

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Renee Marie Manse
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Orchard Hill Intermediate School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1305 Jonathan Avenue S.W.
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City North Canton State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44720-4115

County Stark County

Telephone (330) 497-5655 Fax (330) 966-1701

Web site/URL https://www.northcantonschools.org/orchardhillintermediate_home.aspx E-mail rmm1nc@northcantonschools.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. Jeff Wendorf E-mail wendorfj@northcantonschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name North Canton City Schools Tel. (330) 497-5600

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. Bruce Hunt
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	65	78	143
4	68	69	137
5	63	71	134
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	196	218	414

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91 % White
 - 5 % 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	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	404
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.062
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36 %
Total number students who qualify: 147

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
58 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.

- 5 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 3 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 1 Mental Retardation
- 3 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 15 Other Health Impaired
- 28 Specific Learning Disability
- 3 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 26:1
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%	96%	97%	96%	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
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.
The mission statement of North Canton City Schools is "inspire students; impact our community; change the world."
16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Since US News & World Report started school rankings in 2007, Orchard Hill Intermediate School has been rated as one of the top public schools in Ohio. Why? No doubt the dedicated staff of caring teachers and the superior program materials are defining elements of the Orchard Hill success formula. They love teaching, respect and relate well to young children, and care deeply that students move through their schooling in an engaging and productive manner.

North Canton City Schools (NCCS) is in a suburban setting and educates 4,263 students. The city of North Canton has a population of 17,496, is 95% Caucasian, and has a median household income of \$52,530. NCCS is comprised of one pre-school, two K-2nd primary buildings and two 3rd-5th intermediate buildings feeding into one middle school then one high school and has a 1 to 1 technology initiative where all K-12 students have a district-issued Chromebook that is used to integrate technology into daily learning. Orchard Hill, one of the district's two intermediate schools, serves 414 students with a 26:1 teacher to student ratio, has 27 full-time certified staff members, four shared staff members in the arts, and four part-time staff members providing support services. It is nestled near the south end of the city of North Canton in Stark County, Ohio and is located in the residential area formerly known as Orchard Acres.

Many Orchard Hill students live in small neighborhood homes that were built in the early 1900's which were a result of the Hoover Manufacturing Company. North Canton was a thriving, blue-collar community until the Hoover Company was sold in 2006. As a result, the city of North Canton and NCCS have experienced a change in demographics as well as a population shift. Our current student population presents very different needs than previous generations. In 2006 Orchard Hill had 15.2% of its students categorized as economically disadvantaged. The percentage of students in the economically disadvantaged category has consistently increased causing this category to spike at an all time high of 35.4% in 2015. Orchard Hill has developed supports for the needs of this population, making sure to provide interventions. Orchard Hill remains strong in a tradition that emphasizes pride and enthusiasm for its history of excellence. It remains one of the more traditional city schools in North Canton, as our families continue to embrace loyalty and a strong sense of pride as Hoover's "Lil" Vikings. Orchard Hill Intermediate School and NCCS have a clear vision for our future: to be recognized as a trusted, leading organization for learning. Our core values are respect, grit, relationships and integrity.

The staff at Orchard Hill is dedicated to teaching our students to be independent leaders. To this end, we focus on Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Happy Kids along with the work of Ron Clark and The Essential 55. Our students understand the importance of thinking about their minds, bodies, and hearts and the importance of self-respect. They recognize that all play a part in overall personal effectiveness. It is important to spend time daily reflecting upon the first habit, being proactive in choosing to do the right thing even when no one is looking, in order to maintain a positive school culture. To reinforce the book's fundamental ideas we share positive, thought-provoking Project Wisdom messages each morning over our school announcements. Evidence of each of the 7 Habits of Happy Kids can be found in lesson plans and newsletters, but most importantly, in a walk down our halls. The implementation of these practices has had a positive impact on both behavior and student achievement as evidenced by our recognition as a high achieving school.

The Orchard Hill staff is committed to the belief that all students can excel. Staff collaborate to improve instructional practices and to ensure that all children are learning and growing. The district vision at Orchard Hill is clear, as our programs continue building students' fundamentals in reading and math while also nurturing the social skills that are essential for success. Orchard Hill's schedule supports a daily intervention program which allows the teachers to provide small group supports for all students. We have strategically built into our schedule a forty-minute "Vike Time," during which no new instruction occurs. This dedicated time allows the teachers to meet the learners at their level, providing the necessary interventions, while allowing students to grow to their fullest potential. Students set challenging goals, conference with teachers to review these goals, and chart their progress through the year. This goal setting sets the stage for learning and leads to the development of 21st century workplace skills.

