

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Kari Dendurent

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

Official School Name Homer Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 500 Sterling Highway

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

Homer AK 99603-7446
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Kenai Peninsula Borough

Telephone (907) 235-5700

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Web site/URL

http://homermiddleschool.blogs.kpb

sd.k12.ak.us

E-mail kdendurent@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

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. Sean Dusek

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail sdusek@kpbsd.k12.ak.us

District Name Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Tel. (907) 714-8888

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Penny Vadla

(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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 10 High schools
 - 13 K-12 schools
- 44 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	54	38	92
8	48	48	96
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	102	86	188

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 6 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 0 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 82 % White
 - 6 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 19%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

12 students have transferred to and from Connections - the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District Home School Program. 17 students have transferred to and from out of the Homer Middle School attendance zone.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	36
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	194
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.19
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	19

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
5 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32 %
Total number students who qualify: 61

8. Students receiving special education services: 23 %
43 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>5</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	10
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
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 18:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	93%	92%	93%	93%	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 2017.

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.

Homer Middle School honors students' diversity by recognizing each individual's academic and creative potential. HMS promotes high standards through a positive work ethic and encourages students to learn, succeed, and believe in themselves.

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

N/A

PART III – SUMMARY

Homer Middle School (HMS) is the only traditional brick and mortar public school in Homer, Alaska. The city of Homer with a surrounding area population of approximately 6,000 is located on the stunning Kachemak Bay made famous as “The End of the Road” in Tom Bodett’s tales. Homer is at the end of the Sterling Highway, 200 miles south of Anchorage, Alaska and is surrounded by wilderness and ocean. Homer is a home base for great fishing (the Halibut Fishing Capital of the World), kayaking, bear viewing, hiking, foodie and art vacations. Additionally, many people know about Homer due to the Discovery Channel’s Alaska: The Last Frontier” Kilcher family, and it is home port to the Fishing Vessel Time Bandit of “Deadliest Catch” fame. Other’s also refer to Homer as the Cosmic Hamlet by the Sea due to the many museums, art galleries, fine dining and seaside accommodations.

A famous geographical anomaly that has put Homer on the must see destinations checklist is the Homer Spit. The “Spit” features the longest road into ocean waters in the world at 4.5 miles. It was also named one of the best 100 beaches in the United States for its incredible views and variety of wildlife seen along the multi-use trail. The “Spit” is the true end of the road on Alaska’s Highway 1. Just across the Bay, less than 10 miles from the Spit, is Alaska’s only designated wilderness park. The city of Homer and its surrounding area have had a great influence on the quality of life for Homer residents, which has contributed to many new residents who were once a summer tourist and are now calling Homer home.

HMS averages around 200 7th and 8th grade students. The students participate in a traditional seven period day, and the class schedules include four core content classes- English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics and Science. In addition, every student at HMS has PE and Music (Band or Choir), and an enrichment wheel scheduled every quarter to include health, visual arts, technology and robotics for 7th grade students and World Language and Project Lead the Way for 8th grade students.

The Homer area has a variety of school options for families, which has led to superior academic achievement as documented in the Alaska Department of Education Annual Standardized Assessments and the Alaska School Performance Index (ASPI). The feeder schools for HMS include McNeil Canyon School (grades K-6), Paul Banks Elementary (grades PK-2), West Homer Elementary School (grades 3-6), Little Fireweed Charter School (grades K-2) and Big Fireweed Charter School (grades 3-6). Upon completion of 8th grade, HMS students have the option to attend Homer High School or Homer Flex Alternative School for grades 9-12. The principals of the Homer area schools work collaboratively to provide vertical articulation to ensure the Alaska State Standards and the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) Scope and Sequence are followed for all students and to guarantee equal access to the established and approved curriculum.

