

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Audrey Becker

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

Official School Name Eugene A. Tighe Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 7804 Amherst Avenue

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

City Margate City      State NJ      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 08402-1802

County Atlantic County

Telephone (609) 822-2353      Fax (609) 822-8456

Web site/URL http://www.margateschools.org/      E-mail abecker@margateschools.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. John DiNicola      E-mail jdinicola@margateschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Margate City School District      Tel. (609) 822-2080

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

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

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

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

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

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. 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

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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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 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	27	15	42
6	23	21	44
7	23	19	42
8	17	25	42
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	90	80	170

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 90 % 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: 2%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	184
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.022
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11 %  
Total number students who qualify: 19
8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
26 Total number of students served

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

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed               |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 14:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes  No   
If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Our mission is to meet the needs of our learners by providing an environment that cultivates academic acquirement, social and emotional capacity, and community conscientiousness.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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The Eugene A. Tighe Middle School is one of two schools in the PreK-8 Margate City School District, featuring a dedicated staff and a supportive community. What makes our school special is its small school "neighborhood" atmosphere affording the students an optimal educational and developmental environment. Our current enrollment is just under 170 students in grades 5 through 8 with 26 certificated staff members. Quality education is a high priority for the families that choose to call Margate City home. The combination of an experienced, dedicated staff with supportive, involved families create a system that fosters learning and growth for all our students.

The Eugene A. Tighe Middle School strives to meet the needs of its learners by providing a balanced and rigorous curriculum as our children transition from elementary to high school. Student achievement includes academic success, social and emotional growth, student responsibility for learning and behavior that benefits a positive school environment, and the ability to use critical thinking to navigate real life situations. Our teachers and staff offer a developmentally responsive program that addresses the unique characteristics and needs of each student. Being a small school, our students develop supportive relationships with caring educators who are committed to the unique instructional and social needs of each child. A deep commitment to middle school philosophy, standards-based curriculum, and a positive school climate all merge together to create a school environment that encourages students to pursue new challenges and learning experiences.

A typical student day includes a challenging curriculum in the core areas of mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies. Students also explore the areas of multimedia technology, Spanish, health, physical education, visual and performing arts. Each teacher plans differentiated assignments within their content area to challenge our high achieving and gifted individuals, as well as to scaffold learning and provide success for our students in need of a stronger foundation. The staff collaborates to create dynamic and innovative lessons that include interdisciplinary and enrichment projects. Instructional technology can be found in every classroom and embedded in a multitude of activities, which has transformed the delivery of our instruction. The media center houses a collection of print, non-print, and online materials to support the curriculum, sustain student interest, and serve as a focal point for instruction and research. The media literacy curriculum helps students develop the research and presentation skills utilized throughout their academic program. Every subject area follows district developed curricula and is aligned with state and national standards, and all subjects are designed to prepare the students for their high school careers and beyond.

Our inclusive philosophy affords all students an opportunity for learning. All staff members work together to include students with special learning needs in all aspects of the school. Intervention and focused instructional support is provided in mathematics and English language arts daily. A co-teaching approach to instruction can be found in many of our classrooms throughout the day. Our district Child Study Team develops student plans with each individual child's unique needs in mind, and our school Intervention and Referral Services team meets weekly to monitor and support all students. Communication between school and home is essential and is maintained through the parent portal of our student information systems software, teacher webpages, monthly publications, postings to the school website, and weekly informative folders. Although we are a small school, we are proud of the diverse programs and supports we provide for our students' academic and emotional growth.

Along with academic endeavors, Eugene A. Tighe Middle School teachers competently attend to the social and emotional growth of each student. Our building-wide assemblies and events, extracurricular activities, interscholastic sports, and variety of clubs have been incorporated to enhance the student needs of affiliation, empowerment and achievement. The Tighe Pride initiative is at the core of our building atmosphere. This program strives to create a positive school climate where quality character traits can develop and students can be their psychologically best through good decision making and coping skills.

