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   [X] Charter   [ ] Magnet   [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Sandra Brighton

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

Official School Name Socrates Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3909 Weddington Road

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

Matthews   NC   28105-6673
City   State   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County

Telephone (704) 321-1711   Fax

Web site/URL http://www.socratesacadamy.us   E-mail   sbrighton@socratesacademy.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. Larry Peroulas

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)   E-mail lperoulas@socratesacademy.us

District Name Socrates Academy   Tel.   (704) 321-1711
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. Larry Peroulas

(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	43	33	76
1	32	46	78
2	42	38	80
3	23	54	77
4	39	39	78
5	40	40	80
6	35	37	72
7	31	34	65
8	34	35	69
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	319	356	675

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
   the school: 11 % Asian
                                          6 % Black or African American
                                          9 % Hispanic or Latino
                                          1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                          69 % 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: 4%

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	12
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	676
(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: 4 %
                                                        29 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Albanian (1), Amharic (2), Greek (4), Gujarati (1), Hindi (1), Portuguese (1), Romanian (2), Russian (8), Spanish (5), Tagalog (2), Telugu (1), Turkish (1)

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %
   Total number students who qualify: 58

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

     61 Total number of students served

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

5 Autism	1 Multiple Disabilities
0 Deafness	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deaf-Blindness	18 Other Health Impaired
3 Developmentally Delayed	25 Specific Learning Disability
2 Emotional Disturbance	7 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
1 Intellectual Disability	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

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.	32
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.	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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   20:1

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%	97%	97%	96%	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 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.

Encouraging students to reach their full potential in a high achieving, multicultural, disciplined, partial Greek immersion program through the use of the Socratic Method.

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

Students who reside in the state of North Carolina are eligible to apply to the school through a public lottery. Any child who qualifies under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school also qualifies for admission at Socrates Academy. The Academy does not discriminate against any student on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, gender, or disability. Socrates Academy explains in writing through its admission policy document the process that is followed by all candidates, (e.g., siblings, children of current employees, and students who left the school). For instance, siblings of current scholars are placed at the top of the waitlist for the following school year if a sibling application is submitted.
There are two lottery applications that are updated annually on the third Monday of November on our website: (a) the new enrollment application, and (b) the sibling application. During this open enrollment time, a minimum of four Open Houses are hosted at the school by the leadership team during daytime hours and nighttime hours to accommodate all families. Tour Tuesdays are also available for families to sign up and have a tour during school hours. All lottery applications must have a postmark date of no later than the last day of January. The live lottery is held the second week of February, and it is open to the public. Lottery winners and waitlisted applicants are notified by mail within one week of the drawing. Applicants who apply after the January 30th deadline or after the live-lottery takes place are placed at the end of the waitlist. New applications must be filled out each year.

PART III – SUMMARY

Socrates Academy is located in suburban Matthews, North Carolina. The Academy opened in 2005 with 67 students in grades K-1. The school grew to include grades K-8, with enrollment of approximately 700 Scholars. Current population consists of 1% American Indian, 11% Asian, 6% African American, 9% Hispanic, 1% Pacific Islander, 69% White, and 3% Multiracial. Additionally, 4.3% of our population are English Language Learners whose native languages are Albanian, Amharic, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Telugu, or Turkish. Our current free and reduced lunch population is 9%. The charter plans to include a high school in the near future.

This is a public charter school that provides partial immersion in Greek Language and Culture. Scholars are taught Language and Mathematics in English and in Greek from Kindergarten. Instruction is provided by highly qualified American teachers and Greek teachers in collaboration with the Greek government. The Academy plans travel to Greece with Middle-School Scholars, who engage in language experience with students from other countries who are also part of a partial immersion program (e.g., Australia, France), Greek students and University professors. Such collaborations are a consistent practice. For instance, in the 2017-2018 academic year, teleconferences (five per school year) are organized with the House of Science at Patras University (Greece). Scholars at Socrates collaborate with scholars at Arsakeio elementary at Patras solving math problems using math concepts in geometry (Euclidean approach) and in logic syllogisms (Aristotelian syllogisms applicable in computer science). The Board of Directors also approved a pilot research study with 7th-graders to be conducted by the Department of STEM Education at the UNC Charlotte in collaboration with the STEM Department at the University of Patras. The study is on Mathematical Tools and Argumentation and examines how mathematical tools support Scholars' argumentation about proportionality in transformations. The Academy believes in Innovation and evidence-based practices and collaborates with UNC Charlotte for student-teachers' clinical placements. This is a long-term collaboration (occurs twice within an academic year). The Academy also engages in research studies with UNC Charlotte Faculty on innovative approaches. For instance, in 2017 we collaborated with Dr. Cindy Gibson on a project for middle schoolers and in 2017-2018 with Dr. Philippakos on a reading and writing instructional approach that was based on collaborative reasoning and strategy instruction with self-regulation.