HMS also has established partnerships with a variety of entities in Homer. These entities provide hands on learning, guest speakers; community based projects as well as curricular-based field trips. Specific examples include the Islands and Ocean Visitors Center who provide students access to the world’s largest seabird refuge and offers a variety of units about the Kachemak Bay. Specific activities include the Annual 7th Grade Beach Clean-up in the Fall and the Annual 7th Grade Cold Water Safety and Marine Days in the Spring. The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies promotes the appreciation of the Kachemak Bay’s ecosystem and brings speakers and volunteers into the 7th grade classrooms to provide hands on access. Biologists and staff have also provided support for the HMS Art Class’s recycled art project in which a 10-foot husky was created out of recycled items found in the Kachemak Bay. The Pratt Museum provides a variety of cultural and history units into many classrooms; one specific example includes bringing in locally found fossils for the 7th grade Ancient Civilization class to promote interest and appreciation of historical artifacts of Alaskan Natives. Because of these partnerships, the students of HMS have had the opportunity to engage in their surroundings, which may spark interest specifically in the sciences.

HMS has purposefully provided access to the Homer Community partnerships to encourage students to start thinking and planning their post-secondary transition. In addition, every student has the opportunity to explore music, technology and daily physical exercise to ensure academic and enrichment balance as they discover how they can contribute positively to society.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Seventh grade life science focuses on students' use of the scientific process as a means to develop understandings of crosscutting scientific concepts and the characteristics of life. Engaging students with community science programs allows students to interact with the natural environment and community agencies to ask questions, collect data, draw conclusions based on evidence, and communicate their findings as they develop stewardship and become active, reflective learners and citizens.

Eighth grade science is aligned with the Physical Science discipline of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The disciplinary core ideas found within Physical Science include chemical reactions, matter and its interactions, energy, and waves. NGSS standards focus heavily on problem solving and using models to describe phenomena so students acquire foundational skills through iterative and inquiry based investigations

The purpose of 7th grade math is for students to have a basic understanding of fractions, decimals, ratios, proportions, and convert percents to decimals. Students have a solid understanding of algebraic principles, and interpret graphs, graph proportional relationships on the coordinate plane, and determine equivalent ratios and rates. Students apply basic concepts of geometry such as perimeter, area, surface area, volume, angles, and congruent and similar polygons. Students apply math to everyday activities such as application of percents and simple interest, and students interpret probability.

In 7th Grade Advanced Math, 8th Grade Math and Algebra, students learn math concepts, executive skills, and logical thinking. Students gain the concepts and understanding to excel in their future math studies and careers. Self-reflection, time management, and goal setting are just a few of the life skills students acquire. Students learn to approach problems logically and think critically about a variety of solutions to not only math, but also life.

The seventh grade language arts teacher has created reading and writing workshops that promote a community of learners supporting one another's growth. While exploring literature, the students become world travelers, expanding their understanding of cultures and history. As they develop and share their writing, students learn to effectively express opinions and evaluate the reasoning of others. Through seminars and discussions, students practice listening and speaking thoughtfully while addressing new ideas.

Students in 8th grade language arts have worked hard to become critical thinkers, conscious readers, and mindful writers that are able to transfer their thoughts to paper in a clear and organized way. Students frequently use media outside of the curriculum to create relevancy and engagement. The state ELA standards guide practices, and build the necessary skills over the course of the year to ensure students will be successful in their future.

The goal of 7th grade ancient civilizations is to provide historical-based learning experiences through which students observe, interact, and interpret their world. Students engage with historical documents, figures, and each other to build understanding of the values, beliefs, and ways of life that comprise the human story. In doing this, students examine both governmental and ideological systems, and consider the influential roles that these systems play in shaping how societies live and function.

8th grade U.S. History students use historical documents to learn about the early history of this country. Students learn how different cultures played a role in shaping this country. Students also examine how past events in history affect their lives today.

The Resource Math courses teach civic learning where students act as peer teachers and experts offering practical help to others. Examples of engagement include students demonstrating graphic work at whiteboards /Smartboards, and students are able to re-do assignments to increase grades. The curricular approach provides modifications and accommodations, and time is available for students to review material

again at a later date.

Resource Language Arts class time is dedicated to writing structure and organization. Students are expected to be able to write a 3-5 paragraph essay including an introduction, three supporting paragraphs and a conclusion by the end of the school year. The teacher focuses on the needs addressed in student specific goals when presenting the curriculum.