The Margate community is actively involved with the school. Parents frequently visit Eugene A. Tighe Middle School throughout the day, working as volunteers, participating in school-wide activities, and

assisting with special Margate Education Foundation projects and fundraisers. Our middle school also enjoys a positive and collaborative relationship with the Margate Recreation Department and our local Fire and Police Departments. The Dr. Dominick A. Potena Performing Arts Center, which resides in our building, is a state-of-the-art facility that is available not only for school assemblies, presentations, and theatrical plays, but for a wide array of community events as well.

At Eugene A. Tighe Middle School, we value the relationship between staff, students, parents, and community members. We continually strive to improve the overall learning experiences of our students, and are fortunate to have a faculty of dedicated and knowledgeable educators who strive to be continuous learners. Our staff is committed to implementing a comprehensive academic program in a supportive and nurturing environment to benefit all our students.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

As a standards-driven school, the creation of the National Common Core Standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, followed by the Next Generation Science Standards, transformed the content focus and proficiency expectations for all students in the four core curricular areas of Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies.

First and foremost, the Common Core Standards created a shift in ELA instruction that transferred the focus from fiction and theatrical selections to informative and career readiness applications of text analysis. This profound shift not only impacted what was taught and how it was taught in ELA, but it also strengthened the students' ability to comprehend and apply academic text in Science and Social Studies classes. When our school first adopted the new standards for ELA, it was done following extensive administrative research and planning. The process began a full year before implementation and had three critical components. The first was the selection of Literacy materials that offered rigorous learning activities, balanced instructional content, authentic text selections, embedded technology applications, and challenging assessment choices that would support our standards-based curriculum. Our students were exposed to complex text, but were still encouraged to enjoy self-selected recreational reading choices. Reading comprehension strategies and writing skills and procedures were systematically taught through a variety of research proven methods. The second task was to provide staff development on the new standards to ensure instructors understood how they would transform learning in their Literacy classrooms, while also granting teachers time and training with the new Literacy program to fully embrace the pacing, focus, and outcomes expected with a successful implementation. The third task was to purchase classroom sets of laptops for every ELA teacher to guarantee that students would be using technology daily to learn, produce, and share. As we approach the fifth year since initial implementation, our students continue to improve their proficiency analyzing a variety of text, citing factual evidence, and applying critical thinking to communicate their purpose.

The Social Studies curriculum introduces our middle school students to Ancient and Medieval World History and United States Civics, while expanding their knowledge of American History up until the late 1800's. Project-based learning is often utilized as a summative evaluation tool to increase student engagement and assess student understanding. Interdisciplinary connections to Literacy are commonplace, as students often complete research and communicate their findings through written responses, multimedia displays, or oral presentations. Some sample culminating projects include a History Fair, a Cultural Fair, a Colonial Job Fair, a Medieval Festival, and the Ancient Olympic Games. Every four years, the entire student body participates in special activities to learn about the Presidential Election process, which concludes with an energetic school-wide Election Fair. The Social Studies teachers attend workshops each year to cultivate new ideas to enhance their programs. Recently, one teacher learned how to use the art of debate in the classroom, after which she successfully incorporated the strategy into her unit on the Bill of Rights. Now eighth grade students confidently defend their point of view and articulate counter arguments utilizing factual evidence in a manner that is impressive to witness! In addition to the planned curriculum, the teachers frequently begin class with a discussion of current events, as the children need to understand the world around them. Respect of other cultures, religions, and traditions is necessary as these young citizens grow to become productive members of a larger society that value diversity. Age-appropriate lessons on the Holocaust and other genocides equip the students with knowledge and empathy to effectuate more socially responsible citizens. Humanitarian efforts facilitated through the Social Studies classroom, both in the local community or abroad through non-profit groups, are encouraged to build a new generation of young people dedicated to helping others.