Orchard Hill believes in a strong partnership between the community and school. Parents show their support

for our school through their participation in a variety of volunteer opportunities. We have an active Parent Teacher Organization; we offer after-school enrichment activities, including golf, pottery, chess club and theater class that are all taught by community members. Through our collaborative partnership with a local university, we are also participating in school-community learning opportunities by inviting college professors and students to partner with our students and teachers to create a hands-on learning environment.

This is only a snapshot of the history and culture that led Orchard Hill to receive the “Momentum Award” in 2016 from the Ohio State Board of Education (awarded to schools that exceed expected student growth), reinforcing our belief that good can always be better. Our dedicated and committed staff continue to pursue ways to become better, and for those reasons we would feel honored to receive yet another award, the distinguished recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

NCCS' mission is Inspire students; Impact our community; Change the world. To achieve this, Orchard Hill promotes collaboration, communication, and creativity/innovation with the intention of fostering a growth mindset, responsible citizenry, respect and appreciation of diversity, and social responsibility. Orchard Hill's core curriculum, based on Ohio's Learning Standards, provides students with the knowledge and skills to make a difference in the world. Additionally, the school culture supports staff in ongoing professional dialogue, educational programming, and professional development (PD). A strong PD focus has been on preventive instruction. Since all students are not alike, staff focuses on students' differences, allowing students the opportunity to grow.

To ensure success for all students, Orchard Hill focuses on three things: 1) Common belief system regarding low-performing students; 2) Staff expectations of student behavior; and 3) All-inclusive instructional systems, including Response to Intervention (RtI), and other systems that embrace all learners, and includes specific strategies intended for those who need additional support.

Reading/English language arts:

Reading, writing, language, speaking and listening skills are specifically taught in 80-minute daily blocks. Many students also receive additional reading intervention and specific phonics instruction. Students engage with a variety of texts by reading short stories, newspaper articles, magazines, and novels, with emphasis on comprehension. Exposure to various genres of literature include realistic fiction, fables, folktales, myths and legends, poetry, and nonfiction texts. Students frequently access digital magazines and newspapers to compare/contrast texts, make inferences, identify themes, and cite text for evidence. Because literacy is critical, reading is emphasized in all content areas, and students apply domain vocabulary in all classes. Students on IEP's are provided instruction in an adapted environment, which ranges from full inclusion with support to intense reading intervention programs utilizing visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile approaches to learning.

Mathematics:

Teachers use formative assessment to determine instructional needs and form fluid groups to personalize core and intervention instruction (RTI). Collaborative groups of students work together on "lab days" to engage in enrichment activities to stretch their mathematical reasoning skills. Academic Assist time is used to pre-teach or re-teach concepts to students on IEP's with multisensory instruction approaches sometimes used to aide in information retention.

Application of math skills to real-world situations is emphasized with math incorporated into daily classroom routines and into other subject areas. Each day includes time for whole-class and small-group, partner, or individual instruction. These activities balance teacher-directed instruction with opportunities for open-ended problem solving, hands-on explorations, and long-term projects. Students are encouraged to explain and discuss their mathematical thinking and given opportunities to verbalize thoughts and strategies to clarify their thinking and gain insights from others. Numerous opportunities for basic skills practice, including mental math routines and a wide variety of math games, designed to build strong mental math skills and fact fluency, are integrated into regular math instruction. Lastly, homework provides opportunities to reinforce learning and for family members to be a part of the learning.

Science:

All students receive an introduction to Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Art, and Math (STREAM). Students use the engineering design process to problem-solve real-world scenarios and engage in research activities by reading and writing about scientific topics. Through inquiry, 3rd graders explore states of matter and learn about life cycles.

To better understand light energy, students create a laser maze with mirrors and beam splitters to direct lasers through mazes to light up a target. To integrate science, technology, music, and art, students design

their own cardboard guitar and use a circuit board invention kit to program sounds and music using their Chromebooks. They use the same kit to create video game controllers out of recycled materials. Lego Robotics kits provide an introduction to engineering for 5th graders as they design/build their Lego structures and use technology to program robots for movement and sound. Fourth-graders study electrical energy by building a working alarm for their lockers.

Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement:

Students learn social studies themes and study historical time periods through project based learning. Third-graders study the history of North Canton while fourth-graders engage in an extensive study of Ohio history, using an online program from the Ohio Historical Society that allows them to experience simulations, linking authentic learning to the history of our state. Fifth-graders learn about ancient civilizations and Native American geography through research-based activities, which utilize presentations using Google apps and Time for Kids to study current events, economics and bolster literacy and critical thinking skills.

Orchard Hill students have multiple opportunities for civic engagement. A special needs classroom conducts an annual pajama collection for domestic violence shelters. Student Council annually organizes a food drive and funds many school improvement projects such as a sound system and playground resources. All students become involved in service activities across the district, such as the NCCS book drive that resulted in hundreds of books being donated to the pediatric wards of local hospitals.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At-risk students who have access to the arts in or out of school also tend to have better academic results, better workforce opportunities, and more civic engagement, according to a 2012 NEA report, *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies*. For this reason, Orchard Hill adheres to the Ohio Visual Art Standards to create projects for all grade levels. Students participate in art class for 40 minutes during a three-day rotation. Lessons are delivered to appeal to all modalities of learning: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. With each lesson, the focus is not only on acquiring knowledge and skills needed to complete a project, but also allowing all students to demonstrate their own individuality and creativity. Orchard Hill received a grant through ArtsInStark, a community-based organization that promotes the arts. A local graphic artist is brought in to work with fifth-graders, introducing them to the field of graphic arts through a lesson on metamorphosis in art, and art tools such as Pixlr Express, digital cameras, and a Watercolor Bot. Student artwork is then shared with a variety of audiences, from inside our building to a public art gallery. Students in all grade levels are given the opportunity to participate in the Orchard Hill Art Show. Student work is showcased in the North Canton Public Library's "Little Art Gallery" and Arts in the Park.

The physical education program follows the Ohio Physical Education Standards, exposing students to 40-80 minutes a week of exercise. A wide range of programs are offered, including sports and non-traditional activities all centered on exercise and healthy living. Students participate in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart, Kohl's Department Stores and Akron Children's Hospital's PE Fit Program. Orchard Hill also created a unique program called the Workout Warriors. This program allows students to have a successful start to their day by beginning their morning with additional physical exercise.

The start to each day at Orchard Hill also includes a healthy breakfast. Our teachers have a sense of urgency that every moment in the classroom counts. After arriving at school, students may obtain breakfast and take it to their classroom where learning begins for the day. Food selections are always nutritionally sound with fresh fruit and vegetables offered each day. Our cafeteria has "Try Me" days where students may try a food that might be new to them, such as hummus or grapefruit. Students are encouraged to try the new food, and they receive a sticker showing that they tried the new food.

Five years ago Orchard Hill Intermediate School implemented a one-to-one technology program where all students receive a Chromebook so technology can be integrated throughout the day. With all students being able to take their Chromebooks home, student access to technology and student learning both continue beyond the school day.

In addition to the one-to-one program, all students take a tech skills class throughout the year taught by a certified teacher. The course objectives are based on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards. Students regularly collaborate using technology to create projects that use Google applications. They also engage in research projects, create informational websites, produce animated videos and program basic computer games. All students participate in Hour of Code, an international curriculum that introduces students to computer science and computer coding. Another key component of our technology program is the instruction of digital citizenship. Students discuss the advantages and pitfalls of using social media and how to be an “upstander” to help others who may be experiencing cyberbullying.

Performing arts classes consist of 40 minutes of general music for all students every three days. Fifteen percent of our students in grades 4 and 5 elect to participate in orchestra for 50 minutes weekly. Additionally, about 35% of our fifth-graders participate in band and/or choir for at least 80 additional minutes per week. Students have opportunities to perform in choir, band, and orchestra by participating in multiple concerts during the school year. Band students in grades 5-12 participate in a district program called “Bands in the Round,” and the district choral department hosts a “May Fiesta” which includes students in grades K-12.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The Orchard Hill staff truly believes all children can learn and achieve at high levels. They realize to turn this belief into reality, it is often a very challenging, but meaningful journey. To meet the needs of a diverse student population and to help all students reach their fullest potential, teachers use a variety of instructional, intervention, and enrichment methods and strategies. During their collaborative planning periods, teacher teams analyze data to determine where to target instruction and then design differentiated instruction, using visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile (VAKT) strategies. Students are provided with opportunities to show mastery of learning using a variety of assessment practices, including technology, performances and/or presentations, and independent learning projects. To ensure high levels of student achievement, teachers give ongoing formative assessments and analyze the data to plan future lessons and determine support and/or enrichment activities.

