

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 Mr. William Z. Seidelmann

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

Official School Name Hickory Creek Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 22150 South 116th Ave

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

Frankfort IL 60423-9064
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Will County

Telephone (815) 469-4474

Fax (815) 469-7930

Web site/URL

<http://www.fsd157c.org/static.asp?path=2852>

E-mail wseidelmann@fsd157c.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*Dr. Maura Zinni

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail mzinni@fsd157c.org

District Name Frankfort Community Consolidated School District 157-C Tel.

(815) 469-5922

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. Gina Briese

(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	141	167	308
7	147	130	277
8	145	149	294
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	433	446	879

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 2%

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

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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	855
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

Mandarin, Yoruba, German and Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3%
Total number students who qualify: 24

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
98 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>9</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>21</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>35</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>8</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: 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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	47
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
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 19:1

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	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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. 1993

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

To prepare all students to be confident, life-long learners and productive citizens by challenging them to reach their fullest potential and by providing a quality educational environment in partnership with family and community.

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

Public School

PART III – SUMMARY

Hickory Creek Middle School (HCMS) serves a population of 879 students. The majority, 80 percent, being Caucasian, Non-Hispanic and a minority combined population of Hispanic, African American, and Asian creating the other 20 percent of the student body.

The Frankfort area is a developing, upper middle class suburban community located approximately forty miles southwest of the Chicago metropolitan region. HCMS is a wonderful place to foster growth, learn and prepare for the future. Attended by students in grades sixth, seventh, and eighth we welcome, challenge, and accept adversity. Our student attendance rate is over 96 percent with no chronic truancy. The average student mobility rate is approximately two percent.

We offer a full academic and co-curricular program that prides itself on its “Tradition of Excellence.” We have been selected as a “Demonstration School” by the Association of Middle Schools and an Illinois Horizon School “School to Watch”. This year we earned the Raising Student Achievement Award through the Association for School Superintendents. Stable resources, experienced, highly qualified staff members, high achieving, involved students, supportive parents and comprehensive programs are indicators frequently used to describe our district and great school.

In addition to placing an emphasis on the Common Core State Standards, we are infusing additional skills into our curriculum to prepare students for a future that is ever changing. These skills include but are not limited to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity for 21st century learning. We will continue to prepare students for their future; a future that will allow our students to succeed in life, citizenship and work. Effective use of instructional technology is encouraged throughout all of our classrooms and Digital Citizenship is embedded into each content area. For example, English Language Arts (ELA) focuses on creator’s rights, Social Studies and Science focuses on strategic searching, Advisory focuses on digital life, and Health focuses on cyberbully, scams and schemes. An example of a real-life lesson, our eighth grade students created a hashtag Twitter account to positively document a recent class trip to Washington D.C. We invite the Blue Ribbon review team to visit our Twitter feed, #HCMSinWashDC to experience how our students used social media to demonstrate how this virtual format can be used in an engaging and respectful manner to share their story.

At HCMS, we demonstrate Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity, and Organizational Structures and Processes designed to support a trajectory toward excellence. We are only successful with the continued support from our community, staff, students and parents.

Our strategic goals are as follows: Learning Spaces optimize the physical environment to meet the individual needs of all students. Student Outcomes enhance the ways we serve the needs of all students. Professional Development promotes high quality professional development opportunities. Financial Stability maintains financial stability through the development and responsible management of all resources. Community Partnerships serve and engage our community to enhance the academic, social and cultural well-being of all students. As a result of implementation of this 21st Century Continuous Learning Plan, the district is experiencing a positive trajectory of student achievement outcomes as measured by local, state and national assessments in the core academic areas of instruction.

The mission of District 157-C is to prepare all students to be confident, life-long learners and productive citizens by challenging them to reach their fullest potential and by providing a quality educational environment in partnership with family and community. We have been supported by donations from our Family School Partnership in the amount of approximately \$33,700 in the form of family events, school assemblies, curriculum enrichment, parent university, and educator appreciation. The Education Foundation donated approximately \$182,000 in the form of classroom grants to promote creativity and innovation. Our Booster groups raise significant funds to support numerous activities and provide resources to our students that enhance their educational experience. Athletic Boosters gifted \$31,035, Chorus Boosters gifted \$34,603, and Band/Orchestra Boosters gifted \$20,617 for a total of \$301,955 in donations last year alone.

