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

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Achieve Charter Academy
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3250 Denton Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Canton   MI   48188-2110
City   State   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Wayne County

Telephone (734) 397-0960   Fax
Web site/URL
https://www.nhaschools.com/school
s/achieve/en/pages/default.aspx   E-mail   78.jconley@nhaschools.com

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*Ms. Cathy Henkenberns
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail chenkenberns@nhaschools.com

District Name Achieve Charter Academy   Tel.   (734) 397-0960
I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Brad Defoe
(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   1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   0 Middle/Junior high schools
   0 High schools
   0 K-12 schools

   1 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
   [X] 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	47	42	89
1	49	37	86
2	32	54	86
3	39	46	85
4	48	39	87
5	45	45	90
6	46	37	83
7	41	41	82
8	42	46	88
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	389	387	776

4.   Racial/ethnic composition of   <u>1</u> % American Indian or Alaska Native
     the school: <u>56</u> % Asian
         <u>14</u> % Black or African American
         <u>2</u> % Hispanic or Latino
         <u>0</u> % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
         <u>27</u> % White
         <u>0</u> % 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: <u>4</u>%

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 *to* the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	20
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	762
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6.   English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: <u>25</u> %
         <u>196</u> Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
<u>Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bisaya, Cantonese, Chinese Mandarin, Dutch, Farsi, French, Gujarti, Hindi, Ibo, Kannada, Korean, Malay, Marathi, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese</u>

7.   Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: <u>14</u> %
     Total number students who qualify: <u>110</u>

8. Students receiving special education services: <u>6</u> %

   <u>49</u> 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>8</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>2</u> Developmentally Delayed	<u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</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: <u>6</u>

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	4
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 <u>28:1</u>

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%	95%	97%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

    If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

To offer the families of the Canton community a k-8 school that has a challenging academic program and a culture that values integrity, academic excellence, and accountability, where each and every student is given the opportunity for success in high school, college and beyond.

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

Students are selected to attend Achieve Charter Academy through a lottery process that follows the state guidelines for charter school lotteries.

PART III – SUMMARY

Achieve Academy serves an academically and demographically diverse community of families in the Canton community, as well as some surrounding communities. We serve over 775 students, in the Canton area as well as surrounding communities. Achieve was founded in 2009 and is proud of the diversity our community represents. Achieve Academy has fostered an academically rigorous learning environment that has excelled in robotics, spelling competitions and science Olympiad. Historically, we have continued to foster an environment that is grounded in moral guidance and a love for learning.

Our community uses a positive approach to support student emotionally, academically, physically and culturally. Our moral focus virtues are practiced and taught explicitly on a daily basis and enforced through community service projects. Our community is proud that our students are grounded in strong academic and moral foundation. We build a sense of community by celebrating our cultures and differences daily. Our multicultural celebration is an event that spotlights the many cultures in our school and values the unique arts, entertainment and foods of our families here at Achieve. We are proud of our community, our academic and moral focus, as well as our representation in the Canton community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

We view the Achieve Charter Academy curriculum as much more than a collection of courses, textbooks, software, standards and other tools that drive teaching and learning. Our curriculum is all that and more: It is the very foundation upon which we strive to place and maintain a new font of hope and opportunity for children.

For these reasons, we bring a special passion to implementing the curriculum provided with our education management partner, National Heritage Academies (NHA). The curriculum has been carefully aligned with Common Core Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts, mathematics, Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for science, Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE) for social studies, art, and music, physical education – and our passion for helping our students overcome long odds and create a better tomorrow for themselves and this community.

In partnership with NHA, we completed a thorough process of curriculum alignment to ensure that Achieve Charter's curricula is aligned to the state standards. We reviewed various English Language Arts and mathematics curricular tools that had been designed to align to the standards (for both k-5 and 6-8). Pre-defined rubrics were used to determine which tools best aligned to the CCSS and would best meet the needs of our students. In addition, a gap analysis was conducted to determine what was missing from the tools compared to the standards and allow additional resources to be selected to cover any identified gaps. We use this same process to select new curriculum resources and instructional materials.

