

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Laurie Johnson

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

Official School Name Brownsburg West Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1555 S. Odell Street

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

Brownsburg IN 46112-8041  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Hendricks

Telephone (317) 852-3143

Fax (317) 858-4100

Web site/URL  
west-middle https://www.brownsburg.k12.in.us/

E-mail laurajohnson@brownsburg.k12.in.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\*Dr. Jim Snapp

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jsnapp@brownsburg.k12.in.us

District Name Brownsburg Community School Corporation Tel. (317) 852-1015

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. Phil Utterback

(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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	171	132	303
7	147	149	296
8	167	138	305
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	485	419	904

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 11 % Black or African American
  - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 74 % White
  - 6 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 8%

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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	47
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	76
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	984
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Yoruba, Wolof, Vietnamese, Urdu, Tigrinya, Telugu, Spanish, Punjabi, Portuguese, Polish, Marathi, Mandarin, Kinyarwanda, Fulani, French, Dan, Arabic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 24%  
Total number students who qualify: 219

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %  
107 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>24</u> Autism                 | <u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>18</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>34</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>9</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>6</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	35
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 26:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	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 2018.

<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.

Brownsburg West Middle School will provide an engaging, relevant educational program with opportunities for all students to pursue their maximum intellectual, social, and physical potential.

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**

---

Brownsburg West Middle School is one of two middle schools located in Brownsburg, Indiana, a rapidly growing suburb of Indianapolis. Our town is a tight-knit community centered around a passion for our schools. In 2002, Brownsburg's population was 16,000, but today, it is currently predicted to be over 25,900. This growth has brought economic development and physical changes to our town while also bringing much welcomed diversity to Brownsburg. In 2007, almost 87% of our students were white. Today, 74.4% of our students are white. West Middle School's free and reduced enrollment is 25% of the total population. Brownsburg Community School Corporation continues to be one of the fastest growing school corporations in the state of Indiana.

At West Middle School, we are committed to providing rigorous, standards-based curriculum and academic opportunities that foster growth for all students. Our teachers participate in professional learning communities (PLC) to determine the effectiveness of our instruction and brainstorm interventions and extensions to best meet the academic needs of our students. The teachers are constantly learning from their peers. Because of this embedded and consistent form of professional development, West has established a reputation of academic excellence and continues to be one of the top performing middle schools in the state of Indiana.

Another important facet of our culture is the inclusiveness of our students. West Middle School houses the district's lifeskills program which serves our students with significant cognitive disabilities. These students are not in general education classes and are working toward a certificate of completion versus a high school diploma. The students in our lifeskills program do not bring academic accolades to West, but they teach all of us at West, the students and the staff, important lessons on a daily basis. My general education peers who support the classroom learn patience and empathy, the general education population embraces the idea that differences can be celebrated, and the staff learns to find joy in the small moments. These students are integral to our West family; we are better because they are a part of our learning community.

Brownsburg Community School Corporation has developed a character education plan for use with all students. This plan incorporates district wide PK-12 character traits and components of cultural competency training to provide a well-rounded program. Academics are important, but character is what will make our students successful in life. Our school counselors create weekly character education lesson plans that teach the district character traits and are responsive to student needs.

In addition to our character education program, West maintains a focus on making positive choices by implementing a Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) System. Beginning with day one of their middle school career, our students are taught that in our building, we are respectful, responsible, safe, and caring. These messages are posted throughout our school and even in the students' agenda books as a constant reminder to make good choices. Students are rewarded with "Dog Bones" when their behavior exemplifies one of these tenants, and they can purchase preferred items in our "Dog Bone Store."

West Middle School also prides itself on providing diverse opportunities for students to be involved in to further develop socially, academically, physically, and culturally. Students have the option of joining a variety of clubs such as robotics, coding, art, Fuel Up to Play 60, walking, Best Buddies (a club dedicated to forming one to one friendships between students with disabilities and general education peers), and game boarding club. They can also be a part of one of our many service-oriented groups: National Junior Honor Society, Student Government, or Builders Club. Of course, our students may also participate in our athletic programs. At West, we actively encourage all of our students to be involved in at least one extra-curricular opportunity. Our students are better because of the dedicated adult sponsors who provide rich, engaging opportunities.