Over the last three years, we have had regional, sectional and state championships in Baseball, Bowling,

Cheerleading, Cross Country, Scholastic Bowl, Softball, Track, Volleyball, and Wrestling. The music department has earned distinguished and top honors for Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra and Chorus events. Individual scholars have been recognized in mathletes competitions as well. HCMS is an amazing place to grow, learn and develop a growth mindset. By empowering our students to embrace a growth mindset, students learn from their setbacks and mistakes. Our staff see value in and serve as role models by supporting our middle school students throughout this pivotal age. Our end-of-the-quarter assemblies recognize all students from academic, social, and athletic accomplishments. Our end-of-the-year celebrations enrich our curriculum and expand the learning experiences for our students. For example, our sixth grade class studies ancient civilizations and architecture. They attend a trip to Chicago to compare and contrast modern day architecture of our great city of that of Mesopotamia while riding a boat along the Chicago River with their friends. In seventh grade our students enjoy a day trip to Springfield. Visiting our state capital connects with the seventh grade constitution unit. This year, for the first year in HCMS history, we flew to Washington D.C. As a culminating trip we entrusted our students to travel with our teachers to explore D.C. The students connected their novel studies and social studies units to the museums and adventures. For example, in seventh grade the students read "Chasing Lincoln's Killer." The background knowledge they studied last year connected to the new information they learned at Ford Theater. In eighth grade, the students read the novel "Knight." When we entered the Holocaust Museum the students were in tears and truly embraced the stories on the walls. The history standards helped them engage in conversation of the Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vietnam, and WWII memorials. Lastly, they were able to have fun and laugh with their classmates while attending a comedy show, sharing hotel rooms, and truly enjoying each other's company. HCMS is a unique learning environment that stretches beyond the Frankfort Community. We challenge our students academically, socially, and morally. We are responsive to the changing student needs and design our curriculum to engage our community members and will continue to grow along with our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

All students at HCMS receive 84 minutes of ELA, 65 minutes of Mathematics, 42 minutes of Science, 42 minutes of Social Studies (SS), and 19 minutes of daily Advisory. At HCMS there are multiple levels of courses that reach the varied needs of our students. The most restrictive program offered focuses on functional and life skills. Students who are functioning approximately two to three grade levels below their peers can take an ELA and or Mathematics course that focuses on foundational skills and the core of the student's current grade level standards. All four core courses are available in a co-taught structure where there is both a general education teacher and special education teacher instructing the students.

All general education core teachers instruct in one grade level and one content. This allows the teachers to become content experts and attend professional development that is specific to the instructed subject. Students have four different teachers for each of the core subjects. With the change of teachers, there is time for natural movement breaks for the students.

ELA has both regular and honors level courses available to all students at HCMS. In an ELA course, there are leveled novel studies of both fiction and non-fiction texts, that are based on a theme that engages our Frankfort students and changes at least every other year, Speaking and Listening projects, analysis of varied styles of text, with an emphasis on the process of writing and revising, all of which reinforce the Common Core State Standards. The scope and sequence of ELA classes allow the teachers to differentiate content and tailor instruction to meet individual needs and interests of the students. Teachers focus on one to two standards per day which allows for a deeper understanding of the content in the 84 minutes of class. Honors ELA courses generally has greater text complexity and occasionally more mature or complex themes than the core extended text.

Mathematics also is available in both regular and honors level courses. In a Mathematics class, the course is based off of the Common Core State Standards. While HCMS uses the Carnegie resource as its mathematics textbook, teachers supplement the curriculum by using Partnership for Assessment and Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) released items to create engaging activities that challenge students to show their work and justify their reasoning. In an Honors Mathematics course, it is expected that students are working at an 'Exceeds' level on all classroom, district, and state assessments and assignments. Honors level courses complete the regular curriculum in three quarters and during the fourth quarter, the students learn the standards from the next grade level.

At HCMS, the Science courses challenge students to make predictions, inquire further on presented information, and conduct experiments based on their inquiries. The science courses are modeled using Next Generation Science Standards and push students to use the mathematics, writing and reading skills on a daily basis. Science teachers design a scope and sequence that builds on all scientific principles including Chemistry, Environmental, Physical, and Biological sciences.

Social Studies (SS) offers students the opportunity to learn about world and United States history in both a chronological and thematic scope and sequence. Integrated into the curriculum is the study of cultures that differ from our student population, geography, civics, and economics. At HCMS, teachers use the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework to drive the creation of this unique grade level curriculum. No content is repeated among the three years. SS teachers and ELA teachers work together to integrate skills into the daily lessons. An emphasis on writing with Document Based Questions (DBQ) is an interdisciplinary method to support the speaking, listening and writing standards for ELA.