Our faculty regularly monitors student understanding through observation, checklists, and informal assessments such as entrance and exit slips. We challenge students to self-assess their own learning, by setting and monitoring achievable goals. Teachers give common assessments in core content areas, allowing them to analyze student progress and discover instructional weaknesses. Since our goal is student mastery, teachers encourage risk-taking and learning from mistakes and provide regular opportunities for test retakes. Teachers provide timely feedback through individual conferencing, sharing of feedback notes and/or modeling of assignments and assessment so students understand their errors. Practicing our leadership beliefs, students take ownership of their learning and are taught to learn from their mistakes.

So that our staff follows the most systematic method of RTI, the district utilizes a universal screener, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). This screener, given three times a year, provides valuable data in literacy and math for our teachers to scrutinize for the purpose of providing intervention and enrichment. The students also take the state assessment provided by the American Institutes of Research (AIR). These state assessments, given in the core areas, offer information about the students’ achievement at grade level. Both of these standardized testing opportunities are utilized by our teachers to make decisions about the skills that student need to increase.

In addition to the standardized testing, teachers use their common formative and summative assessments to progress monitor the students throughout the year. From these checks, teachers tailor their interventions and enrichment activities to the needs of the students. Vike Time (our no-new-instruction 40-minute daily period) builds around the interventions and enrichment that each child needs. Teachers collaborate to make flexible groups to work during this period on research-based interventions in literacy and math. Every teacher and support staff person is involved in assisting students during this period. This dedicated time focuses on the students who have not met the requirements for the grade level indicators for learning targets and need additional instruction for remediation, thus allowing us to accelerate the academic achievement of students who are meeting the grade level targets. Because all staff members are involved, all children have

some opportunity for small-group and/or individual assistance. Vike Time serves all students from those on IEPs to those in our Galaxy Program (gifted and talented) and all students in between. The goal is to grow all students so they meet or exceed the grade level targets.

Orchard Hill's teachers utilize the most effective instructional strategies to close the achievement gaps in math and reading. Students who have been identified performing below grade level all receive intensive support. Students needing support in reading and math receive direct instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness, touch point math, and multi-sensory instruction. Teachers work to front load lessons (pre-teaching) as well as re-teach as needed. Teachers conduct weekly progress monitoring, graphing and charting of progress data and incorporate incentive plans to encourage family support. As a result of our intervention strategies, Orchard Hill earned an overall A on the Progress component on the State of Ohio Report Card and A's in all Progress measures including students with disabilities and students in the lowest achieving 20%.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students and staff at Orchard Hill embrace the leadership qualities of Stephen Covey’s 7 Habits of Happy Kids, which helps make our school an exemplary learning facility. Our educators are found each morning in hallways and at the classroom doors, modeling the seven habits as they welcome each student. Every month, Orchard Hill focuses on a different habit, and students who exemplify one of the habits are awarded a Golden Ticket that they place into their grade level box. The principal and guidance counselor conduct grade-level lessons to teach the attributes of this habit and pull names of winners from the Golden Ticket box. Our student leadership program supports our district mission by promoting the habits that will make students successful in all aspects of life. To help build relationships and tear down walls, our staff has also implemented the 2 x 10 strategy, which is having a personal conversation for two minutes per day for ten consecutive days with an at-risk student, to help catalyze meaningful change.

In an effort to encourage kindness to all, the students respect the hallways as “Quiet Zones” because they have been taught to appreciate the learning environments of others. Orchard Hill also participates in the Sandy Hook Promise, “Start with Hello Week,” where the entire school works to emphasize friendship and caring for others. We encourage the students to use our Buddy Bench to help prevent the feelings of isolation. In addition, we work in collaboration with our local YMCA through our Character Champion Program to nominate students and staff to receive a Character Champion Award for exhibiting the pillars of character, in our school and in our community. Student Council conducts food, clothing, and pajama drives each year to support local food banks and domestic violence shelters. We offer numerous opportunities for our students to develop leadership qualities, including Safety Patrol, Library Pages, and Workout Warriors.