The curriculum resources provide teachers with direction regarding what to teach and when to teach it. These resources—which include interim assessments and blueprints, yearlong planners, scope and sequence documents, among others—are developed and reviewed by NHA's Curriculum and Instruction department. Achieve Charter teachers and deans have opportunities to provide feedback to NHA regarding these documents and when needed revisions are made to these resources.

With high-quality instruction, solid curricular tools to support instruction, and rigorous assessment, the curriculum promotes academic success for students and equips them with the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to be college ready.

We also utilize commercial programs to support the implementation of our educational program. Below is a list of these programs.

Program Name Subject Grade Aligned to curriculum framework?
Reading Street, ELA, k-5, Yes
Holt Literature, ELA, 6-8, Yes
Math Expressions, Math, k-5, Yes
Big Ideas, Math, 6-8, Yes
Foss Learning Modules
Delta Learning Modules, Science, k-5, Yes
Science Fusion, Science, 6-8, Yes
K-3 Online NHA Resources, Social Studies, k-3, Yes
Michigan Studies, Social Studies, 4, Yes
History Alive: American's Past, Social Studies, 5, Yes
The World and Its People, Social Studies, 6, Yes
Human Heritage: A World History, Social Studies, 7, Yes
The American Journey: Early Years, Social Studies, 8, Yes

Our curricular tools differentiate in a way that seeks to help students of all achievement levels to learn and grow. In particular, the curricular programs (i.e., Reading Street, Big Ideas Math) include intervention strategies for students who have not yet mastered grade-level content and also support the learning needs of

students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners. These tools also provide instructional strategies for students who have already mastered grade-level content and are ready to advance. For example, Reading Street provides "Differentiated Instruction" pages in our Teacher's Editions, allowing teachers to target strategic, on-level, or advanced learning needs, including the needs of special students with individualized education plans. To target the learning needs of identified ELs, Reading Street also publishes resources like their ELL and ELD readers, which are designed to support English language acquisition through targeted opportunities for students to read, write, speak, and listen at their current levels of language development. Resource such as these provide our teachers with multiple options for instruction to meet the learning needs of all students. Similarly, Math Expressions provides differentiated instruction cards that provide intervention, on-level, and "challenge" activities for students.

Further, our curriculum creates opportunities for advanced learners to be challenged with higher-order thinking skills and project-based learning. For example, classroom teachers offer accelerated students differentiated instruction and extended opportunities in various ways, including: enrichment; differentiation in content, process, products, and/or learning environment; infusion of higher-order thinking skills; and individualized learning opportunities. We also provide students with opportunities to accelerate their learning through various curriculum-based field experiences, community service projects, and high school and college visits.

Character development is an explicit and integrated component of the curriculum. Individual responsibility, integrity, personal character, and effort are important contributors to success in school and life. In addition, we strive to instill character traits such as perseverance because these traits are highly correlated with college success. Each month we have a focal virtue differentiated by grade level. While students are working on the exact same objectives, differentiation naturally happens because each grade is studying the virtues from a slightly different perspective. To support this, we have Virtue Progression Charts that outline the development of each virtue with grade specific definitions and behaviors that are unique for each grade from kindergarten through eighth grade, allowing teachers to clearly see how each virtue becomes more complex and challenging with each subsequent grade. This intentional scaffolding allows students to deepen their understanding and extend their ability to display each virtue as they progress from grade to grade. Through intentional moral focus lessons, students develop and practice these virtues until they become ingrained habits, building and maintaining strong personal character while developing the qualities necessary to achieve academic success and become good citizens.

Students also participate in moral focus assemblies, during which staff and other students speak on the monthly virtue and how they have implemented this virtue in their own lives. Students are encouraged to share their experiences, and their progress in developing good character is recognized.

Schools implementing NHA's educational program have a track record of academic success with students, regardless of socio-economic or other factors, including students with disabilities and English learners. This track record has been achieved through top-quartile academic growth rates that lead ultimately to higher proficiency rates. There is considerable evidence confirming the effectiveness of NHA's educational approach.

NHA partner schools have established a commendable academic record of serving students who are the most likely to be in academic risk, confirming the viability of the curriculum.