HCMS recognizes the importance of preparing students for pursuing a career or attending college after high school. In order to best prepare our students, HCMS offers the following: free PSAT prep courses, a College and Career Day which includes colleges and local businesses, presentations from the local high school about course options, College Financial Planning seminars, education on leaving a positive digital footprint for

college applications, and a ‘famous’ HCMS alumni board which highlights students who are currently in college or in the work force and advice for current students.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to the four core subjects, all students take a 42 minute Encore class and a 42 minute Physical Education (PE) class daily. All classes are developed to connect 21st century problem solving and collaboration skills with the core. Interdisciplinary planning and vertical articulation is embedded into our professional learning model to support this approach.

All sixth grade students take one quarter of Spanish, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) course that uses Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA) curriculum, music, and Art. After taking all of these classes in sixth grade, in seventh and eighth grade, students can select which subjects they wish to study further.

PE classes are structured in a manner that exposes each student to a variety of team, partner, and individual sports while focusing on improving each student’s fitness level. While the mainstream sports are taught every year (basketball, flag football, soccer, and volleyball) other less common sports are on a three year rotation. For example, students will only have the ping-pong unit once in their career at HCMS. All PE courses utilize heart-rate monitors to help students create and track their individual fitness goals. Regardless of the PE course, all students participate in Fitness Fridays. This is an intensive, individualized class where students create personal goals and track their progress from week to week. Recently, the Illinois State Board of Education lowered the PE requirement from five days to three days per week. The Frankfort 157-C Board of Education values their mission of developing the whole child and therefore will continue to support PE for all students every day of the week.

One quarter per year, all students will take a Health course taught by their PE Teacher. During this quarter, students will have Health four days a week. On Fridays, students will participate in Fitness Fridays. The Health courses are designed to meet the maturation levels of the students. The scope and sequence of Health is different for all three grade levels. Each PE teacher instructs all three grade levels. This format allows the teachers to create a curriculum that flows smoothly from one year to the next and connects trends in the community to Health topics.

Seventh graders can select which PE course they would like to be enrolled in during eighth grade. Students have the option to enroll in Fit for Life, Competitive PE (which has pre-requisites), or Traditional PE. Fit for Life is a fitness based course that provides students with knowledge and activities they can take and apply in their everyday lives outside of the school setting. Activities include Pilates, yoga, kickboxing, step aerobics, interval training, circuit training, weight training, CrossFit, and a variety of resistance training. Competitive PE requires a recommendation from a PE staff member, high PE grade point average, and meeting all requirements for Fitness Gram Fitness Assessments. Finally, Traditional PE is a course that is a mix of everything and a mirror of the “traditional” sixth and seventh grade physical education curriculum. Students will take part in a variety of sports, activities, and fitness based units.

In an effort to prepare our students for the demands of the 21st century workplace, HCMS replaced the basic technology courses with STEM courses. Seventh and eighth graders have the choice of STEM Secret Communications: Sharing Concealed Messages. Ciphers, codes and modes of delivery come together in this unit to foster inquiry into the subject of cryptology. Students act as researchers and investigators to explore a variety of ciphers, codes and methods for making sense of encrypted messages. Students can also take STEM Take Flight which investigates the Aviation Industry, as the major unit of study. Students are immersed in the various facets of the aviation industry ranging from aircraft design and assembly, airport structure and runway design, navigation, air traffic control, and airline efficiencies to the economic and environmental impact aviation has on their lives. About a quarter of seventh and eighth graders chose this option.

Art options include Drawing and Painting and Design and Sculpture. Drawing and painting explores 2-dimensional space through a variety of art media and topics. The focus is on creating realistic, three-

dimensional illusions on paper or canvas. Various artists and time periods will be discussed and used as inspiration for the projects created in this class. Design and Sculpture explores three-dimensional space through a variety of sculpture media. Sculpture media will include: clay, paper machè, wire, foam board, paint and paper. Computer generated design will be incorporated into planning some projects. Approximately a quarter of our eighth graders chose these options.