The community of Brownsburg embraces every opportunity to support our students, and as a school, we try to give back to the community as much as possible. Philanthropic efforts are typically led by our student government, National Junior Honor Society, and Athletic Ambassadors who organize efforts to contribute both financially and physically to organizations such as Riley's Children's Hospital, Relay for Life,

Brownsburg Older Alliance Association, and our Brownsburg food pantry. Due to the generosity of our students, Brownsburg West Middle School has been named a Riley's Miracle School for many consecutive years. West Middle School has amazing students who positively contribute to our school and community both inside and outside the classroom walls.

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

---

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

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

West Middle School follows our agreed upon curriculum for 6th-8th English. Teachers, based off the state standards, design this curriculum. All Brownsburg students 6th-8th grade receive this same guaranteed and viable curriculum. Using the Indiana Department of Education resources, we have identified the priority standards and have used that as a guide to narrow the focus of our curriculum to the essential English standards and correlating student learning objectives.

To create rich discussions and connections, we use agreed upon novels to teach English/Language Arts standards. In addition to literature, we also embed thematic nonfiction throughout each unit. Much of the nonfiction is current and at times leveled to meet the different reading needs of our students. For writing, Brownsburg K-12 utilizes Smekens 6+1 approach to writing, creating common vocabulary and expectations for students each year.

A variety of instructional approaches are used to teach the E/LA standards. These include close reading, group discussions and debates, Socratic seminars, modeling of writing, creative writing/student choice, and differentiated stations.

Each day, 45 minutes is dedicated to SEEK, Student Enrichment and Extension of Knowledge. This time provides individual students additional academic support. Data from state assessments, classroom observations, daily checks for understanding, and interim formal assessments identify students for targeted intervention or enrichment of state standards.

Along with our common curriculum, we have common summative assessments for each of our units. The common summatives are teacher-created and are either a test format or essay. In addition to formal essays, our students also write at least three common data collection prompts; we use the data from these writings as common assessments that drive our writing instruction for the remainder of the quarter. The assessments are based off the depth of knowledge of the state standards.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

West Middle School offers a variety of levels of math in order to best meet the needs of all students. Courses offered include Math 6, Math 7, Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, and Geometry. Each course's curriculum map is derived from and aligned with the Indiana State Standards. Using Indiana Department of Education resources, teachers identify learning objectives, create formal and informal formative checks for understanding to assess the learning objectives, and write common unit assessments that measure mastery of the Indiana state standards.

For job embedded professional development, teachers meet weekly in content specific, grade level professional learning communities. As a collective group, teachers select the most essential learning objective on which to focus. Using this objective as the focal point, teachers analyze formative and summative data, identify common misconceptions and anticipated errors, discuss strategies to preemptively address these concerns, choose research based best practices to support learning and mastery of the objective, and determine remediation and enrichment strategies to improve outcomes for all students.

A variety of instructional approaches are used to teach and assess the Indiana state standards. These include modeling, discovery, error analysis, mathematical discourse and dialogue, purposefully embedded hinge questions, guided practice, independent practice, spiral review, interactive notebooks, enrichment activities and more.

Each day, 45 minutes is dedicated to SEEK, Student Enrichment and Extension of Knowledge. This time

provides individual students additional academic support. Data from state assessments, classroom observations, daily checks for understanding, and interim formal assessments identify students for targeted intervention or enrichment of state standards.

We adopted McGraw Hill Indiana Math Course 1 and 2 for Math 6 and Math 7, Pearson's Envision for Math 8, and Pearson's Indiana High School Math for Algebra I and Geometry. These materials are used in our classrooms for reference and practice.

### **1c. Science:**

West Middle School follows our agreed upon curriculum for 6th-8th science. Teachers, based off the state standards, design this curriculum. All Brownsburg students 6th-8th receive this same guaranteed and viable curriculum. Using the Indiana Department of Education resources, we have identified the priority standards and have used that as a guide to narrow the focus of our curriculum to the essential science standards and correlating student learning objectives. Teachers meet weekly at PLC to determine misconceptions, best practices for mastery of an objective, and to determine best practices for remediation and enrichment on these standards (all data driven dialogue).

We adopted Pearson's consumable workbooks, Indiana Interactive Science. These workbooks are used in our classrooms as resource materials and for close reading of specific science content. This is one piece of our implementation of the state required literacy standards for science as well. The other literacy standards are addressed throughout the year woven into our content curriculum.