The Academy's mission is to work in partnership with parents and community to encourage students to reach their full potential by developing critical, analytical thinking skills and becoming self-confident in a high achieving, multicultural, disciplined environment. The school has a strong partnership with families who are partners in the academic experience. Therefore, there are several events that embrace parental involvement and presence. The Academy hosts annual middle school dances, movie nights for scholars in grades 4 and 5, a grade 1 to 3 mother-son bowling, a K to 3 daddy-daughter dance, an annual NJHS blood drive, BINGO nights, Veteran's Day performance by first grade scholars where the color guard is invited and all friends and family members of scholars are honored. Further, there is an Author celebration by second grade-writers. The Parent Faculty Involvement (PFI) also (among other events) hosts an annual event where parents make pies for all members, and quarterly it hosts breakfasts or lunches for Faculty appreciation.

Within the academy emphasis is given to Scholars developing proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics both in English and Greek through the use of the Socratic Method, which encourages thinking "beyond the answer" and promotes students' critical thinking skills. The Academy's goals are to support in collaboration with families the graduation from the school of a complete person (a Global Citizen) and not only of a student. The Academy believes in teaching and inspiring children to reach the right answer through discussion, analysis, and exploration; thus, it promotes questioning and discovering knowledge through inquiry. This emphasis on critical thinking skills and purposeful questioning is supported further through chess classes, spelling bees, and math Olympiad that help students apply their knowledge outside of the classroom settings. In reading, scholars engage in literature analysis and a thorough understanding of genre, purpose, and author bias. Similarly, in writing they engage into rhetorical analysis to identify the author's purpose, the genre's demands and assignment's demands before they work on planning and writing. Students are encouraged to be writers and thinkers, to develop inquiry in reading and writing and science

and demonstrate their knowledge through dialogic interactions/debates and writing.

The Academy strives to nurture Scholars with confidence and leadership skills. Therefore, Scholars develop and gain self-confidence through positions in student government, safety patrol, and bullying-prevention teams. The Academy focuses on Positive Behavior Support programs, encourages appropriate awards and consequences for student choices explaining through these practices the value of self-reflection.

The Academy believes in Continued Teacher support and growth (growth mindset) and provides opportunities for teachers to attend Professional Development sessions at Conferences. Further, the Leadership supports the application of "shared knowledge" among faculty. Therefore, faculty meets and problem-solves. Teachers coteach or coach each other.

Socrates Academy earned the distinction, "Honor School of Excellence with High Growth in All Tested Areas" (2008-2012). In 2013, Socrates Academy achieved a 74.3% composite compared to local school districts Charlotte-Mecklenburg (47.2%), Union (59%) and North Carolina state (44.7%). The top performing schools from 2011-2012 performed at an average of 77.6% on the 2013-14 EOGs and Socrates was one of them. In 2017 the Academy is honored to be nominated as a National Blue Ribbon School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The Curriculum Committee, which consists of distinguished faculty from UNC Charlotte with expertise in various aspects of education, mathematics, science, technology, Greek language, literature and culture, and other world languages, the leadership team, and teachers, has provided guidelines for a scope and sequence in the curriculum that aligns with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, Common Core, World Language Essential Standards, and supports students' critical thinking skills. Within this scope and sequence, Faculty has identified the resources to be used (e.g., literature), while the instructional methods applied are pedagogically sound and innovative. When programs are used, they are evidence-based and have a strong research support as the academy strives to provide a strong Core program and differentiate instruction to address all students' academic needs (Tiers of instruction).

