



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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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

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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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	34	28	62
<b>1</b>	35	30	65
<b>2</b>	32	32	64
<b>3</b>	27	33	60
<b>4</b>	28	35	63
<b>5</b>	41	29	70
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	197	187	384

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 90 % White
  - 5 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 7%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	384
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14%  
Total number students who qualify: 52

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
59 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>6</u> Autism                  | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>20</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>6</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: 11
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
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 22:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

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

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

Twin Oak is committed to meeting the needs of each student and providing a quality education that instills the value of being a life-long learner.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Twin Oak Elementary School is located in the small city of Mount Vernon, Ohio approximately 50 miles northeast of Columbus, Ohio. Mount Vernon is the county seat of Knox County and was honored with the designation of “Best Hometown, 2017-2018” by Ohio Magazine. Our town has a strong tradition of educational excellence, with three colleges nearby: Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Central Ohio Technical College, and Kenyon College, one of the most prestigious colleges in the country. John Chapman, aka Johnny Appleseed, came to Mount Vernon during the early 1800s when Ohio had just become a state. He planted apple trees around the area which have continued to make the Mount Vernon area a popular destination for fall apple picking. Johnny Appleseed’s earliest recorded landholdings were in Mount Vernon and his pioneer spirit lives on in our school. Although we face many educational challenges, we meet each one with a cheerful, can-do attitude.

It is important to us that our school is prepared to meet the needs of all students, because many of them are facing significant barriers to education. Over 50% of our students receive free or reduced lunch. Many of our students are being raised in single parent homes, by grandparents, or doubling up with family and friends because of homelessness. We have students who have parents in prison or family members who are struggling with addiction issues. Many of our families are considered the ‘working poor.’ Students come to school with a multitude of problems and differing home environments. School has become, for them, their ‘safe place.’

If a child needs warm clothing, food at home, eye glasses, or someone to listen to him/her read, a staff member is on it. No child at Twin Oak is ever left behind because of poverty, lack of home support, or medical needs that are not being addressed. When students were not reading during the summer break, teachers, aides, and community volunteers created a summer reading program. Teachers work with students during the lunch/recess to complete schoolwork that can’t or won’t be done at home.

The Twin Oak Student Council supports a food drive that helps fill the local food bank which many of our families utilize. Fifth grade students run a school store, subsidized by the school budget, so students who are still hungry after lunch can buy a 25-cent snack. The Twin Oak Parent and Teacher Organization (PTO) supplies scholarships for many fifth graders to go to overnight camp. They also provide funding for field trips so that every grade level has an educational experience outside of school. The Twin Oak community members all work together so that our children are successful and provided the opportunities necessary to reach their true potential.

Mount Vernon City School District (MVCSD) serves over 4000 students in grades K-12, with six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Twin Oak Elementary School is the newest school in the Mount Vernon City School District and was formed when two schools were consolidated. West School was built in 1877, and when it closed, its student population had dwindled to less than 100 students with a 90% poverty rate. Because of enrollment, West shared teachers with other schools and combined classrooms. Elmwood Elementary, built in 1917, had a growing population of about 250 students, and was over-crowded. Students had to exit the building throughout the day to gain access to other parts of the school. Both schools needed a change and the district found funds for a new building. The staff of each school spent time together, melding ideas and philosophies, creating a mission statement, selecting the red-tailed hawk as school mascot, and suggesting the school name. Today, almost 13 years later, the Twin Oak students are more alike than different and their academic achievements are evident as all students have been recognized for their academic success and abilities.

Twin Oak is a school-wide Title 1 building with a dedicated staff of highly caring professionals who work every day to provide almost 400 students with the best educational program available. There are three classes at every grade level from all-day kindergarten to fifth grade. The students benefit from experienced teachers who work collaboratively to know each student academically and socially. Teachers plan together before school, during school, and after school discussing students and their needs.