Music options are Music Production and Instrumental Music. During Music Production, students go beyond general music education further exploring current areas of music technology and production. Students will use music software to create a variety of hands-on, creative projects focusing on music usage in today's world. Projects include arranging loop-based music in Mixcraft, creating short movie soundtracks, and composing music using various digital formats. Instrumental Music uses guitars, ukuleles, drums and wide assortment of cultural instruments. Instrumental Music begins with a nine-week guitar unit that builds a musical foundation focusing on melodies, chord structure, and theory by using a variety of songs in many different genres. Students then spend the second half of the class using classroom instruments including the ukulele, world drums, mallets, electric guitar, bass guitar, and drum set to perform various musical ensembles. About a quarter of the students choose these options.

After sixth grade, Spanish is offered as a Spanish Extension semester long course as well as a quarter long course. Spanish Extension integrates the current seventh grade quarterly curriculum with Spanish culture, geography, and vocabulary and grammar concepts from the eighth grade curriculum. Approximately three quarters of our students take Spanish Extension. This course offers a balance between language development and cultural aspects such as countries, foods, families, and traditions. For eighth grade students, Spanish I class follows a two semester Spanish curriculum that is taught at the local high school. This course begins the process of developing Spanish language and strong communication skills. The skills and concepts learned in the course may be valuable for travel and employment opportunities. On a daily basis, students will be required to do homework, memorize new vocabulary, orally participate in speaking of the Spanish language, and be actively engaged in the written units. Nearly one half of eighth graders take Spanish 1 as a full year option.

In addition, to the four Encore classes offered, HCMS Band is offered to all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. This program includes experience with Jazz Band, Marching Band, sectionals, and various Solo and Ensemble performances. All full Band rehearsals are held before school to eliminate conflicts with other events. Orchestra is also offered from 6:45 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. to all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Orchestra also has full rehearsals before school on the same days as Jazz Band. All Band and Orchestra sectionals, which provide small group intensive instruction, are held during Encore or Physical Education classes. Sectionals meet on a twice-a-month rotation. The sectional schedule is very creative and the directors work hard to allow the students enough time to practice during the school day while ensuring the students do not get behind in their other studies.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Using student longitudinal and triangular data from district common assessments, the PARCC and Fastbridge Assessments, we schedule heterogeneous mixed classes. Our curriculum scope and sequence was designed using the state model curriculum or Live Binders. Our teacher's professional learning communities are structured to support student learning standards. The special education teachers and interventionists are tasked with working with our students performing in the needs improvement category or the PARCC 1s and 2s. Our general education teachers work with the PARCC 3 students who are within 10-15 scale score points of meeting on the state assessment. Our honors teachers work closely with our students scoring the closest to a distinguished or PARCC 5 level. All teachers chose "target students" to focus on along with challenging the rest of the students in each of their classes. HCMS has two interventionist teachers who support student learning. One mathematics and one reading specialist works with students by pushing into and pulling out of classrooms to reteach foundational skills. These Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) are also scheduled before and after school, during lunch, and in a small group or one-to-one setting to truly meet each students' needs. The MTSS structure has been modified to keep students in class as much as possible and provide supplemental supports to their learning needs. The interventionists along with all the teachers in the building take time to truly understand the standards we are teaching and

how to scaffold the standards to explicitly teach within a mini lesson and allow time for inquiry.

Our Case Managers are assigned to ten to twelve students with special needs. These students have been identified as having either a speech or language, reading, mathematics or writing deficit. The case managers work closely with the core teachers, modify instruction, make accommodations to district assessments, and create a partnership with the parents and the students' IEP teams. These special educators work tirelessly to collect data, advocate for their students and model expected behaviors.

Social Workers in the building implement our social emotional curriculum within the advisory classroom. They have small group counseling sessions, one on one sessions, and also teach some of the health standards. The two social workers and psychologist ensure that our students learn coping strategies to use in social, academic and real world environments. All students are assigned by alphabet to a social worker. The social worker's presence in the building allows students to feel comfortable to ask for help or be more easily identified as needing more assistance through team meetings.

All of our teachers plan rigorous daily instruction. In order to reinforce modeling and reasoning standards we have Number Talk Tuesdays, Throwback Thursdays that help with spiraling the curriculum, and "writing in the air" assists with our speaking and listening standards. Additionally, focusing on the depth of standards instead of the breadth helps sustain our growth that was achieved during the prior year. Then we set our goal. Our goal is created by calculating the number of students who earned a scaled score on PARCC of 740-749. We then add the total number of students within this range and divide by the number of students in that specific grade level per subject area. This number sets the percentage of growth we would like to see within that given year, grade level and content.