Theoretically, the Academy merges sociocultural approaches with cognitive ones developing a curriculum for all students. Pedagogically, instruction is based on the Socratic methodology and on the gradual release of responsibility with teacher modeling, modeling with coping, guided practice and student independent application of taught strategies and skills. The Academy applies strategy instruction in reading and writing with the application of coping methods, emphasis on self-regulation and goal setting, and the use of models. The learning environment of the Socrates Academy is student centered and focuses on a multicultural curriculum. An inter-disciplinary teaching methodology enables our students to think and read critically and analytically, question statements of fact and opinion, write expository and creative works, debate issues and understand advanced vocabulary and concepts.

Socrates Academy teachers provide instruction that is based on evidence-based practices and pedagogy that addresses: Reading and writing connections, writing across the curriculum, critical thinking and reflection. Starting from its early grades students learn phonological awareness with an emphasis on phoneme manipulations and the relation of those with graphemes. The alphabetic principle is fully applied with support in fluency in first grade, continuing with comprehension and vocabulary. Scholars at grade levels K-2 learn to read well by immersion in intensive phonics with emphasis on word recognition and fluency. The phonics method has been demonstrated to break through diagnosed learning disabilities and accelerate the progress of children who are reading below grade level. Within this continuum, genre knowledge is addressed and writing across the curriculum for students to demonstrate knowledge and inquire knowledge.

Inquiry is promoted by the Socratic Method. Teachers model an inquiring, probing mind by continually probing into the subject with questions. Questions are used to arouse curiosity and at the same time serve as a logical, incremental, step-wise guide that enables students to figure out about a complex topic or issue with their own thinking and insights. The main benefits of the teaching by inquiry are that it excites students' curiosity and arouses their thinking, rather than stifling it. This is the method applied in all subjects, including Science and Social Studies, while addressing all standards in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the Common Core.

Science is taught through the use of the Socratic Method. It is inquiry based to ignite the inquiring minds of young scholars. In all grades, a hands-on approach is used for learning. An outdoor classroom, created by an Eagle Scout, allows our scholars to learn outdoors and release the newly hatched ladybugs from kindergarten and butterflies from second grade annually. Additionally, a flower and vegetable garden provides hands-on learning where our first grade scholars see first-hand the life cycle of a plant, and our third grade scholars explore the composition of soil. Our second grade scholars are visited by scientists from UNC Charlotte who are members of SPIE (Society of Photo-Optical Instrumentation Engineers), which allows our scholars to gain a better understanding of the scientific process. Yearlong, our middle school scholars learn through labs. One of the scholars' favorite labs involves obtaining samples from around the school to find the location where the most germs hide.

The Social Studies curriculum is embedded into literacy, through project-based learning, reading and writing tasks, and field trips at each grade level. The content of social studies is addressed through the use of

informational text and novel studies. This allows a deeper understanding of the material students learn as they are able to learn about the context and read information from primary, secondary sources, and engage into discussions about perspective and bias. Fourth grade scholars participate in a Junior Achievement program, which ends in a field trip to Biz Town where they apply their entrepreneurial and economic knowledge and skills learned throughout the year. Eighth grade scholars travel to Washington, DC annually, where they visit museums, experience our nation's capital, and participate in the wreath laying at the tomb of the unknown soldier. A history club of middle school scholars participates in the National History Day competition.

With regards to specific Programs, the Singapore Math program is used in elementary grades to promote the development of critical thinkers, utilizing math concepts through whole group discussion, collaborative planning, and problem solving. The approach used in Singapore Math is concrete, pictorial, and then abstract. Manipulatives are used to create hands-on learning experiences for the scholars, fewer topics are taught more in depth. There is an emphasis on thinking skills and mental math, multi-step problem solving with a model drawing approach, multiple methods are given to explain concepts and skills, and there is constant review. By incorporating fundamentally sound lessons, innovative activities, and difficult multi-step words problems, the Singapore Primary Math series provides our scholars with a well-rounded and relevant curriculum that challenges them to become problem-solvers and mathematical thinkers.