Twin Oak uses data analysis to guide the assessment of student learning. The focus on all students and their

individual needs provides a feedback system that allows modifications and strengthens instruction and directs interventions. The Ohio Board of Education recognized Twin Oak as a Momentum School in 2015 for exceeding expectations in student growth. Twin Oak is dedicated to children and their learning as well as their social and emotional growth and its staff is passionate about being the best opportunity for students every day.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Twin Oak's curriculum meets the needs of all students regardless of their ability levels. Twin Oak teachers follow a challenging curriculum that is aligned with Ohio Learning Standards and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Lessons are based on educational objectives that are differentiated according to student needs. Students know and understand the content standards they are learning through the 'I Can' statements that are posted in 'kid-friendly' language in classrooms. Using assessment data, teachers plan engaging lessons that are targeted to address their students' strengths and weaknesses.

English Language Arts (ELA) is taught employing a balanced approach to reading instruction within a daily 90-minute literacy block. Using a combination of Fountas & Pinnell's Literacy model and the supplemental materials provided by board-adopted materials, students are instructed using a framework that utilizes whole group, small groups, and individual learning opportunities. Teachers use running records, 'Concepts of Print', the 'Developmental Reading Assessment 2' or the 'DRA Word Analysis' to determine their students' reading levels and determine how their struggling readers attend to and work with words. Guided reading, mini lessons, interactive read aloud, and word work lessons are planned according to these needs. The Book Room is utilized by all K-5 teachers to select books for guided reading. Teachers use supplemental materials to teach students at the upper grades how to go inside text for close reading and how to cite evidence to support opinions in their writing. Students begin writing in kindergarten with direct instruction for students as they move from invented spelling to standard spelling. The writing process is taught beginning in kindergarten. At all grade levels, instruction links literacy to the state standards with integrated activities to write about complex subject matter in print and electronically.

Our district's adopted K-5 curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards for Math, with a focus on the 8 Mathematical Practices. Number sense, vocabulary and computation in the primary grades are the foundation for higher level problem solving in the intermediate classrooms. At all grade levels, students are guided from concrete to abstract problems solving, using models and hands on experiences. Technology is incorporated throughout the math curriculum and discourse is encouraged, so students gain experience explaining their mathematical strategies clearly and concisely. Differentiation is a key part of the curriculum, allowing students to receive the level of support that each individual needs. Calibrating the enrichment and rigor to just the right level helps all students achieve to their full capacity.

In science, students participate in hands-on activities based on the Ohio State Science Standards. Science has been enhanced this school year by a new STEM Lab that Twin Oak staff members converted from an old computer lab. From the lime green walls with scientific terms written in large, bold, black letters to two 3-D printers, the STEM Lab has created an open area for science, technology, math, and engineering activities. STEM lessons are provided for teachers to use during their weekly visit to the Lab. Students produced science projects for a Science Fair that encouraged students to ask questions and find answers displaying on tri-folds what they had learned. Parents and community members visited the Twin Oak Science Fair on the day that the students became the teachers.

In social studies, students study families, examine their local community, and study the state and then the country. Throughout their investigations, they also examine geography, government, and economics. Third grade students make products to sell at the December Holiday Shop learning entrepreneurial skills in the process. This year they created a Twin Oak Foundation with their profits and encouraged other students to write opinion pieces asking for funding for specific school projects. Fourth graders travel to the state capital to visit the State House and see first-hand how state government works. Fifth graders attend a Junior Achievement program in Columbus which provides a realistic opportunity to experience the responsibilities of citizenship in a free enterprise system. Our Veterans' Day Program draws community member who have served our country. Many tears are seen when the students sing patriotic songs that honor the visitors who attend the program, and then, when the veterans are presented with red carnations at the end of the program.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Twin Oak Elementary K-5 students participate in additional classes to enhance the core curriculum. Art, Music, Library, and PE provide opportunities for support and integration with the regular classroom. Students have 45-minutes for these specials weekly.

The art curriculum incorporates a variety of 2D, 3D, and digital art media like drawing, painting, collage, and kiln-fired ceramics. Student artwork is shared through an online art gallery. In addition, student artwork is displayed throughout the school and in local businesses. The art curriculum has an interdisciplinary focus: fourth grade students create plaster fossils to connect with science and kindergarten students create mixed media mice while studying nursery rhymes in ELA. Fifth graders can attend a noontime Art Club. Students help create artwork for the sets of the school's musicals, 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas' and 'Where the Wild Things Are'.