The core curriculum at HMS supports college and career readiness in every class as students are presented and expected to use 21st century skills throughout their two year experience. Lesson plans, unit plans and cross-curricular units address the Alaska State Standards which encompass collaboration and teamwork, creativity and imagination, critical thinking, and problem solving. These skills are demonstrated, taught, and modeled throughout the school as student exemplars are showcased in the entry way, the library and in presentation boxes. Other areas to support college and career readiness include professional development for staff to participate in webinars for Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset to support students in student ownership. In addition, every student at HMS participates in the online Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) to start their portfolio for career interest.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The students at HMS have a variety of enrichment activities in addition to the regular core content in order to promote awareness, exposure and opportunities to increase interest in the world they live in.

Every student at HMS participates in 30 minutes of music daily. Students choose band or choir. Students also participate in PE for a 52-minute period each day.

In choir, students learn to work collaboratively towards a common goal through the preparation of music for performance. As each student's instrument is their own voice, students must problem solve and think critically to find their place within music, increasing personal responsibility in a cooperative environment. Curriculum includes music from all over the world, expanding global and cultural awareness.

In the HMS Band program, student musicians engage in collaboration and teamwork every day, working within their sections and the larger ensemble to make music out of the notes and words on the page. As students prepare for their five concerts, they develop adaptability and critical thinking skills through daily practical application of hands-on skills.

The purpose of physical education is to promote healthy living and knowledge of lifetime activities. In physical education, students learn how to live an active lifestyle. Through skill building, students gain the confidence to explore different ways to stay active.

Both 7th grade students and 8th grade students have a 52-minute enrichment period. The courses occur on a rotating basis every 9 weeks. 7th grade students take health, art, technology and robotics. The 8th grade enrichment wheel is health, art, Project Lead the Way and French.

The health teachers recognize students need access to accurate information and reliable resources in order to make thoughtful decisions. As well, students must be able to develop skills that will enable them to carry out these healthy choices. Within health classes, students are invited to explore issues that influence health as they practice decision-making, conflict resolution, and communication skills.

In art, students learn vocabulary related to the visual arts such as Principles and Elements of Design, and use this vocabulary to make critical judgments about their own projects and the art of others. Students learn to paint a color wheel using only the three primary colors deepening their understanding of basic color theory, and use basic drawing and shading skills through a variety of mediums such as pencils and oil pastels. In 7th grade, students draw and paint a city scene in 2-point perspective. In 8th grade, students continue to explore a variety of techniques and materials such as pen and ink, acrylic paints, and sculptures made with wire, fibers, and plaster.

The Technology class focuses on expanding the technological abilities students already possess. Students learn about digital media, photography, computer-aided drafting, and as time allows basic coding. In addition, a large part of the class is focused on introducing and improving students' keyboarding skills.

Robotics introduces students to STEM and the art of robotics. Students learn programming and engineering through meaningful problem solving, using a hands-on approach to math; while applying concepts of engineering and science, and working in cooperative teams. This highly interactive technology engages students while demanding development of complex higher-order thinking skills.

Project Lead the Way is a K-12 program designed to offer students hands-on learning opportunities in a variety of STEM fields. Middle grades focus on Design and Modeling; and uses project-based learning strategies to teach students skills such as sketching and 3D modeling required, for designing and building therapeutic toys for children with Cerebral Palsy.

In French, students learn working language construction skills amidst vocabulary, such as verb conjugations, negation, and asking questions. Culture is learned through a hands-on project during the 9 weeks. Students' skills grow through comparing and contrasting English grammar with French, learning sound differences in the pronunciation, and they learn about a culture outside of their own.

In 7th and 8th grade intervention reading classes, students are taught remedial reading with an emphasis on themes and history. Last year the class researched and read about WWII and focused on the theme of perseverance. This year students are looking at refugees throughout history and the theme of tolerance. The purpose of this course is to engage the reluctant readers while broadening their knowledge base and asking them to justify their understanding with scaffolded instruction in text dependent analysis.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Over the past five years, HMS has had a complete renovation of technology allocations and resources to support student learning and content presentation. In addition, during the past year, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) has contracted with Ed Elements to assist with Personalized Learning (PL) to increase academic achievement for students throughout our district. Many of the teachers at HMS were dabbling with PL, but it was not a central focus school wide. Through the implementation of PL at HMS students now have more choice and voice over the pace, path and time in which learning will occur and what works best for them. Additionally, students have choice in projects, presentation style, rubrics, group size, and challenge levels.