A variety of instructional approaches are used to teach the science standards including problem-based learning, inquiry, labs, projects, close reading, group discussions and debates, Socratic seminars, and web quests. We incorporate brain-based strategies as well. Our lesson design follows the model of objective, anticipatory set, direct instruction, guided practice, and individual practice, with checks for understanding embedded along the way.

Along with our common curriculum, we have common summative assessments for each of our units and also a common performance task and labs. These are given to all students in our district in that grade level. The assessments are designed by teachers based off the depth of knowledge of the state standards. Building level, subject area teachers meet weekly at PLC, where they bring data from the agreed upon formative assessments and hinge questions. These discussions are used to drive our professional growth and student academic growth.

### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

Brownsburg Community School Corporation has developed a rigorous core curriculum that is followed by both middle schools in the district and is based on the Indiana Academic Standards. Social studies teachers have worked on committees to adopt materials, create common assessments, and develop curriculum calendars that best meet the needs of our students. This curriculum is tightly aligned and clearly articulated to all teachers across grade levels. Teachers are held accountable to following this curriculum with fidelity. No single person or building can make changes to the curriculum on their own, ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum across all content area classrooms.

Our curricular approach is based on the Gradual Release of Responsibility model. Teachers model the new learning, provide opportunities for students to practice with peers or alongside the teacher, and give time for independent practice. These levels of support are differentiated based on student need so that some students spend more time under the tutelage of a teacher while others are allowed to excel at a rapid pace. Research based instructional strategies are used in all classrooms to ensure that students have a solid understanding of what they are learning and why it is important.

professional learning communities. As a collective group, teachers select the most essential learning objective on which to focus. Using this objective as the focal point, teachers analyze formative and summative data, identify common misconceptions and anticipated errors, discuss strategies to preemptively address these concerns, choose research based best practices to support learning and mastery of the objective, and determine remediation and enrichment strategies to improve outcomes for all students.

A variety of instructional approaches are used to teach the social studies standards. These include close reading, group discussions and debates, Socratic seminars, labs, and projects.

### **1e. For secondary schools:**

West Middle School supports college and career readiness in a myriad of ways. West students participate in a Reality Store simulation. During this simulation, students are given a list of potential careers to research based on their grade point average. Throughout this event, students are exposed to financial literacy, post-high school education opportunities, and careers. On the actual day of Reality Store, students run through stations to essentially play the game of life. Our guidance department also supports College Go! Week, which provides an opportunity for students to explore college options and learn how they might pursue a college education.

### **1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

West Middle School students are exposed to a variety of other curriculum areas during their middle school career. All students will take at least one year of music. Once this requirement is met as a 6th grader, students will choose to continue with music during their 7th and 8th grade years. Our music classes are yearlong courses which meet every other day. Band is one of two instrumental music classes offered. In band, students learn to play one of 11 instruments: flute, oboe, clarinet, alto sax, tenor sax, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, tuba, or percussion. Orchestra is the other instrumental music class. In orchestra, students learn to play one of four instruments: violin, viola, cello, or bass. Students in our instrumental music classes will perform in two public concerts. Students may also choose to be in a choir class where they will study the ongoing process of proper singing techniques as well as notating and sight-reading music. Choir students will perform in multiple concerts each year. These music options offer students an opportunity to experience self-expression and creativity, all in an environment that fosters a combination of teamwork and leadership.

The other related arts courses offered at West are semester long courses. Our related arts classes operate on a Purple/White Calendar where courses will alternate each day.

All West students will take an art class at least once during their middle school years. The visual arts program is designed to provide students with experience in both 2D (drawings, paintings, mixed media) and 3D (clay) artworks. Students will also study components of art history, famous artists, and the elements and principles of art. This course can be taken multiple times over the course of student's middle school career as there will be different projects each year. Much like music, this course offers students an opportunity to experience self-expression and creativity.

Students will take one semester of physical education each school year. Our goal is to help our students develop healthy habits that lead to a lifetime of physical activity. Instruction includes physical fitness concepts and practice including cardiorespiratory endurance, stretching, and muscular strength. Students work to improve or maintain physical fitness throughout the semester through in-class practice. Students also participate in a selection of team sports and games to increase the heart rate, learn to work cooperatively as a team, and develop/practice basic sports skills that can be used for lifetime activity.

Health class is taken in either the 7th or 8th grade. The goal of health education is to provide students with

the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lifestyles. Units include wellness, physical fitness, nutrition, infectious and non-infectious disease prevention, mental/emotional health, and reproductive/relationship health.