Once the goal is shared with all teachers in the building we follow the following practice: In August and September the teachers are asked to get to know their students and have a data free month. They are tasked to build connections, find students' interests and what intrinsically motivates them. All the warmups/hooks within each lesson are prior grade level standards that should fall in the securely held knowledge category. All activities are planned to support the one or two standards the students will practice in each lesson. In October, the teachers are given their data and work with students who just barely met on PARCC. These would be the students who scored a 750-755. Each teacher selects three students per class period to work with more frequently, check in on them more often, call on them and build their confidence and self-esteem. Warmups for each lesson are developed using prior grade level standards. Direct instruction and mini lessons are always at grade level standards. November the focus is on students scoring within the 745-749 range. Similar strategies as previously stated but all activities are differentiated and include extension activities. December the range is 740-744 and warmups now include only grade level standards and include assessment questions that the students have shown mastery or evidence of learning. January the range is 735-739 with the same strategies of the previous month. February the teachers cycle back to the students they started the year working with more closely. March has a range of students from 745-749. April is the month the state assessment is given and throughout this month review activities of the major content standards are conducted.

Although our ELA and Mathematics classrooms are the two most assessed subjects, this methodology is an "all in approach." Science and social studies focus on information text with claim, evidence and reasoning. The Encore and Physical Education teachers support our core teachers and students by providing movement breaks. Our classrooms all have flexible seating, and we incorporate positive incentives and building self-confidence throughout the school day. All of our grade level teams have developed common assessments that are used to have professional dialogue on the success of standard implementation, inter-rater reliability, and provide opportunities to extend and challenge the students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

HCMS schedules a mandatory advisory program for every student to attend each day. This program, now attached to the mathematics block, allows our students access to the media center, a social emotional curriculum, necessary interventionists, related service providers, and special education case managers. One significant change in the last three years was made to our advisory period. Advisory was shortened by fourteen minutes to twenty-one minutes per day. This change increased instructional time for the mathematics curriculum while still allowing a daily advisory period to transpire. Lowering the advisory minutes was a component to increase our mathematics scores. It was important to recognize our responsiveness to our students and community's social emotional needs while maintaining the academic rigor across subject areas. The community expressed a need for growth beyond academics. Mawi Leadership was adopted, integrated in the advisory time, with no loss of core instruction. This change also allowed teachers to focus on teaching one content instead of two to three. The climate and culture was greatly impacted with this positive change to the schedule and allowed the teachers to be experts instead of spreading them too thin across multiple content areas.

HCMS is piloting the Mawi Leadership course and collecting data for other schools to learn from us. All students are enrolled in this course. "Turbo Leader" gives our students and staff skills to succeed in middle school and in the real world. Turbo Leader helps students and staff manage time, set goals, get organized, and learn how to make peer pressure work for instead of against them. By the end of the program, students will have higher confidence, new skills for success, and dozens of research based strategies to unlock their potential and measure success.

At HCMS, we strive to provide individualized educational experiences that maximize the strengths and potential of each student. All students have the opportunity to receive additional, free tutoring, from the students inducted into National Junior Honors Society. This opportunity takes place every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in the Media Center. Teachers are also available before and after school for those students who require additional assistance.

An extensive array of extracurricular opportunities is available to all HCMS students. We have activities ranging from Mathletes and Scholastic Bowl to National Junior Honor Society and Student Council. We also offer nearly every mainstream sport. While some athletic activities are tryout based programs, HCMS also provides ample opportunities for students to participate in intramurals which are non-tryout activities. Intramurals are a direct reflection of student interests.

HCMS also has orchestra, tiger band, jazz band and chorus which has over one half of the student population as active members. While being a member of a band or orchestra can be financially burdensome, the school board offers families in need the opportunity to still participate in the activity with financial assistance. This is just one example of where the Frankfort 157-C Board of Education has demonstrated the value of social equity by making all extra-curriculars accessible to families in need. The equity and unique opportunities provided at HCMS allow our students exposure to many fun, engaging and enriching social and academic opportunities.