Values and character are instilled in Scholars through a learning process that utilizes teaching moments. These teaching moments are teacher-led discussions that have the goal of nurturing the principles and values of self-knowledge and knowledge of others including; honesty; integrity, life-long learning; social awareness, and leadership. Overall, self-regulation with goal setting and progress monitoring and reflection is promoted across the curriculum and all disciplines and practices of scholars, faculty, and leadership.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Academy offers several opportunities for student involvement in Arts, Language, and Technology. Drama classes, Greek, Spanish, and Chinese languages, music and technology are offered to promote speaking and listening skills.

In grades 6 to 8 Scholars attend drama class three to four times per week. By participating in the different roles involved in theatre-making they gain self-confidence and become comfortable with public performance by taking on leadership positions, practicing collaboration, and developing skills in group-problem solving. Students also improve their fluency through repeated oral readings and role playing using self-written work to the plays of Shakespeare.

The elementary music program supports grades K-5th grade with classes once a week for 50-minutes for grades 2-5 and twice a week for 25 minutes for Kindergarten-1st grade. Scholars learn essential skills such as improvisation, rhythm, melody and harmony which follows the North Carolina standards of music. Scholars explore their creativity as they engage in learning percussion instruments in younger grades and melodic instruments in upper grades as the Academy applies the Orff system of music education. This helps Scholars transition into the band program (elective in grades 6 to 8).

Technology is integrated throughout the disciplines using programs in both English and Greek. As early as kindergarten, scholars visit the computer lab once per week to learn how to use PowerPoint, practice rhyming words on game sites, and they type sight words and insert images in Microsoft Word and learn basic tools. In first grade, the scholars learn how to research on the computer, learn PowerPoint applications. In second grade, they use their personal accounts on Microsoft Office to practice mouse skills; they learn how to use the Snipping Tool, and typing skills. In grades 3 to 8, Scholars develop presentations for core classes. They also learn how to evaluate websites, to conduct research for projects. Students also create Sway presentations to display their knowledge about historical figures and will also create one as a digital portfolio this year. Teachers Skype frequently with other countries and areas of the United States (e.g., Egypt, Greece, Yellowstone National Park) making learning authentic. Faculty engages with the support of the Technology facilitator in use of tools such as Nearpod, OneNote, Schoolnet, Quizizz, Go Formative, Edpuzzle, Flipgrid and many more.

In grades K-8, the scholars at Socrates Academy are exposed to a partial language immersion in Greek for literacy and mathematics and become very knowledgeable of the Greek culture. The curriculum follows the North Carolina State Standards and World Language Standards; thus, the partial immersion language program focuses on the skills and methods that are essential for the children to read and write in a dual language. Students engage in language experience and learn the parts of speech through application. The emphasis of the program is on techniques that can facilitate phonological awareness, basic phonological segmentation and reading between the ages of 5 and 9. In the early grades, dialogue and meaningful conversations are used to practice skills. During the 2017-18 school year, a pilot program was introduced in grades K-2, where a co-teaching strategy was used to teach mathematics in Greek with both the American and Greek teachers.

Scholars in grade five take one semester of Spanish and one semester of Chinese (one hour per week). Scholars are introduced to both languages and their respective cultures, and make a choice to pursue either of the languages in grades 6-8. This foreign language is taken in addition to the partial Greek immersion.

Socrates Academy follows the North Carolina Healthful Living Essential Standards for health and physical education. This curriculum is differentiated so each student can achieve success at his or her level. Students are taught essential skills necessary for participation in a wide variety of team sports, individual sports, and lifetime activities.

Health and physical education classes are taught by certified teachers. Students in kindergarten and first grade attend two classes per week for 25 minutes; 3rd -5th grade scholars attend one-hour class per week and 6th to 8th scholars attend two-three one-hour classes per week. In addition to structured physical education, students in grades K-8 attend physical activity daily (30 minutes).

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

Socrates Academy has a strong Core (Tier I) curriculum and utilizes a multi-tiered framework for instruction which promotes school improvement through engaging, research-based academic and behavioral practices. Our multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) employs a systems approach using data-driven problem-solving to support and promote growth for all. The following section further explains the application of MTSS.