Our mathematics program went through a complete revision with the introduction of the Common Core Mathematics Standards. Moving from a spiral based content model that built subject matter complexity in subsequent grades, we thoughtfully converted our program to the grade level specific content prescribed by the Common Core prototype. New materials were reviewed for quality and completeness, then purchased and implemented in phases to best transition the new standards into the classroom while minimizing gaps in student foundational learning. Our school had always prioritized the importance of providing our students

with a strong conceptual understanding in mathematics. With the shift from a spiral approach to a prescribed bank of grade level topics, it allowed us to enhance our instruction to allow more time for hands on learning and investigatory problem solving opportunities. Critical thinking and the ability to clearly articulate the method utilized to find solutions is just as significant as finding the correct answer. As was done in our English classrooms, we purchased classroom sets of laptops for every math teacher to guarantee daily access to technology applications. Our school subscribes to a variety of online mathematics software programs to further supplement classroom learning, as some software includes grade level specific content while other programs focus on computational fluency and basic awareness of foundational ideas such as percents, decimals, and fractions. In addition, we continue to offer accelerated mathematics programs to best meet the needs of our high achieving, motivated math students. Our goal is to enable as many of our students as possible to complete Algebra successfully prior to high school, and we offer a number of supports to achieve this goal. Last year we added a summer math class offered to our advanced mathematics students to provide them additional learning and preparation during their vacation. Additionally, we added a second teacher to our after school Homework Club in the media center to guarantee a certified math instructor is available for both high achieving and struggling students. For our students that find math difficult, we are fortunate to offer math sections with two full time certified math instructors to daily teach, remediate, and differentiate to best help all of our students achieve growth and better comprehension.

As with ELA and Mathematics, the Science program we offer at the middle school has evolved since incorporating the Next Generation Science Standards into the fabric of our STEM instruction. Previously, we taught a general Science course in fifth and sixth grades followed by Life Science and Physical Science in the subsequent grades. We have now integrated all branches of Science content in each grade, while embedding technology and engineering practices into activities and projects. Inquiry based learning through authentic lab experiments, both quick investigations and longer research projects, have become a regular learning experience within a typical Science class. Extracurricular clubs have been added, included Family STEM Night, Design Squad Global, and Computer Coding. Our students are provided a broad foundation in Science content knowledge along with Engineering proficiencies to prepare them for future challenging studies in math, computers, and the sciences.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Middle school is a time when many young people develop new interests and long to investigate new topics. We have developed a middle school program of study that exposes students to a variety of disciplines while still balancing the extensive amount of learning required in the core areas of English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

Foreign language, specifically Spanish, is taught in every grade. The class is held three days a week in grades five and six and four days a week in grades seven and eight. As a full year course that focuses instruction on the three standards-based modes of Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational communication, our instructors teach the students an integrated curriculum that improves their personal proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening in the Spanish language. While other middle schools have reduced their foreign language programs to the bare minimum as required by the state, we have continued to provide courses that expose our students to a second language and foreign cultures to better prepare them for global citizenship.

Our middle school related arts curriculum has evolved over time as it continues to meet the interests of our students, while delivering a variety of state required standards. Students in grades five through eight complete a marking period in each of our three related art subjects: Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Life Skills. The curriculum in each grade builds upon previous learning while expanding skill and knowledge acquisition in all three areas. Visual Arts incorporates robotics, 3D printing, multimedia creation, and other technology applications in a variety of projects, while still providing students instruction in Art History, classic art elements, and fine art mediums such as watercolors, etchings, ceramics, and paper mache. Performing Arts teaches students to read music and perform selections on a variety of instruments, including electronic keyboards. Theater production, choreography, and performance skills are taught as part of the course, along with the study of musical genres and performers from the past. Life Skills builds upon the traditional home economics class by teaching food preparation skills through recipes for cooking and

baking, while also delivering units of study in Financial Literacy and Career Awareness to address personal economics and future career goals. Small class sizes and highly trained educators have made our related arts classes enjoyable, valued, and innovative.

