoroughly to create the appropriate academic response. School funded tutoring is offered to students who are identified based on academic performance on high stakes and teacher created assessments in math and ELA. PLCs have rich conversations about best practices for gifted and accelerated learners. One-third of our teachers have additional training in gifted education and provide support to other teachers on how to best engage gifted learners. The result has been the creation of rigorous curriculum model for all students. Achievement was evidenced in our 2015-2016 student performance data progress points indicator for growth. The benchmark for this indicator set by the state is a maximum of forty points; however, Dodgen exceed that scoring 45 points. We exceeded the state benchmark for students who demonstrate typical and high academic growth.

One-third of our eighth grade students are enrolled in classes for high school credit, and 60% of those students take more than one high school credit class. Several students physically attend classes at our feeder high school throughout the day. Our school district has five Magnet schools and two STEM academies, which accept students by application only. Dodgen students are represented in all of these programs, further confirming that our students are prepared to meet the challenge of any advanced academic program.

Literacy is one of the largest indicators of academic success. In response we offer 70% of our students a reading class that is differentiated for advanced and struggling readers. Our Learning Commons remains the literacy hub of the school. This is evidenced by our recent national recognition by the Scholastic Summer Reading Program in which our students read for 1,002,287 minutes, in a four month reading cycle.

Every student has access to success at Dodgen because of our highly inclusive environment. Whether we are responding to diverse content level options or offering clubs and activities that support adolescent growth, development and maturity, Dodgen is about One Team, One Goal... Student Success!