Students at Twin Oak become musically literate by learning folk music across cultures. By singing and playing folk music, students understand the patterns and components of great masterworks of classical and world music. Students develop their understanding of music through the use of percussion, wind and string instruments. The Mount Vernon area is adjacent to the northwestern edge of the Appalachian region, and many fifth graders experience their musical heritage, by learning advanced concepts of music theory and by studying the science of sound by learning to play Appalachian (Mountain) dulcimers. All students take part in a musical performance either on Veterans' Day, the winter 3-5 musical, the spring K-2 musical, the Kindergarten Nursery Rhyme program, or the Grade 5 Show Case in May.

The Twin Oak Physical Education program is based on the Ohio PE standards. Second and fifth graders are required to complete a comprehensive physical fitness assessment throughout the school year with results tracking annual progress and growth. Fourth graders participate in, 'Crunch Out Obesity', a 6-week program sponsored by the Knox County Health Department, Knox Community Hospital, the United Way, and the YMCA. This program provides students with exercise balls for workouts at home and at school. The students write daily about the exercises they are doing, their diet, their sleep habits, and how they can improve and stay healthy for life.

The Twin Oak Library/Media Center is the heart of our school! It's located at the center of our building and students see new and interesting books showcased on bulletin boards and display cases inside and outside the library walls. Students visit the library to listen to stories, check out books, and learn library skills. Teachers visit the library to find interesting books that support their lessons and to find an enticing read 'aloud' that students will pick up to read again. Authors visit to inspire young writers and illustrators. The Twin Oak Library's goal is to instill a love of reading and to inspire lifelong learners. This happens every day through book clubs, library helpers, favorite book contests, and student/teacher competitions in a 'Battle of the Books'. A love of books is encouraged and cultivated in the library and all across the school environment.

Students have access to Chromebooks and are learning keyboarding, publishing writing, making presentations, doing online research in K-5 classrooms, and taking part in activities that reinforce the State Standards. Teachers use Google Classroom to provide students with resources and assignments, accessible from school or home, and to differentiate instruction and encourage collaborations. On-line technology programs are utilized beginning in kindergarten to provide intervention, extra support, reinforcement, and enrichment of concepts, available through the math and reading curricula. Classrooms have interactive Smart Boards to support instruction. Technology safety and digital citizenship are taught and monitored across the grade levels.

Because many of our students are lacking the skills necessary to be successful socially, behaviorally, and academically in school, teachers use a wide range of instructional strategies and supports when working with diverse classrooms of students. "Second Step", a research-based social emotional learning curriculum, is taught weekly by the K-5 classroom teachers. Thirty- to forty-minute lessons, to increase social emotional competence and decrease problems, are a focus of this program. Strategies for de-escalation and self-

regulation have provided students and teachers with common language across the school environment allowing students to problem-solve when encountering challenging situations.

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

Teachers use a variety of instructional practices to engage and motivate each child through whole group lessons, guided math and guided reading groups, centers, cooperative learning, hands-on activities, inquiry learning, conferencing, project-based learning, and online programs for reading and math. Teachers provide differentiated instruction in the regular classroom and resource room whenever interventions and extensions are needed. Special education teachers often provide specially designed instruction within the regular classroom.

The Twin Oak staff believes that all students can and should be successful in school. Understanding what a student knows is an important first step in attaining that goal. To determine reading levels, Title 1 teachers, special education teachers, and classroom teachers, use diagnostic tests such as the DRA 2 and the DRA Word Analysis assessments. Teachers use curriculum-based assessments in the Board-adopted math program to determine math levels. Supplemental online programs such as Study Island and Khan Mappers provide in-class interventions and enrichment at the upper elementary levels and identify student achievement levels. Successmaker Math and Successmaker Reading provide grade level equivalents to provide K-5 teachers with additional information to understand where students are academically and what they need to make growth.