We pride ourselves in providing these possibilities for our students and staff. The climate and culture is extremely positive when creating an educational setting that is designed to address the needs of a whole child. Having extensive opportunities for students to be involved allows all students a chance to be successful.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

HCMS chooses to teach our students the value of civic responsibility. We do this through various service projects throughout the year. Our students participate in projects to serve the needs of other communities, by giving of their time and service. Through these projects our students experience the value and impact of

giving to those in need and learn to be productive members of society. Supporting an inner city school of need, our active and veteran service people, the Frankfort Food Pantry, the Lincoln-Way Special Recreation Association, the Cystic Fibrosis and Rare Disease cures are just some of the many events our school puts on each year. In addition to these district-wide efforts, we actively engage our students in learning about diverse students, charities, and empathy.

The District's Charitable Giving Committee meets annually with parents, teachers, administrators, and students to reflect on the prior year and plan next year's events. Our district is also grateful to have such an invested parent teacher association. In Frankfort this group is referred to as FSP or Family School Partnership. Their mission is to strengthen the partnership between home and school through parent volunteer opportunities, student enrichment activities and fun family events. The FSP works hard to raise money to provide events for the students, families, and staff in our school district. The families and district staff work as a partnership to connect with the students in school and beyond the school day. This year's events have included Book Fair Nights, Exploration Night, nights out at minor league baseball and hockey games, and our most proud event called "Around the World." Around the World is a night where families within the district and community come and share their culture, traditions, religions, and foods. Students from all three district buildings join in to learn about their friend's heritage and have a great time connecting with diverse peoples.

The Education Foundation was formed to enrich the education of 157-C children by supplementing resources currently available to the district. The Foundation is another parent partnership. The Foundation raises funds to support teacher-written grants for projects and materials that directly benefit our children in the areas of art, literacy, technology, mathematics, physical education, science, social studies, and character-building programs. To date, The Education Foundation has contributed over \$1,800,000 to our schools! Together with the District and the community, the Foundation continues to raise funds through annual events.

Both of these organizations provide resources beyond what the district is able to afford. They also provide support in manpower by having volunteers in the building nearly every day of the school year. Bringing our families together enriches the student's school experience and working in collaboration with the staff is something unique to Frankfort. Our parents have a large and powerful impact on our young students. There is a true connection between home and school in Frankfort.

3. Professional Development:

In the forefront of every decision made at HCMS, is student academic achievement and social emotional wellbeing. The district has a five year strategic plan. One of the main goals within this plan is to focus on professional learning to improve instructional strategies. We expanded the Instructional Coach model to support ELA, Mathematics and Technology Integration. We Implemented a Professional Development (PD) schedule to maximize instructional time and reduce teacher time out of the classroom. We have trained teachers on Office 365 to create a virtual learning environment, offer in-district credit courses to support the goals of the district's Continuous Learning Plan, and allow teachers to be a part of the planning committee on what to focus on within these PD days.

As a school, the daily schedule was restructured to allow teachers to become content specialists. Two years ago teachers were instructing in multiple content areas, as well as multiple grade levels. Now, teachers instruct one content area, with all core teachers instructing in the same grade level the entire day. Available to the teachers are instructional coaches. These coaches assist teachers in best practices while providing feedback in a non-evaluative manner. With the changes in the structure of the schedule at HCMS, the opportunity for consistent Professional Learning Communities (PLC) was built into a teacher's day. On average, there are approximately four to five structured PLCs per week. This gives teachers the opportunity to have access to their team, administrators, social workers and content peers. However, no teacher loses personal plan time because of these meetings. Also during this PLC time, the team can meet with students and parents.

We have seen tremendous improvement in teacher delivery and instruction through the use of instructional

coaching by way of professional learning communities. Continuous classroom observations have made for a more fluid continuum of services, and working closely with outside consultants to continue the professional development throughout the academic year has provided our teachers with experts outside of the building. We continue to plan all professional development opportunities with the staff and consultants in conjunction with the District Directors for Instruction and Special Student Services. We use our growth on PARCC each year as a guide for what subjects to plan for and when to implement these changes. Our students are showing tremendous growth because our teachers have time to grow, learn, and reflect. Teachers and administrators enjoy their jobs and have time to improve their craft.