Due to the high performance demands and social pressures facing many young adults, student wellness and health has become a critical component of our middle school environment. In addition to a comprehensive positive school climate program delivered by our entire staff, we have designed a physical education and health curriculum that meets the physical, mental, and emotional needs of our students. All children enrolled at Eugene A. Tighe Middle School take physical education every other school day, while also having a separate Health class on either Monday or Friday each week. Fitness goals and healthy choices are incorporated into the foundations of both courses. Physical education further imparts good sportsmanship and teamwork practices through the study of various team athletics, with active participation by all students. The Health curriculum teaches students about their changing bodies, the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse, and provides guidance with the emotional and social challenges that face all young people today. In addition to the expertise of our licensed teachers, our children in grades five and eight also complete a ten-week class on substance abuse prevention led by local officers from the Margate Police Department to incorporate a community connection and Public Safety presence in the school.

Last but certainly not least is the integration of technology throughout the school. Every math, English, and Science classroom is equipped with a full set of Chromebooks or laptops for daily use by students. Spanish and Social Studies classes share portable Chromebook carts to facilitate online learning and computer applications. All staff and students utilize Google Apps for Education to provide access to technology programs and sharing capabilities on all Internet devices both in school and at home. Interactive whiteboards, document cameras, and other instructional technology devices are embedded in the daily delivery of instruction to best facilitate a broad range of teaching methods. Instructional software and online textbook resources are used by students to learn and assess content knowledge in a variety of subject areas in all grades.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

The strength of Eugene A. Tighe Middle School begins with our staffing structure. The Margate City Board of Education has funded the administration's request to provide small class sizes in all grades, with most classes ranging between 10 and 15 students. This allows for a tremendous amount of interaction among teacher and student and also ensures that no student 'gets left behind'. Our school also offers two math and English classes in each grade that are co-taught daily by two highly qualified instructors. This model provides our basic skills and mainstreamed special education students a tremendous amount of variety in the instructional delivery of content and in the grouping methods utilized in the classroom. Additionally, our related arts classes are extremely small in size to allow the teacher to cover a large amount of content during the single marking period class.

With high quality staffing in place, a goal was made to improve the instructional delivery and evaluation methods applied in the classroom. The Principal delivered a year long staff development program for the math and English teachers to guide them in using a variety of strategies to best support all students in the co-taught classroom, which has been reflected in improved state assessment scores. Formal classroom observations of teaching staff are used to carefully analyze the overall environment created by each teacher, to provide detailed feedback on their strengths and weaknesses, and to conclude with honest and constructive conferences. Teachers value this experience and appreciate being recognized for their strong job performance. Beyond formal evaluations, the Principal and the Supervisor of Instruction frequently visit classrooms to observe learning activities or to monitor student engagement. This practice enables them to design professional learning workshops, articulation meetings, and mentoring relationships to strengthen instructional practices or classroom management skills that are identified as in need of improvement. Periodic faculty meetings are also used to depart new strategies in pedagogy to staff and to inform them about new methods to support the varying academic and behavioral needs of the students. Focus on effective differentiation in content, process, and product is an ongoing discussion between administration and teachers to benefit all learners. Student achievement on classroom evaluations, standardized assessments, and benchmark exams are dissected and audited for use by the instructors. For example, each

fall students take standards-based assessments developed by teachers using online software databases in all content areas. The test items are selected to measure previous knowledge and provide the teacher with a personalized pretest result for each child. Utilizing these outcomes, the teacher can quickly learn about each student's strengths and weaknesses and apply it to differentiate learning in the classroom. Additionally in math and English classes, the fall assessment data is compared to the student's achievement on the previous year's state exams to further analyze each child's instructional level. These results are also shared with the school administration to track student growth when compared to the correlated posttest results given at the end of the year. As these assessments are given online, access to the results and documentation of student performance is better achieved school-wide. New technologies are constantly investigated and purchased to provide the seamless integration of hardware and software in the daily school lives of the children. In summary, school leadership asserts that the achievement of the entire student body is directly proportional to the expertise and dedication of the school staff, so all are inspired to be the best educator possible.