Group and individual tests are given to students to monitor progress and determine educational needs and mastery levels. At the beginning of the school year, the Measure of Academic Performance (MAP) in reading and math is administered in grades 2-5 and then in January and April to monitor progress and growth. A state-approved reading diagnostic is given to K-3 students to determine if they are 'on track' for reading success. Not 'on track' students receive a Reading and Monitoring Plan (RIMP) which is developed with parents to address the student's needs. Kindergarten students take the Ohio Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in the fall and the Ohio State Tests are administered to students in third grade through fifth in ELA, math, and science in the spring.

Teacher-Based Teams (TBTs) meet weekly to examine assessment data to determine which students are making growth and which interventions are effective. Referrals are made to the Response to Intervention (RtI) Team when students are at risk. Tier 2 interventions are implemented, and if not effective, then the RtI Team recommends Tier 3 interventions. Progress monitoring for academic improvement and growth continues. When the Response to Intervention Team determines that students have not made sufficient progress after implementing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, testing for special education is initiated. If a student qualifies for an Individual Education Plan, specially designed instruction begins. Students who are identified for special education may qualify for speech intervention, occupational therapy, physical therapy, academic, and/or behavioral interventions.

Leveled Literacy Intervention, Fast ForWord, Orton Gillingham and the Fast ForWord Reading Assistant, all Tier 2 interventions, help striving readers develop and strengthen the cognitive skills necessary for reading successfully by directly and intensely targeting their deficits. Students who still struggle with decoding and spelling may be referred for the Tier 3 Wilson Reading Program. This instruction is interactive and multi-sensory, teaching the children the total construction of words, helping them internalize the sounds and syllables necessary for reading and spelling. In math, students have online custom courses in the Successmaker Math Program as well as Ten Marks and Extra Math tutorials. The Go Math Program offers re-teaching interventions for K-5 students who need more assistance in understanding math concepts.

Students identified as gifted are served by teachers differentiating and providing enrichment in content areas in the classroom. Those identified as gifted in math are served through a pullout program in grades 4 and 5. These students are identified through their scores on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). Fourth grade students work through the grade level curriculum with many challenging extras, while the grade 5 students are formally accelerated to sixth grade math. Twin Oak students who are identified as superior cognitive (through whole grade screening in grades 2 and 4, with the Iowa Cognitive Abilities Test, or

individually by referral, or MAP scores) participate in a community of advanced learners known as the Challenge Seminar which meets monthly to develop relationships with others of similar abilities, to strengthen their social skills, and to increase their awareness of the talents within their peer group.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The Twin Oak day begins when students are met by smiling staff members at arrival areas. Morning announcements include students listening to musical selections while walking to class. The “Pledge of Allegiance” is said together, birthdays are announced, and special information of the day is shared.

The Twin Oak staff uses PAX, The Good Behavior Game (GBG) strategies to create a positive, risk-free environment. These strategies encourage daily cooperation, self-control, and emotional regulation giving the students and teachers a common language and increasing the sense of community. The harmonica is used to gain attention during transitions within the building, in the cafeteria, and in the specialized classes. An example of a Good Behavior Game could be students staying on task during a 20-minute center rotation. The prizes rewarded are simple, cost no money, and give students a 30-second break to do something silly.

Working together, teachers and students created a continuum of positive behavior supports (PBIS) that describes expected behaviors of Twin Oak students. Using the red-tailed hawk school mascot, the HAWKS matrix was created: Have Respect for Self and Others, Act Responsibly, Work Together, Keep a Positive Attitude, Stay Safe. Expected behaviors are addressed for the classroom, playground, hallways, restroom, cafeteria, and bus. Students learn behavioral expectations and earn ‘HAWK Caught Being Good’ tickets. Daily class meetings offer students an opportunity to start the day by promoting social problem solving and encouraging emotional growth. Students give compliments to each other, or ask for a compliment, or often share that they are wishing someone in their home, ‘well’.

Student partnerships are a key part of the Twin Oak culture. Student Council members adopt a Primary classroom to mentor. Student Council is collecting 400 pounds of plastic bottle caps/lids for a playground Buddy Bench. Intermediate and Primary classrooms do buddy reading, work in the STEM Lab together, and when a school event could use an older student, help a younger one. Bus and car dismissal partners provide opportunities for the older students to be role models.