Core instruction (Tier I) consists of evidenced based practices demonstrated to produce outcomes for students. Thus, reading instruction incorporates Interactive read alouds, shared reading, dialogic reading (for Kindergarten students the latter), with written responses for the purposes of reflection and application of genre knowledge within the context of the discipline. To enhance the high-quality core instruction, Socrates Academy utilizes explicit instruction with our inquiry-based model. Explicit instruction is the utilized methodology when students have little or no background knowledge and/or a history of difficulty with the content. All classroom practices have the components of systematic instruction including modeling, deliberate/frequent feedback, scaffolding, and practice. Emphasis is placed on developing proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics both in English and Greek through the use of the Socratic Method. The Socratic method is an integral part of instruction at Socrates Academy. This method of thought and analysis has been in use since the time of the ancient Greeks and has been recognized as not only an effective teaching tool, but also an engaging way for students to take an active role in their own education. Socratic teaching focuses on giving students questions, not answers.

Technology is seamlessly integrated throughout instruction. Students use technology not only daily, but also have access to a variety of tools that match the task at hand and provide them the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of content. Teachers use technology to increase student engagement and response rate. Teachers also use technology as an alternative way for students to provide responses.

Tiers of instruction are supported through a consistent application of screening, examination, progress monitoring for all students. Thus, the Academy identifies students for whom Tier I instruction is not sufficient and then differentiates based on students' needs. In reading this may be an emphasis on word recognition and fluency, fluency-comprehension, vocabulary-comprehension with specific goals within

(e.g., learning and application of beginning and ending blends in isolation and in the context of reading). Students whose academic skills fall below benchmark and put them at risk compared to their peers on the screening measures are considered for placement in intervention in addition to core instruction. Socrates Academy's intervention support for these at-risk students includes the following features: strong evidence-base for its effectiveness; provided in addition to core instruction; targeted and matched to specific skills that an at-risk struggling student lacks; and implemented with fidelity.

Socrates Academy utilizes a comprehensive and efficient assessment system using multiple measures and is culturally appropriate. The assessment system measures critical areas within literacy, mathematics, and behavior/social-emotional functioning. The data gathered within the assessment system is designed to allow effective problem solving at all tiers and across all student groups to design responsive instruction for all students.

The assessment system serves the following purposes: inform instruction, identify students who are at-risk, determine why students are at-risk, monitor student progress, and determine outcomes. For these purposes, the Academy uses mClass (literacy assessment for screening and progress monitoring), NWEA-MAP (literacy and mathematics assessment for screening, identification and progress monitoring), North Carolina End of Grade (literacy and mathematics assessment as outcome measure), and Ellinomatheia (Greek Language assessment as outcome measure).

Grade level teams meet every nine weeks in data teams to analyze core data and problem solve regarding student response to core instruction. Problem solving conversations are guided by the following questions: (1) What is the goal? (2) What is the current status for that goal? (3) What is the status for students across levels of performance? and (4) What do data suggest about students' challenges? What are the instructional challenges? How can we further challenge our high performers; How can we support our low performers? (5) How big is the gap between where we are and need to be? What is our timeline?

Teams are encouraged to consider and shape instructional changes based on what Faculty can control at Socrates Academy – the instruction, the curriculum, and the environment. Thus, instruction is evidence-based across disciplines and the academy differentiates for all students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Socrates Academy cultivates a positive school climate that creates a healthy culture. This is done by first mutually agreeing to trust and respect among stakeholders and making sure that everyone's point of view is appreciated and voice is heard. All members of the Academy work daily to create an environment where both students and Faculty feel valued. Each day at Socrates all grade levels start with a type of Morning Meeting that focuses on sending Scholars into the day with an open heart and mind, feeling good about what they do. Faculty and Supporting Staff can be seen throughout the week in a "huddle" as we team up to check on with each other.