Personalized learning begins with a sense of belonging, a positive school climate and culture, ownership of self, as well as being intrinsically motivated to do your absolute best. The staff at HMS strive every day to provide the best opportunities for students to realize their personal goals.

Every day the 7th grade Professional Learning Community (PLC) and the 8th grade PLC are allocated 30 minutes of team time to collaborate on a variety of topics to include cross curricular integration units, identification of students needing intervention, providing pertinent information affecting our students and families, as well as time set aside to communicate with parents. Teachers also review a variety of assessments such as Performance Series (given three times a year), Aims Web, Performance Evaluation for Alaska's Schools (PEAKS), informal observations and course grades to ensure appropriate placement in classes. This time provides teachers the ability to know each individual students' needs, their aspirations and what can be done to ensure a positive middle school experience.

There are a variety of PL classroom structures for teachers to choose and decide what will work best for their teaching style. Some of the teachers at HMS have completely "flipped" their classrooms; while others have chosen a blended learning approach to include lab rotations, station rotation and a la carte. In order to ensure students have the necessary skills to compete with their peers nationally, HMS has focused on providing access to technology and the technological content. A concerted and collaborative effort was

made to provide smooth transitions and easy access to technology for all students and teachers. These changes included the advanced 7th grade math, 8th grade math, and Algebra classroom being located next to the computer lab for whole class access; and the 8th grade language arts and World Languages classroom was provided with a set of Chromebooks. The 8th grade social studies and health classroom received a set of Chromebooks from the \$ 5,000 Safeway Technology Grant. The 8th grade science and Project Lead the Way classrooms have a class set of Surface Pros. The resource teachers for parallel academic classes and study skills have classroom computers and laptops for student use. The 7th grade team has a designated Computer on Wheels (COW). The Library has a classroom set of computers for student use before school, during enrichment time, and during class time.

Another change that has proven results is how students with IEPs are supported as well as students with 504 Plans. Students with IEPs and 504s each receive personalized learning in classrooms with support in study skills, and students receiving intervention are identified and provided supports as well in reading and math. Resource classes for students with IEPs include one intensive needs classroom with three paraprofessionals. There is one math basic class, one parallel 7th grade math class, one 8th grade parallel math class, one 7th grade parallel Language Arts Class, one 8th grade parallel Language Arts class, one 7th grade co-taught science classroom and one 8th grade co-taught science class.

In addition to our students with IEPs, HMS also has a large population of students who have been identified for the QUEST Program (also known as Talented and Gifted). Several of these students participate in advanced math in 7th grade and take Algebra for high school credit. The team creates the Individual Student Plan with the QUEST teacher and parents to ensure students are challenged and engaged in their studies.

One of the many positives of the Homer Area Schools is the consistency of high academic achievement. One way HMS has continued this tradition is through vertical articulation with our feeder elementary schools and our high school. Teachers collaborate about the curriculum and identify gaps of teaching at the different grade levels to ensure the curriculum is taught with fidelity. Schools do not compete with one another to stand out but rather work together for students in the Homer Area to graduate and be successful in post-secondary pursuits. Every staff member is responsible for the success of all students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students at HMS are engaged in many activities throughout the school year. There are four sport seasons. In the early fall students can choose cross country running or soccer; basketball is in early winter; late winter consists of Nordic skiing, wrestling, and volleyball, and track is in the spring. Students also participate in club sports such as hockey and swimming and are in the local performance of the Nutcracker in December. All of these students are recognized at our quarter pep rallies.

HMS also has assemblies to honor our students for their academic achievements. Students are recognized for honor roll, the Spelling Bee, the Geo Bee, Mathcounts, the KPBSD Math Meet, Battle of the Books, LEGO Robotics, KPBSD Art Awards, Perfect Attendance and the Masonic Award.

One HMS award recognizes the whole student. The HMS teachers select three 7th and 8th graders each month for the Husky P.R.I.D.E. Award. The selection is based on a positive attitude, being respectful of self and others, inclusive and involved, diligent in their work, and an enthusiastic learner. Students' names are read on the announcements, and their photos are placed on the bulletin board in the main entrance.