Weekly Teacher-Based Team (TBT) meetings, monthly Building Leadership Team (BLT) meetings, monthly staff meetings, Common Planning for grade level teams, weekly teacher/ principal meetings encourage everyone to be focused, supported, and heard. Teachers know their contributions are essential and make a difference. Teachers are supported by the administration through positive words and an open door policy of support. It takes time and patience from everyone and Twin Oak is a collaborative place where being positive is encouraged, valued and celebrated.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Twin Oak, we have strong home/school/community connections. Families are invited to be active participants in their child’s educational experience. At curriculum meetings, primary and intermediate teachers share with families how their child will learn and how they can help. The November conferences update parents and progress reports are sent home quarterly. Grades 2-5 parents have access to an online reporting system which provides information regarding grades and assignments.

Twin Oak has great volunteers who are parents, grandparents, college students, community members, and even older siblings. Volunteers can be found in the library, chaperoning field trips, and tutoring students. The Twin Oak Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) sponsors student and family events throughout the school year. PTO movie nights provide families an opportunity to watch movies together on the large screen that was purchased through PTO fundraising efforts.

The Twin Oak website and teacher web pages offer school and classroom information. The Twin Oak Twitter account provides pictures of school events and the Twin Oak newsletter and classroom newsletters are posted on the school’s website. Twin Oak is a Title 1 school and parent involvement funds support

communication folders, home/school reading bags, take-home books, and family events. Communication is valued and essential at Twin Oak.

It is important for our students to experience real life events and make connections. Mount Vernon Nazarene University (MVNU) sends their students to Twin Oak for educational field experiences and this year our 4-5 students were invited to an MVNU Character/Basketball event. A representative from the Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Knox County Auditor visited fourth graders to talk about their job responsibilities. These students later visited the county fairgrounds to learn more about the agricultural program in Knox County. Local engineers came to Twin Oak and taught fifth graders how to construct bridges and then these engineers volunteered when the students had a Junior Achievement field trip. Partnerships with the community are important. Our students are meeting individuals who have jobs and responsibilities in the real world.

The community is supportive in many ways. Twin Oak teachers have received technology grants from the local power company. The Ariel Foundation in Mount Vernon has fully funded the Fast ForWord intervention program at Twin Oak for years as well as the fifth-grade overnight field trip in May. The Salvation Army of Mount Vernon provides a free after-school program for students. Twin Oak enjoys a solid foundation of community support which makes learning engaging and meaningful for our students.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Participating in professional development opportunities allows our teachers to continue to grow as educators, and as they grow, so do their students, and our professional learning community. Twin Oak teachers create Professional Growth Plans that outline personal goals for the upcoming year. Teachers focus on one goal for Student Achievement/Outcomes for Students and the second goal for Teacher Performance on the Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession. Twin Oak's professional development goals center on the social emotional and academic growth of all students by providing teachers with the tools they can use to address the needs of each child.

Mount Vernon has a rising drug use problem and it is important that our school is prepared to meet the needs of all students, because many of them are facing significant barriers to education. Our students need to be empowered through awareness, education, and action. Twin Oak's professional development has included the Second Step Program as a resource to assist in the area of social-emotional skills development.

The Twin Oak staff began a year-long book study, *Lost at School: Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help* by Ross W. Greene Ph.D. The Collaborative & Proactive Solutions approach to understanding behavioral challenges and a non-adversarial approach for improving communication described in this book are providing teachers with the tools to better understand students. Teachers are actively using this approach to ensure a safe and productive environment in classrooms and around the school.

Twin Oak has embarked on two years of study to assist teachers in their ability to meet the needs of gifted students and how to differentiate effectively. Whole group and grade level discussions provide opportunity for learning about the characteristics of this unique population and utilizing the shared knowledge to better meet their academic, social and emotional needs.