Scholars can be observed taking ownership of their work and are motivated to seek understanding—not to merely complete tasks or to get good grades. This looks like routine and consistent practice of the Socratic Seminar in grades 2-8 where Scholars are highly engaged in rich dialogue and critical conversations with each other. We realize that effective communication is a key component to a successful school. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program has been implemented to prevent problem behavior and promote achievement for all students. We have professionally developed teachers on how to engage with scholars and maintain positive and nurturing relationships. Students are recognized often and rewarded for improved academics and behavior through tickets. The tickets allow them to be eligible for weekly rewards and events.

Faculty and Supporting Staff (Both American and Greek) are recognized monthly through various awards that are presented in Faculty meetings. Teachers also have multiple opportunities to qualify for a jeans pass, duty free lunch and other incentives. Alongside this, over half of the staff have taken advantage of attending an off campus professional development or workshop of their choice that is funded by the school.

The Academy focused on the social and emotional well-being of our students by incorporating trauma-informed practices which ensure that school employees can identify and appropriately respond to students who may have been exposed to traumatic or stressful events. The Scholar-support/counseling department has two interns (one who focuses on play therapy) that further supports Scholars in addition to the main counselor. At Socrates there is a focus on restorative-justice practices that help students process, learn, and grow from challenging encounters. For this, Staff routinely works with students in mindfulness practices and self-regulatory applications.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The founders and the Board of Directors (BOD), who support the Academy's mission and financial operations, knew that one of the crucial elements of the school's success would depend on parent and community involvement engagement. Therefore, the first line of the mission statement is, "The mission of the Socrates Academy is to work in partnership with parents and community to encourage our students to reach their full potential."

There is a relationship between Scholars'-academic success and parent involvement. This is one of the characteristics of high-performing schools. Thus, we encourage 36 volunteer hours per family, per school year. Families are welcome at the Academy and positive relationships between families and Faculty promote student success. Our parents volunteer to tutor students, help in the library, and come to Socrates' Weekend Workdays. We promote flexible-schedule volunteering on evenings and weekends to encourage participation by all families.

New parents are contacted by our New Parent Navigators who answer questions and plan events. The Parent Faculty Involvement (PFI) is an organization that brings in speakers from the community to collaborate with parents. For example, in January 2018, our PFI sponsored a free seminar for K-8 parents and students titled, "Families Managing Media". This offered parents new strategies for using computers, video games, and social media. When parents volunteer and attend activities in the school more often, they

form relationships with Faculty and staff members and feel more comfortable to discuss problems they may be facing at home or at school. Parents use Powerschool to monitor their child's progress, but faculty keeps the lines of communication open with text-based mobile apps, classroom websites, and weekly newsletters. Our staff members set the expectation of a quick response time with a 24 hour "turn-around" on parent communication and quarterly conferences.

Something the Academy is proud of is that it fosters a culture of positive feedback from teacher to parent; thus, parents are not contacted at the presence of a challenge only. Faculty shares successes and challenges with parents and speak to a parent by phone or email to share positive notes from the classroom very often.

Students are also included in IEP meetings/conferences to work with their parents and Faculty and provide input on strategies for their success. The Academy finds that when students are asked to take ownership of their own study habits or behaviors, they are able to reflect and feel more empowered.

3. Professional Development:

The Academy provides Professional Development (PD) at the start of the year on main methods (e.g., Socratic approach) and then throughout the year on practices that data show that are necessary. Thus, the approach to PD is ongoing, is content based, has duration and in general reflects the principles of effective PD practices.

We started our planning and designing of PD for this school by reviewing the Teacher Working Conditions Survey as well as a survey we designed as a team. Based on this data, we have been able to provide a comprehensive calendar of sessions for both the instructional and support staff at Socrates Academy.

The most immediate need was differentiation for a diverse population of students. To fulfill this need we solicited the support from our lead Faculty who consistently display 90% or more of transformative engagement in their classes. This information derives from survey data that is administered from the administration and confirmed by observations of instruction that regularly take place across an academic year. Faculty were given time to plan, prepare and organize their sessions to present to teachers in the grade spans of K-2, 3-5 and 6-8. We knew that hearing from peers and not someone outside of our school would have a more profound impact on our teachers. Capitalizing on the expertise of members of our school's teaching team has increased morale and changed the perception that many teachers had about ineffective PD sessions.