School leadership, in partnership with NHA, evaluates the curriculum and effectiveness of our curricular program by monitoring the fidelity of implementation, soliciting teacher feedback, and analyzing student learning results. NHA is responsible for selecting new curriculum resources and instructional materials for new grades or courses.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Achieve Academy offers enhanced curricular areas to all students in kindergarten through 8th grade multiple times per week. Our students are supported in the visual arts, physical education, music, technology and library/media following our national standards progressing. Students attend classes daily and acquire skills

that support the full development of the whole child in the arts.

Our staff works collaboratively with regional staff to continue further development of these particular curricular areas and ensure alignment of skills. Students showcase music and art development through arts shows and performances that highlight student growth and development.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Tiered approach to instruction is essential in closing achievement gaps at Achieve Academy. We have a strong focus on differentiated instructional practices that ensure the use of data actively to plan for individual and small group needs. The master school schedule is driven from the small group and intervention needs of the building, allowing for daily small group and individualized instruction.

Achieve Academy utilized research based tools to support student growth using this model. Common assessments are developed by National Heritage Academies in both reading and math and administered to students several times per year. The assessment data is used to drive instruction by creating groups of students based on represented needs.

Our largest achievement gap is present between our IEP and non-IEP students. We continue to work diligently to provide appropriate supports and services, as well as opportunities for support. Teachers are spending time learning about research based strategies to close this achievement gap and understanding each students disability and how to support each child.

Overall, Achieve Academy is a high performing school that continues to support student growth and achievement. We continue to focus on meeting each child's academic level by offering advanced placement courses. We allow students to continue to advance through our curriculum as demonstrated in our interim assessments. A highly rigorous and challenging academic curriculum is expected in all of our classrooms.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

We are intentional and systematic with developing a culture of achievement and a culture of care. It starts with Moral Focus. We have an NHA designed Moral Focus curriculum that highlights and develops one virtue each month. These virtues are taught in the classroom 3 days per week and during morning assembly 3 days per week. This morning assembly, called Opening Ceremony, is a time when all grade levels assemble in the gym and enjoy poems, skits, and video clips related to the monthly virtue. More impressive, is the content is created by students. On select days, the principal and deans create lessons. We recite a moral focus creed together as a school community daily.

Our students are motivated by weekly positive recognition such as All-Stars, High Fives and Positive Paws at appropriate grade levels. Students are awarded with weekly prizes and fun days on a trimester bases.

Teachers who attend professional development are charged with the responsibility of "building" others with their knowledge. This is done through breakout sessions at staff meetings. Staff members are acknowledged for their pedagogy and contributions to school culture in other ways. Our teachers are honored and recognized through our high five system which allows our entire staff community to recognize one another for doing good deeds and supporting one another.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

Achieve Academy works to engage families and communities in many ways. At the building level, the principal hosts a meeting called Principal's Coffee. During this meeting, the principal leads a conversation related to school improvement goals, data, or school issues that interest parents. It also gives parents and opportunity to interface and have conversations with the principal. Parents are also engaged with opportunities to volunteer in the building. Often times, they make copies, support with mail distribution, volunteer in the office, and use the laminating machine. Because our school does not have a formal cafeteria and students eat lunch in the classroom, we rely on parents to volunteer during lunch. Parents appreciate this opportunity because it creates the space for them to interact with their children and their children's friends in a relaxed setting. In eighth grade, parents take the lead on organizing the 8th grade trip and related fundraisers. Achieve Academy has an active PTO that frequently does fundraising and community events that engage all families enrolled. By way of directly supporting teachers, parents support with small group instruction and help with bulletin boards. Recognition is the final piece related to engaging families who have volunteered in our school. Parents are able to enter their names into a raffle for a parent parking space or lunch with their child. We see parent involvement as in integral piece of our success. To engage new families, we have a Parent Ambassador who makes the initial contact and sets up a tour. We see this as a chance to understand the needs of new families and help them understand what Achieve Charter Academy offers in terms of education and environment. Our community involvement and close connections with Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the Michigan Humane Society, Canton Public Library, and Eastern Michigan University. Through fundraisers, social awareness, and volunteerism, these partnerships allow us to further develop our goal of building students who are not only smart, but also have good moral character.