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) professional development has been district-wide and has focused on analyzing the data collected from the online tests. The assessments enable teachers to gather information for each student. Based on the knowledge of where each child is in terms of readiness to learn, intentional strategies can be used to increase growth in math and reading comprehension. Several training sessions have allowed teachers to develop expertise on the assessments and to fully immerse themselves in the data. We are committed to maximally leveraging our student assessment data into positive educational outcomes for our students.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

Twin Oak has a strong team of professionals who work together for every student's educational success. Teachers meet weekly for 40-minutes in Teacher-Based Teams (TBT), to discuss and analyze student data. The Building Leadership Team (BLT), made up of teachers and the principal, meets monthly to review the data compiled by the TBTs, looks at PBIS data, and makes decisions for building improvement. A teacher representative, along with the principal, is on the District Leadership Team (DLT) which meets monthly bringing information regarding district initiatives to the staff.

Twin Oak has a principal who works collaboratively with all staff members offering support, motivation, and an open door for anyone who has an idea, a suggestion, or a concern. A master schedule provides grade level common planning allowing the principal to meet weekly with the grade level teams. The Response to Intervention team meets weekly with the principal, psychologist, and teachers to monitor the progress of those students in intervention.

There is no assistant principal or dean of students at Twin Oak, but there are staff members who assume informal leadership positions without having conventional titles. An experienced kindergarten teacher is the 'Teacher-in-charge' when the principal is out of the building. The Twin Oak social worker meets with students to address social emotional and discipline issues and contacts parents as needed. Another teacher serves as the vice president on the Parent/Teacher Organization. Twin Oak teachers serve on district curriculum committees. Teachers have collaboratively created a Twin Oak STEM Lab. Staff members have learned the ALICE drill protocol (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate) to keep students safe. The physical education teacher heads up an annual program called 'Jump Rope for Heart' that teaches students about supporting research to help people with heart problems. He also works with the PTO to design the annual Fit a Thon that provides students with time to exercise during the school day and raise money for the school.

The Twin Oak Mission states that Twin Oak is committed to meeting the needs of each student and providing a quality education that instills the value of being a life-long learner. The school community works together to realize that vision so students can learn in an open and secure environment. Shared and collaborative leadership with all stakeholders on the same team works well at Twin Oak. All staff members are leaders and willingly take on that role.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Collaboration and cooperation are essential if you work and learn at Twin Oak. Teachers plan meaningful lessons together creating learning opportunities that focus on engagement and promote a love of learning. Teachers collaborate with students to create classrooms that are student-centered. Students work in cooperative groups to develop critical thinking and social skills as they maximize learning through activities that increase achievement.

Twin Oak's professionals and students have created a place where students are motivated and engaged. Whether it is noontime sledding, a before school technology club, the STEM Lab, or designing projects, students are excited about learning and being at school. The STEM Lab was a summertime collaborative effort by the Twin Oak staff to design a site that would be motivating for students. Recently, a parent shared that the STEM Lab has made a major difference in her child's interest in school. This student is challenged academically and socially and her enthusiasm about science encouraged her to partner with another student on a science fair project.

Collaboration is taking place as teachers and students review data. Data analysis is an incredible tool for student success and this practice has provided the Twin Oak learning community with a strong focus on student achievement and growth. The Twin Oak students are aware of their reading levels, online assessments, and the data collected in math interventions and enrichment. In many classrooms, students chart their achievement in data folders and understand what is needed to reach the next level.

Analyzing data has proven to be instrumental as Twin Oak's state report card data has trended upward over the last three years having or exceeded performance expectations. Twin Oak is consistently attaining a year's growth for all students meeting and exceeding state targets in Math and English Language Arts. Twin Oak has received an 'A' for Value Added on the Ohio State Report Card for 'all' students showing strong growth for Twin Oak students in grades 3, 4, and 5. All Twin Oak teachers meet collectively to review the state report card data formulating plans for improvement to ensure continued student success.

Twin Oak has encouraged teamwork and collaboration since staff members came together in 2005 to plan a new school. Twin Oak is still working collaboratively to provide high quality learning experiences for children every day. Twin Oak does employ multiple strategies for academic success, but cooperation and teamwork are essential as we grow together.