4. School Leadership:

Along with our positive PARCC assessment results, we improved in nearly all of our 5 Essential Survey categories. With the increase of accountability on student achievement, restructuring much of the school day, and moving staff around throughout the building to meet the needs of the new master schedule we were able to still see a less stressed staff and a positive moral with our staff and student body. Most often staff members feel more stress and feel a sense of discomfort with any level of change. However, with all of the changes made over the last three years we still scored in the “Most Implementation” in all areas of the 5 Essential Survey. These areas include Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Supportive Environment, Involved Families and Ambitious Instruction. 100 percent of our staff completed the survey. As administrators, we pride ourselves on the continued focus of a positive building climate and culture, developing a staff of learners, and continue to hold ourselves responsible for the success of both staff and students. Before any decision that is made we ask ourselves how the students and staff will be positively impacted by their decisions and what is our strategic plan to articulate a plan that is practical and efficient. The last question we ask ourselves is how we can support our teachers and students throughout this process.

The school leadership team at HCMS consists of three administrators, one principal and two assistant principals, an athletic director, and representatives from each team, a representative from special education, our school psychologist and a social worker. The three administrators have access to each team at least once a week and meet with the leadership team every other week after school. The philosophy of all the leaders in the building is a team approach and to never forget what it was like to be in the classroom working with students. We try to be visible to the students, staff, and parents as much as possible and even have students stay after school for tutoring with an administrator. Anytime a team has a problem we ask that they also bring their ideas for a solution. This team approach has not only worked well with our teams but also has created a dynamite relationship with the union leaders in the building and in the district. Furthermore, we have heard from many of our teachers, their spouses, and community members that HCMS is a fantastic place to educate our young adults and grow with them as professionals. We pride ourselves on the continuous improvement plan that incorporates all constituents and a practical approach that makes sense to our community. We have focused on improving communication with all stakeholders to effectively articulate the plans and goals of Hickory Creek Middle School. We try to never remain stagnant and know that like our students there is always room to grow and learn.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Over the past three years, Hickory Creek Middle School has shown tremendous growth on the PARCC assessment. This past year after receiving the Raising Student Achievement Award we shared our success story with other administrators, teachers and community members. We hope that our colleagues along with their students can be positively impacted by our methodology.

In 2015, our sixth grade class had 45 percent of students in Mathematics and 62 percent in ELA meeting or exceeding on the PARCC Assessment. Just three years later, that same cohort of students graduated in the spring of 2017 with 77 percent of them meeting or exceeding in Mathematics and 82 percent of them meeting or exceeding in ELA. To achieve those results we changed our master schedule, increased our instructional time in Mathematics, developed a framework for teaching within each content area, adjusted our advisory period, maximized our time on institute days and during faculty meetings, refocused our Professional Learning Community (PLC) times and agendas, maximized our time with our grade level team leaders, and collected data to drive our decisions.

We take great pride in this growth of 35 percent in Mathematics and 20 percent in ELA. We plan to continue bridging the gap between Mathematics and ELA, as well as get closer and closer to 100 percent of our students meeting or exceeding on the state assessment.

Our most impactful formula for success is our Professional Learning Community (PLC) Model. This model focuses on curriculum writing, assessment writing and results, as well as the social emotional well-being of each and every one of our students. Embedded within our school day is a daily Plan and PLC period for our teachers to follow. This back to back 84 minute time slot is so powerful for our teachers to plan, implement their lessons, and reflect using student's artifacts to drive their discussions.

We have a five day PLC model that is broken up by each day. Mondays are content meetings with all of the same content/core teachers meeting together. Tuesdays are team meetings that integrate all content members on each team. There are two teams per grade level and the social workers and building assistant principals push into these meetings on a bi-weekly rotation. The team spends time identifying students who may need extra academic or social emotional supports through MTSS, behaviors and patterns across classes, and put those thoughts into practice. Wednesdays are administrative PLCs with the principal focusing on best practices and modeling the four PLC questions: What do we expect our students to learn? How will we know they are learning? How will we respond when they don't learn? How will we respond if they already know it? Thursdays are Techie Thursdays where the technology instructional coach either presents a new instructional tool to use with students or offers an open lab model where teachers can come in and receive assistance planning a lesson and infusing 21st century skills. On Fridays, the teachers have another content day. However, unlike Monday where all the core teachers come together, we use Fridays for our co-teachers, special educators and interventionists with the core teachers, and honors teachers to plan together and focus more closely on the needs of their specific students and differentiated instruction for the honors or co-taught classes.

Another unique part of the PLC model is the time allotted to make connections with students. The teachers make positive phone calls home, work on reinforcing 'productive struggle', prioritizing their mini lessons, planning small group rotations, and peer observations that assist in vertical articulation and closing the gaps within our sixth to eighth grade continuum. This PLC model provides a platform to respond to student needs as frequently and in as much detail as possible.