3. **Professional Development:**

Developing our Professional Development Plan is a 2-pronged approach that requires information from the school improvement plan and National Heritage Academies (NHA), our Management Company. NHA creates a regional plan for PD for their schools. This PD is based on our curriculum, CCSS. During these regional meetings, teachers are organized by grade and content area. Teachers as well as content experts present on a variety of topics including instructional methods, data analysis, planning, culture, and assessment. Teachers exit these sessions with strategies to improve their direct instruction, guided instruction with students, collaborative learning with students, and independent work with students. Participant engagement is promoted through discussion, practice, and reflection related to the topic.

Teachers are offered a thorough onboarding at New Teacher Orientation (NTO) led and delivered by the NHA Curriculum and Instruction Department. It is our vision at NTO that the teacher receives the skills necessary to manage a classroom, plan lessons, and be prepared to be acculturated to NHA. They will meet colleagues involved in this learning experience, along with the Curriculum and Instruction team committed to their support. Regional trainings are also offered 2-3 times a year for every NHA teacher with sessions that are intentional and focused for the varying content areas. Best practices for instruction, raising student achievement and opportunities for collaboration with other teachers are among the goals for the regional days. Aside from regional aspect, at the building level, PD comes through direct coaching from Deans and content specific support from outside of NHA. This gives our teachers an opportunity to add other components and make minor adjustments to the expectations laid out in regional PD. The impact on teachers is consistency with instructional practices and initiatives. With this consistency teachers become better at their craft. It also allows for a common language and similar instructional strategies across schools. This creates a process that can be duplicated hence allowing us to forecast student success and possible gaps.

4. **School Leadership:**

At Achieve Academy, leadership is more than a title. We have a variety of formal and informal leaders that help our school remain successful. The school improvement plan and data therein drive our instructional goals. Having a model that includes frequent meetings allows important conversations related to school improvement to be ongoing. There are 3 instructional deans, one for grades k-2, one for grades 3-5 and one for grades 6-8. The principal meets weekly with the instructional deans. During these weekly meetings, the dean and principal discuss topics related to teacher development, data, and culture. In addition, the principal does co-observations with the deans to understand building needs. In turn, the Deans in turn have biweekly, one-on-one coaching conversations with teachers about data and instructional practices. Aside from these meetings, there are vertical planning meetings and planned release days where teachers have time to analyze data and plan for next steps. These meetings are led by grade level teams. Within each grade level there are the teachers. These lead teachers facilitate weekly grade level meetings that focus on planning, assessing student work, and analyzing data. In addition, lead teachers are part of the school-wide leadership team. The school-wide leadership team uses the School Improvement Plan and the NHA developed School-wide Framework to determine their leadership focus for the year. This year, the School Leadership Team is focused on three specific tasks: improving student attendance, vertical planning and data analysis, and systematizing a process for on-boarding new staff members. Each member of the School Leadership Team is committed to driving a school wide plan that will bring resolution to these areas and positively impact our building. Human and capital resources are prioritized to ensure that students are receiving the services they need. For example, Title I dollars are used to secure professional development and high-quality intervention staff. Interventionists schedule their time with students based on our master schedule, which includes a workshop block.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been hugely instrumental in our success is having a culture of care. Having a culture of care means that we show care and concern for students, but also for each other. We celebrate students' successes as much as we do students' efforts. This happens when families recognize this, and for that reason, we've had some families for all 9 years and continue to bring siblings to us, as all of their children have been students at Achieve Charter. As staff members, we acknowledge each other for the great work we do. We celebrate our school's accomplishments, no matter how small! As a school community, we make efforts to learn from each other. We train each other when returning from PDs and share resources. Many of the staff members have been employed at Achieve Charter since we opened in 2009 and close relationships have been established. We have celebrated weddings and births as well as cried for one another as we've experienced losses over the years. Without this culture of care, we'd have higher staff turnover which would negatively impact the connections we'd be able to make with each other.