Eugene A. Tighe Middle School provides many layers of support for struggling or remedial students. Beyond the co-taught English and math classes previously mentioned, students receive intensive individual support and monitoring through our Child Study Team, our Intervention and Referral Services team, our 504 team, and our Gifted team. Each school-based team of educators includes case managers that closely oversee the achievement and growth of identified students. The case managers also communicate frequently with the parents of these children to encourage support at home while providing information about their child's performance. Working in tandem with these support teams, there are programs in the school designed to provide aid or enrichment to all students. Every day during the children's recess period, the school opens the media center for students that want to complete schoolwork, read quietly, or work on the computers. There is also a Peer Tutoring program offered twice a week in each grade during the children's lunch and recess period, where a teacher mentor pairs up struggling students with peers that are strong in certain subject areas. Additionally, there is a Learning Lounge classroom staffed by a special education teacher that work directly with students in need of additional instruction during the lunch and recess period. Gifted students work each week with a Mentor Teacher to investigate new topics and complete challenging projects outside the regular curriculum. Another option open to any interested student is our after school Homework Club. This 90-minute period, offered three days a week, is supervised by two teachers and provides a quiet, orderly environment to study, complete work, use the computers, or receive instruction from the teacher supervisors. Many of our students use these programs on a regular basis to complete work and prepare for assessments, which transfers to better work ethic and achievement. The combination of high quality programs, coupled with teams of educators that monitor the growth of children both above and below grade level, has resulted in increased levels of achievement for all students.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

As with many positive school climate initiatives, our program at Eugene A. Tighe Middle School is built upon the premise that we reward students for good behavior, academic achievement, and strong attendance. We make our approach school specific as each year there is an overarching theme tied into the methods of student recognition. Sample themes from the past few years include Tighe Super Heroes, TEAM Tighe, and this year's theme of CAMP Tighe. Our current theme is based on the fundamental philosophy that Tighe School is "a place where Children Achieve their Maximum Potential (CAMP)." On the first day of school, we introduce the new theme as part of the students' welcome assembly. The CAMP Tighe theme organizes each grade level into a different color-coded camp groups, that earn badges based on sixteen positive character traits. Students earn individual badges through recognition from the staff in the school. The number of badges earned each marking period are tallied and rewards are given to both individuals and camp groups that demonstrate top achievement. We also plan team building activities that bring together the entire school, staff and students alike, to invite them to complete creative and challenging activities to earn awards for their camp. Each marking period is celebrated by hosting an assembly to recognize academic success for Honor and Merit Roll, along with badges earned as part of the CAMP Tighe program. These assemblies honor many students for a variety of positive achievements and behaviors that we hope to encourage.

In addition to our annual school climate building theme, the Principal plans for multiple assembly programs each year to expose the students to quality motivational or informational speakers on important topics. Each fall we have a professional speaker that talks to the students about positive life choices including respect, empathy, anti-bullying, and healthy decision making practices. We also plan presentations on a variety of social and emotional topics that face middle school children, such as the safe use of social media, emotional health and wellness lessons to limit the occurrence of suicidal ideation, and demonstrating respect and consideration for others' religious beliefs. The Principal also turnkeys topics of importance to the staff through faculty meetings, to make them better equipped to support the social/emotional needs of the students.

Finally, Eugene A. Tighe Middle School values the ideas and contributions of its building staff. Clear and consistent communication practices are implemented to respect the lessons and planning needs of a dedicated staff. The Principal is open and receptive to feedback and suggestions from staff members, as their experience and ideas are thoughtfully considered. Over time this has created an environment in which the faculty feel that they are valuable members of the school community.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

The Eugene A. Tighe School strives to make parents and community members feel welcome and appreciated. The Principal leads Parent Curriculum Council meetings a minimum of three times each year to share information on school programming and to gather feedback from parents. These meetings offer the staff and parents time to share concerns, highlight successes, and identify goals for the future. In addition, the Principal hosts Tighe School Tours a few days each year. These tours are done while school is in session, so parents can see the environment and the learning in action. Suggestions and requests from parents are welcomed, carefully considered by administration, and often lead to improvements in the school that benefit all the students.