Additionally, the PTO members are quite active, instructing after school programs and providing educational assemblies. The Orchard Hill staff has a strong sense of commitment to the community. Every year the Orchard Hill staff adopts struggling families during the holidays. We buy groceries, shop for and deliver gifts to the families. The Orchard Hill staff sees one another as family as we celebrate our individual and school successes at staff breakfasts, lunches, conference night dinners, Rookie Awards, and Teacher of the Month and Year Awards. The Orchard Hill faculty recognizes that a positive, loving environment is the best support to encourage student growth.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families reinforces high expectation for student success. Family engagement is a key component in student achievement at Orchard Hill Intermediate School. Orchard Hill welcomes families at a “Back to School” night and new students to an orientation led by fifth-graders. Additionally, our families take an active part in parent teacher conferences, Galaxy Nights, Special Education meetings focusing on topics such as executive functioning disorders, anxiety, and students struggling with ADHD. Educators communicate with families through newsletters, emails, Facebook, Twitter, and Schoology, our district’s online learning management system. Orchard Hill uses our district newsletter, the Viking Vision, to highlight the accomplishments of our students and staff. Fourth and fifth-graders look forward to the end-of-the-year awards ceremony recognizing student accomplishments. Several area businesses provide awards and coupons for our students achieving honor roll, demonstrating personal growth, and participating in community service.

Community engagement supports civic engagement. Orchard Hill regularly involves families and community members. Students beam with pride as they have breakfast and read with their grandparents or special guests at our annual “Grand Event.” Recognizing that civic education is important for the foundation of our democracy, each November, students learn about the military and the history of Veterans Day. Our Veterans Day assembly is a unique opportunity for students to recognize and thank local heroes. The local Elks Lodge also honors students for writing a patriotic-themed essay.

Orchard Hill is fortunate to have an active PTO, which provides opportunities for students and families to

be connected through annual events such as an autumn outdoor movie night, “My Favorite Guy and Me” dance, and “My Favorite Gal and Me” bowling event. The PTO also provides after school enrichment opportunities, such as chess club, golf lessons, pottery, tie dye and theater classes as well as educational assemblies for all students. Students and professors from the zoo and wildlife biology department of a local university have brought in a variety of animals including reptiles, birds and exotic cats for a school-wide assembly.

In addition to the YMCA’s Character Champion and the tutoring offered by local university professors and students, other local partnerships also contribute to meet the needs of our student population. Many of our neediest students benefit from the Backpack Program. Volunteers from the North Canton Church of Christ deliver food items for students to take home, addressing the lack of resources for students on weekends and holidays. In 2016 Orchard Hill created a Campus Awareness Response and Evaluation (CARE) Team to connect at-risk students and families with local resources to increase student achievement.

Orchard Hill invites parents and community members to take an active role in the education of our students. Transition meetings are conducted prior to the start of each school year for all incoming students and their parents. Parents are invited to our meet the teacher nights where both academic and procedural information is shared.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development at Orchard Hill aligns with our district goals. District goals were created after collecting data from the NCCS community. NCCS conducted a SWOT analysis by inviting over 100 students, community members, secondary certified staff, elementary parents, elementary staff, secondary parents and classified staff to share their insights regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats posed to the district. The Center for Marketing & Opinion Research also conducted a survey of all district staff and a community survey of 384 residents in May/June 2016. One finding of the data collected from these surveys indicated that our district needed to work towards establishing a growth mindset culture. As a result, district PD has targeted establishing a growth-mindset culture, which is one of the four district goals. Principals meet bi-weekly, designated department heads monthly, all staff three times a year to receive PD opportunities that help to keep NCCS aligned to all district goals including establishing a growth mindset.

Not only do all Orchard Hill staff members engage in the three PD events, they also engage in monthly building sessions conducted by the principal and/or staff members that align to the identified needs of staff and students and in bi-weekly collaborative planning sessions. These sessions focus on using data from a variety of assessments to examine the most effective teaching practices. The teachers then work collaboratively to find the best interventions or enrichments for each student.

One challenge facing teachers at Orchard Hill is the absence of a classroom designated for students with Emotional Disturbances (ED). To best serve a full range of students, teachers participated in a professional development focused on targeted strategies that can be used to meet the needs of the ED population. The staff participated in a book study using Zones of Regulation. Through this study, teachers worked on their students’ ability to control themselves in a classroom setting. By learning this systematic, cognitive behavioral approach, students were able to not only identify their emotions but to also employ self-regulation techniques. Teachers were also trained in Universal Design for Learning, Kids in Crisis, MANDT restraint, differentiation, and online formative assessment. These sessions have provided our team with key strategies for working with a full range of students.