A school wide celebration is our Top Dog Tournament. The Top Dog Competition was created and facilitated by the teachers. The purpose of this tournament is to be a low-maintenance way to get students more excited and involved in school activities. For the kick off event, each class participated in team building activities, came up with their team name and created a poster for display. Each teacher has a team comprised of their 1st/2nd period class. Teams compete in fundraisers and philanthropy (Pennies for Patients, Share the Spirit), spirit weeks, pep-assemblies, and other spirit days. Points are tallied for each activity. A trophy rotates from leader to leader after each competition.

The most recent Top Dog Competition was the HMS Pennies for Patients Fundraiser. The students at HMS raised over \$1,200.00 for Childhood Lymphoma and Leukemia Research. Students chose an activity for each \$200 goal met and the staff enthusiastically agreed. The first increment resulted in staff shaving or dyeing their hair/beard. The second increment was a student from each class pieing their teacher. The third increment was a movie afternoon with popcorn. The fourth increment was to duct tape the principal to the wall in the gym, and the final goal increment the students chose was to have the teachers run the Pacer.

At HMS the number one priority to ensure teachers feel valued and supported is evidenced by the respect teachers are given by the students, parents, administration and the community. As a result, teachers reciprocate respect by ensuring the curriculum they provide is quality work and focused on high achievement as demonstrated and documented in a variety of assessment results. The level of excellence students receive at HMS is shared in the community through the Chamber of Commerce Meetings, Rotary, highlighted in the newspaper and in testimonials to our local, state and national legislators about the importance of high quality education. Additionally, many HMS teachers have been nominated for the Alaska Teacher of the Year and British Petroleum Teacher of Excellence.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The formal body to engage parents and the community stakeholders is the HMS Site Council. The Site Council is an open forum and meets six times per year. The meeting dates, agenda and minutes are posted on the HMS website. The HMS Site Council is a joint planning, problem solving and decision making body comprised of three parent representatives, two certified staff, one classified staff, the principal and one community member. Its purpose is to ensure that plans and decisions that affect HMS are aligned with the school's stated vision, district performance expectations and student achievement goals. Members represent their respective community. Members are encouraged to take input from their constituency. Decisions follow the Site Council Bylaws and parameters set in the guidelines by the school district. Specific actions as a result of the Site Council include adding a variety of parent information nights (Sexual Health, the Teen Brain, Substance Misuse), and facilitating community sensitive signage to reduce animal waste in the

outdoor classroom areas and fields. The Site Council has also provided input and support on the bell schedule change, the school development plan, made suggestions to improve the parent/teacher conferences, school security and access to the school during the academic day, and have garnered and informed community representatives to speak to legislators to support education funding.

Additional engagement activities have included parent nights held in the Spring for rising 7th graders and their families, 7th and 8th grade Orientation held the Thursday prior to school starting to give an overview to students and families and to give them the opportunity to meet the HMS staff, the Open House which allows parents to follow their students schedule as well as a presentation from the grade level team and assistance with logging on and using PowerSchool (the student management system), as well as two parent/teacher conferences in the fall and spring.

HMS has also made a concerted effort to keep parents, students and the community informed about events and celebrations at HMS. There are a variety of mediums to choose and each serves a specific purpose. The HMS website provides access to the school calendar, forms, handbooks, school supplies and resources. The HMS Facebook page provides the daily activities and gives a snapshot into the lives of students. HMS also has a monthly electronic newsletter which includes articles, dates, celebrations and resources. Other forms of communication include our local newspapers and radio stations.

3. Professional Development:

At the beginning of every school year, the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District (KPBSD) requires each school to create a site based School Development Plan (SDP). Schools are required to look at three areas: Rigor, Relevance and Responsiveness; and to score themselves as emerging, developing, advancing or sustaining. After the discussion and scoring is complete the school staff develops school goals to focus on for the current school year. Each goal has a set of action steps, ownership over the action, a specific timeline, sources of evidence for the action and the final result.

HMS worked collaboratively to create three goals. The first goal – In the beginning of the 2017-18 School Year, HMS is dependent on Performance Series data as the only consistent data to drive instruction as well as to determine appropriate placement in courses. By the end of the 2017-18 School Year, HMS will determine at least three relevant and reliable data sources to drive instruction and place students in the appropriate courses. The second goal- By the end of the first semester, every certified staff member at HMS will be able to provide an explanation of Personalized Learning in their classroom when asked by the students, the school based administrator, district based administrators, HMS parents and HMS stakeholders. The third goal- By the end of the 3rd quarter every student will be able to respond they have at least one adult at HMS in which they trust and can depend on as evidenced by the KPBSD School Climate and Connectedness Survey.