Frequently, the school holds special events for the students that incorporate community volunteers. We have an annual Fitness Day, where parents and members of the local Fire and Police Departments supervise various fitness stations under the direction of our physical education teacher. Each homeroom rotates through the stations and completes each activity with the help of these community volunteers. Another popular event each year is our "Dodging Drugs" Dodgeball Tournament. Teams of students participate in this event that focuses on the message of staying drug and alcohol free. Many community groups sponsor or volunteer during this event, including the school staff, the Margate Police, Fire, Public Works, and

Community Recreation Departments, and the Longport-Margate Municipal Drug Alliance organization.

Our school also benefits from community volunteers that deliver academic and social programs for the students. We have a very active group of local ladies that plan and deliver lessons in the fine arts each year to all grades as part of the Art Goes to School organization. Our parent led Margate Education Foundation sponsors school dances, after school activities, and educational assemblies open to all the students. We also welcome retired educators to assist in our media center with the circulation and organization of the materials. Additionally, we coordinate with trained officers from the Margate Police Department who deliver ten weeks of lessons to our fifth and eighth grade students as part of the LEAD (Law Enforcement Against Drugs) curriculum.

Finally, we have a very active student body that frequently holds fundraising events to benefit local and national non-profit organizations. For example, our Student Council holds a food drive and a toy drive every holiday season for local needy families. They make sandwiches every couple of months to donate to a local rescue mission. Our National Junior Honor Society members raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society each year. Our social studies teachers organize activities to honor local Veterans, as well as to send letters or care packages to members of the active military servicing overseas. The teachers often plan projects to encourage our students to volunteer with younger or older community members. Examples include having our seventh and eighth graders read to all the Elementary classrooms for Read Across America Day, and our Peer Tutoring advisor orchestrating an intergenerational 'social' between eighth grade volunteers and senior citizens at local senior living facility.

In summary, the compilation of these activities creates a school environment that welcomes and respects all ages and groups within our community. Volunteerism and community service by students and staff is encouraged, while parents and local organizations are invited to participate in many of our school functions. We believe that this setting of inclusion and respect for others builds character and social responsibility in the children during their middle school years.

### **3. Professional Development:**

At Eugene A. Tighe Middle School, we utilize a highly developed model of professional collaboration, communication, and development to encourage instructional leadership and contemporary teaching approaches. Each week, staff members participate in structured meetings and tasks that include building-wide faculty meetings, content-specific department meetings, grade-level planning meetings, or other assignment specific tasks. Faculty meetings address ongoing building management and efficiency, while also acting as an avenue to deliver staff development on key topics impacting student growth and wellness. As the building instructional leader, the Principal researches new educational approaches, along with social and emotional issues impacting students, and disseminates this knowledge to the staff through faculty meetings. Department meetings allow discipline-specific discussions on curriculum implementation and monitoring, project-based learning, and assessment techniques to enhance the delivery of the specific content knowledge. Grade level meetings allow teacher teams time to discuss individual student performance, behavior, and unique needs to best create a program of growth and support for all. Periodically, district level committees focus on curriculum design, vertical articulation, technology, or other district needs to involve stakeholders in broad decision-making tasks.

In addition to weekly meetings, the district provides multiple half and full day in-service programs each year. Administrators gather feedback from staff to evaluate areas of need and design learning opportunities to address the educators' professional development. Being a small district, we are able to design and deliver differentiated staff education that encourages the individual growth of our educators while improving the learning environment in the school. Teachers may also attend out of district workshops and conferences designed for their specific content or classroom areas of interest. The district encourages professional learning by funding these experiences and providing release time as necessary.

Finally, online staff development software is used to deliver training on a variety of mandatory safety topics to all staff in an efficient and effective manner. Staff members complete these trainings during scheduled intervals throughout the year at their convenience. This component of our professional

development model allows for the delivery of necessary content to the staff without sacrificing valuable common meeting time better used for collaboration and professional growth.