In addition to increasing our capacity for PD options, we also created time and opportunity for teachers to observe other teachers in practice. The "teachers observing teachers" approach is used in other ways, too. For example, the school's MTSS and data teams have worked to identify areas of student weaknesses based on data obtained from their various assessments and put together strategies to improve teaching and learning in those areas as well. It looks like an "all hands-on deck" approach at Socrates where teacher development is concerned.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are also in place at Socrates. During the 2017-18 school year, PLCs take place across K-8 grade levels weekly, half-day quarterly, and one full day each quarter as well. Faculty has time to practice the use of a common assessment for core areas as a way to learn how to analyze student exemplars and to guide their examination of the assessment. Faculty learns how to plan and participate in PLC meetings and how to use their findings to tailor instruction to student learning needs.

Lastly, the four-member administrative team meets weekly and a full day once per month to collaborate on the implementation of initiatives and to learn how to best coach teachers around instructional practices.

4. School Leadership:

This Charter is committed to providing an innovative curriculum and environment. In order to do so, we must have a strong leadership team working in conjunction with the board of directors and all stakeholders.

The leadership team consists of Principal, Assistant Principal, EC Director, Greek Director, and Dean of Students. Committees are created and reviewed annually, consisting of teachers, staff, parents, and leaders to provide suggestions for school improvement as needed. Additionally, Committees of the Board meet monthly with members of the leadership team to continually review the success of the curriculum, technology, policies and procedures, and personnel. The meeting minutes are shared with the Board of Directors who meet monthly to vote on items needing approval, as well as provide an open forum for parents to share their voice.

At Socrates Academy, we create leaders by starting at the top in working with all Faculty and Staff to develop leadership in every position and level of school. The leadership team supports students by empowering Faculty. By focusing on individual's strengths, the leadership team shows a high value is placed upon staff expertise. This also aids the leadership team in building relationships with each staff member while also pushing them to be better every day. This year the leadership team focused on developing leaders within our school by investing in professional development for our top performers. This group, referred to as the Mastermind Group, received high quality professional development on leadership. These group members were encouraged to be a source of knowledge and experience for their grade level and/or content team.

Frequent communication allows for clarity with such a large group of stakeholders. When looking at the structure of the school, we begin with students at the center, parents and families, teachers and staff, the leadership team, and the Board of Directors. The leadership team meets weekly to collaborate on current situations, plan for the future, and review various data. We operate on the philosophy that all stakeholders have a voice and we create an avenue for them to be heard. These avenues include stakeholder feedback sessions, stakeholder surveys, and open forums.

The Board of Directors challenges the leadership team to meet all students' needs and provide evidence of effectiveness. It also provides avenues for Leadership Team's education.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been the most instrumental to our school's success is our partial immersion model. The methods applied within the model promote balanced instruction that develops a complete person and not only a good student (as one may be defined across outcome measures). The Academy takes pride in the graduation of a Scholar who is a thinker and has a respect for diverse ideas and cultures and a tolerance to others. The Academy embraces the principals of Paideia for a graduate who is knowledgeable, inquisitive, respectful, goal oriented, and culturally sensitive and understanding.

Within this immersion program, students with satisfactory performance in Greek language during their three years of middle school earn three high school language credits. Additionally, students choose to study Chinese or Spanish in addition to the partial Greek immersion while they are in middle school. High schools are attracted to students who enter their program with these potential four foreign language credits, because it allows for the students to have more options in their final year or two of high school. They are also (based on the informal information that is shared with us) impressed with the ethics and morals of the graduates who strive for excellence and work in a systematic manner.

Alumni who are currently in high school or college, return to give speeches about what a positive impact the Greek language and culture has had on their future studies, specifically Biology. Scholars are surprised, yet confident, at their ability to define words, because of their knowledge of the Greek root or translation. Students are learners who are not intimidated by challenges, but are able to reach their full potential.

As one can read on NCDPI's wiki space, learning through a partial language immersion program has many benefits that include but are not limited to: higher academic performance, greater cognitive development in mental flexibility, creativity, and divergent thinking, high levels of proficiency in the target language and in English, positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors, and enhanced career opportunities. This ONE program has been instrumental in our school's success as it has infused our curriculum and practice with innovation.