The School Development Plan is the focus for all PD at HMS. In January, a mid-year check is completed to include timely progress on action steps as well as evidence cited. This information is uploaded to the KPBSD on-line document to ensure transparency for our stakeholders. A final evaluation is completed in May to address if the school goals were met. The principal evaluation is also tied to the work completed on the SDP.

Professional Development is supported and encouraged by the KPBSD as there are designated times allocated for PD. These times include but are not limited to at the end of every quarter on in-service days, six Early Release Days, an individual teacher instructional day as well as a variety of online courses/webinars in which the district will pay for college credits for teachers.

4. School Leadership:

In 2013, the HMS principal position became vacant, and the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District worked with the HMS staff to determine the characteristics needed for the new administrator to be successful. The position was posted and had two different rounds of interviews. The focus of the search

was to find someone who could continue to support the high academic success of students and change the climate and culture of the school. The staff needed someone they could trust, who had established themselves as an instructional leader and a person who they could respect. The person chosen met these criteria and brought with them the Leadership Philosophy coined by Robert K. Greenleaf- Servant Leadership. Servant Leadership consists of ten different attributes: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

During this five-year journey, the principal has worked with staff to ask them to contribute to make an impact on moving HMS forward. One of the first activities included transparency, communication and an open door policy. A specific example included rearranging the administrative office to include a unified area for the principal, the school secretary, the school counselor and the school nurse. This allows the office to work as a team and respond to a variety of needs.

Every staff member has the opportunity to participate in a leadership role. One example included giving the teachers ownership over the master schedule and the enrichment classes they wanted to teach. This led to one of the teachers creating a bell schedule to include Music for All so teachers could have a designated team time every day to meet. This has had a tremendous impact on student achievement. The PLCs are also used as a way for the principal to meet with the groups to discuss what is going well and what needs to change, as well as face to face training opportunities.

The number one priority for the principal at HMS is health and safety. This includes the students, the staff and the HMS community. Key strategies include welcoming the students at the entrance every morning, supervision during transitions, during the school day and after school. Being present also provides the opportunity to establish caring relationships with all students. The principal models her expectations and shares the responsibility with all stakeholders. Most importantly, all of the relationships and student ownership have created a healthy and safe learning environment for the HMS family.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The key strategy for excellence at HMS is the phenomenal staff. The staff have high expectations for students, provide the scaffolding, and support necessary for success. The staff have worked together to create a welcoming environment and often refer to each other as their HMS family.

Recruiting, retaining and sustaining a great staff is done through intentional planning and having a proactive approach to hiring opportunities in the future. One of the recruitment strategies is from the teachers themselves who openly advertise that HMS is a great place to work. HMS is fun, the staff feel respected professionally and are given autonomy to make decisions, the teachers are experts in their profession and have an in depth knowledge base of their subject area, time is allocated to collaborate for teachers and paraprofessionals, and meetings are conducted only when necessary. Specific data to support this is HMS has zero transfer out requests for next school year and every person on staff will be back for the 2018-19 school year. In addition, several individuals in the school district have requested a transfer to HMS if something comes open.

Continuous efforts are made to encourage celebrations and camaraderie amongst the staff. HMS has an annual crock-pot cook-off, as well as the Christmas holiday cookie bake off. A roving trophy is given for each event. At the beginning of each year, there is a pre-school social and barbecue for staff and families, and the annual holiday party in December. In May, all staff are thanked for their hard work and dedication during Teacher Appreciation Week. Students, parents and the administration provide small tokens, gifts and lunch every day.

Celebrating, recognizing and thanking staff is how HMS continues to keep great employees. Time is valued and protected and investments are made to build and support the grade level teachers, and the special education team which consists of both teachers and paraprofessionals. The support staff is also shown appreciation for their behind the scenes work. This includes our school secretary, the custodians, the Student Nutrition Services manager, the media clerk and the nurse. The team works together to overcome obstacles in order to best serve all of our students. The longevity of our staff and the established relationships at HMS is the reason HMS has been nominated for the prestigious National Blue Ribbon School Award.