In summary, our staff constantly strives to enhance their pedagogy as educators, which in turn improves the learning experiences of our students. A well-balanced and multifaceted professional development approach, supported by administration and funded by the district, is essential to maintain cogent instruction, activities, and outcomes in all classrooms school wide.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

The Eugene A. Tighe Middle School Principal, who is also the Director of Curriculum for the district, and the Supervisor of Instruction work closely on a daily basis to ensure the highest quality learning environment for the students. All facets of a safe and effective middle school setting are personally monitored by these two leaders to guarantee the finest school possible.

The Principal, who recently studied for and passed her School Superintendent exam for future licensing, has researched Marzano and other contemporary educators to incorporate the best leadership practices into her repertoire. Staff development, teacher observations, school safety protocols, student intervention practices for academic and behavioral struggles are just a few examples of the activities led by the Principal. Delegation of tasks is only an option when it would be in the best interest of the student, otherwise the Principal is directly involved. The Principal also searches for opportunities to involve parents and other community volunteers in the school setting. Suggestions from parents, staff, and students for improving existing programs, accommodating to support student needs, or implementing new activities and experiences into the school day are always thoughtfully considered by the school leadership.

Although the Principal is intimately involved in all activities in the building, the ongoing success of the school could not occur without the attention and expertise of the Supervisor of Instruction. This twelve-month administrative leader provides the strong foundation upon which all other activities prosper. The Supervisor manages all educational purchases, revises and designs curricular plans, guides staff with the effective implementation of instructional strategies, materials, and technology, and assists the Principal with differentiated student schedules and supports to best meet the children's individual needs. Furthermore, the Supervisor of Instruction coordinates all local and state testing, distributes data from these assessments, and advises staff on analysis techniques and the resulting instructional implications.

With the backing and encouragement of the two building administrators, teachers and support personnel in the school are empowered to initiate leadership roles with the children and within the school setting. There are Intervention Teams for each grade level, led by a teacher case manager, that closely tracks struggling student growth, plans school-based aid, and communicates with the home. The school nurse leads our 504 Team to create and implement educational support plans for our medically disabled children. Content-area teacher leaders conduct Department Meetings that address discipline-specific topics and plan for improved curricular programs. These are just a few examples of how the dependable and expansive leadership example set by the Principal and Supervisor has developed the leadership roles among staff members, which in turn has improved the learning opportunities and support experienced by the students and improved the overall school environment.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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As the future life and career competencies of our students evolve, so must the methods by which we educate our young people. Our staff is dedicated to providing every child a robust learning environment that supports or challenges them based on their individual needs. In order to meet this goal, the entire community of Eugene A. Tighe Middle School bands together to continually improve the experiences of our young learners; this community includes the faculty, parents, local volunteers, and student leaders. Ultimately, the building administration contemplates the requisite academic, social, and emotional condition desired for a child to successfully transition from elementary school to high school, and determines the best programs and local resources to achieve this mission. In essence, we support our version of the Whole Child Approach as a school model.

It may sound cliché to claim that a school subscribes to the precept “No Child Left Behind”, but in the case of Eugene A. Tighe Middle School that assertion is what fundamentally sets us apart from other schools. The staff endeavors to truly know each child, both as a learner and as a person. We team together to plan ways to help all students meet their academic potential, while likewise valuing them for strong character traits and guiding them with healthy decision making tools. High standards, critical thinking, effective communication skills, and a strong work ethic are without doubt the foundation of our instruction in all content areas. Yet our school community never forgets that we are working with children that require a safe and supportive socio-emotional environment to best mature into healthy and prosperous young men and women. The Principal, the Supervisor of Instruction, and the majority of the teaching staff have dedicated over two decades of their professional lives to educating the students in this middle school, so the level of commitment and genuine concern for the children far exceeds that which is found in most schools. Our school is unique and special due to the staff, families, and students that create a setting that incorporates learning, kindness, and respect into the foundation of all practices. By knowing each child as an individual, and by providing a safe, engaging, and challenging environment for each student, we strive to prepare the Whole Child for future achievement and happiness.