The goal of professional development at Orchard Hill is to help our students grow academically while taking into account the importance of their social and emotional growth, which we believe are factors that have an extraordinary impact on students’ capacity to learn. In essence, through professional development, our staff will continue to learn and grow, thus putting our students in a position to also learn and grow. We attribute both our students’ academic success as well as their health and well-being to the professional development opportunities that align to the identified needs of our staff and students.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership structure at Orchard Hill Intermediate School consists of the building principal, the school counselor, and the Principal's Advisory Council, consisting of representation from each grade level, special education, and the specials staff. This council meets monthly with the principal to discuss building initiatives, classroom instructional needs, student differentiation and achievement. Each leader shares the council's feedback with the members of their respective grade levels. Teachers also serve as instructional leaders by attending county lead teacher meetings and sharing with their teams.

Because Orchard Hill Intermediate School embraces Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Happy Kids, the administration and faculty believes that everyone is a leader. The students and staff practice the habit, "Begin With the End In Mind," allowing us to demonstrate a collaborative leadership style, which provides a nurturing, supportive, yet challenging, learning environment. As leaders of the school, teachers and administrators are passionate about learning and systematic in their approach to instruction.

North Canton City Schools understands that teacher teamwork is an important aspect of leadership so the schedule is built to include a collaboration period during the teacher school day. The staff meets biweekly in 40-minute collaborative planning sessions to analyze assessment results and make recommendations for interventions. The principal and school counselor participate in these common planning sessions with the teacher teams to review areas of need and adjust instruction accordingly. This collaborative process has been a key component in our outstanding results in gap closing and student achievement.

The principal, teachers, and school counselor attend numerous meetings and committees designed to assess and improve the policies, programs, relationships and resources focused on improving student achievement. Examples include district steering committee meetings, staff meetings, PTO meetings, building-level Response to Intervention team meetings, and the Principal's Advisory Council meetings. The Orchard Hill staff is encouraged to participate in the state Ohio Teacher Evaluation System meetings, district Student Learning Objective Committee, and local Professional Development Committee.

Because leadership is the tenet of the Orchard Hill professional development plan, the staff believes in aligning leadership goals and sharing them with students. Teachers utilize coaching techniques to "professionally develop" students by coaching them to emcee assemblies and special school programs, anchor for the school's televised announcements, lead dismissal procedures, conduct Safety Patrol routines, participate in peer mentoring programs, and initiate lunch bunch programs.

The principal and teachers share in the responsibility of encouraging parents and families to be actively involved with the education process of our students. The leadership structure at Orchard Hill Intermediate School provides all stakeholders an opportunity to collaborate in a nurturing, safe and supportive, yet challenging learning environment.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Orchard Hill staff is committed to having high expectations for all students. Research states that unless academic gaps are closed in the early grades, students will continue to struggle the rest of their academic careers. Thus, our efforts are concentrated on closing gaps and promoting academic success through excellent core instruction and the implementation of our Response to Intervention (RTI) model.

We are very proud that 100% of our students participate in our RTI program. One of the most helpful tools to support RTI is the use of the universal screener, Measure of Academic Practice (MAP) that each student takes three times a year. These MAP assessments are unique in that they are online adaptive tests: each question becomes more or less challenging depending on the correctness of the previously answered query. MAP's robust adaptive nature permits us to target each child individually and because MAP questions are aligned with Ohio Learning Standards as well as the North Canton City School's curriculum, the assessment provides a rich amount of data to drive our academic decision making. A team approach is used to analyze the MAP data, provide further diagnostic measures when needed, profile students according to instructional needs, and provide the necessary interventions and enrichments.

If a student's MAP results provide an at-risk score, further diagnostic assessments and/or classroom assessment data are then used to help identify specific areas where deficiencies or gaps have occurred for the student. The data from these measures of assessment are collected and educators analyze each student's areas of weakness and strength. Most recently, staff has been creating literacy decision trees that utilize data gathered from multiple literacy assessments to help identify an area of focus for interventions. Students are then profiled into tiered intervention and enrichment groups to address all student needs. Forty minutes of daily no-new-instruction time is built into the schedule to provide needed interventions and enrichments.

Students are actively involved by participating in goal setting and the monitoring of their progress. Parents are also aware of the student goals and are provided with suggestions to help their child achieve those goals when working at home. Progress monitoring review meetings are conducted by teacher teams every six weeks to determine if the targeted interventions are successful and if the student needs have changed based upon the review of data.

On the state report card, Orchard Hill earned an overall A on the Progress component which looks closely at the growth that all students are making based on their past performances. All A's were also earned in all individual subgroup progress measures, including students with disabilities, students in the lowest achieving 20%, and students identified as gifted. These results reinforce the staff's belief that implementation of the RTI program has been the most beneficial factor to our school's success.