Brownsburg West students also take Gateway to Technology (GTT). In this introductory Project Lead the Way course, students will focus on problem-based learning. All of the GTT classes will include some aspect of engineering, biomedical science, and computer science. Students will learn the design process and how it impacts change in our world. Students will also learn a CAD program to design items and use tools to create the products they designed. Students in this program will also have access to a 3-D printer.

French, German, and Spanish are considered advanced courses offered to our 8th grade students. Students qualify through standardized assessment scores, test placement data, and English grades. Students may earn high school credit upon successful completion of the course. This course meets every day during our enrichment and intervention time. Students can take the next level of the language in high school.

Each Wednesday morning, West students participate in character education. This curriculum is guided by our district's character traits of the month such as respect, perseverance, compassion, integrity, etc. Students spend the month exploring this character trait and reflecting on how that character trait might be seen in our middle school. Our counselors develop lessons that align with the character trait of the month while also meeting our students' own developmental needs.

### **3. Special Populations:**

The West Middle School staff works tirelessly to support the academic achievement of all our students. We begin by making sure our curriculum is guaranteed, viable, and aligned with our summative assessments. Throughout our instructional design, we embed multiple formative assessments to inform our instruction. When we find that students are not demonstrating understanding, we tweak our practices and provide multiple differentiated opportunities for students to master the curriculum. For example, teachers might create stations geared toward addressing common misconceptions. Instruction could also be organized so that the students who have mastered the skill or concept are working on an extension activity and the students who have not demonstrated mastery are working in a small group with the teacher. Teachers collaborate with their content and grade level colleagues to create intentional instruction to meet the needs of our students. The majority of our general education students master grade level expectations within a unit of study.

Despite the intentional lesson design, some students need more intensive interventions to address their content deficits. All West Middle School students have a SEEK class. SEEK stands for Student Enrichment and Extension of Knowledge. We have a tiered SEEK structure: intervention, middle, and extension. Students who have not passed or only barely passed our state standardized assessment or students who are consistently struggling with in-class teacher created assessments can be placed in an intervention SEEK class. In this class, the teacher creates very individualized interventions for this small group of students. Our middle SEEK class is designed for our students who passed by a seemingly comfortable margin on our state standardized assessment but show inconsistent performance in the classroom. This class gives students extra practice and processing opportunities with the content. Finally, our extension class is for students who are performing well in the classroom and comfortably passed our standardized assessment. Students in this class are given projects or assignments that cultivate their reading, writing, or problem-solving skills. Our SEEK structure has proven to be quite successful. In English, 30 students who were placed in an intervention English SEEK went from not passing our state standardized assessment to passing, and in math, 46 students who were placed in an intervention math SEEK class went from not passing to passing.

Our largest achievement gap occurs between our special education students and our general education students. The vast majority of our diploma track special education students are learning in an inclusion setting receiving special education services within the general education classroom. Special education teachers work in tandem with the content area specialists to provide purposeful instruction that helps these students access the general education curriculum. To address this gap, our special education teachers have been trained on how to create specially designed instruction that address the unique needs of the child as a

result of their disability. This instruction directly meets the student's goals outlined in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

---

### 1. School Climate/Culture:

West Middle School is an amazing place to learn and grow. Our parents, students, teachers, and auxiliary staff work in tandem to create a positive environment where students can flourish academically, socially, and emotionally. During our weekly professional learning community (PLC) time, teachers collaborate and brainstorm ways to best reach our students. We expect all students to show substantial growth under our care. Our intentional instruction and tiered intervention system support student academic achievement.

At West, we talk at length about following our Four Bs: Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe, and Be Caring. Through this positive lens, we can help guide and encourage students to make appropriate choices in all of our school environments. Students are given our paper economy of "Dog Bones" when they are seen exceeding our expectations in one of those four areas. With "Dog Bones", students can spend their earnings at our "Dog Bone Store" for spirit wear, trinkets, or other preferred items. Our positive behavior support system allows us to foster students' social and emotional growth.

Students also participate in a weekly character education lesson designed specifically for their class by their grade level counselor. These lessons are shaped by our district character traits and the specific needs the counselors are noticing in student behavior. West Middle School has three counselors, one serving each grade level of students. The counselors loop with their students, so they will be supporting the same group of students for three years. This structure helps us create and maintain positive and supportive relationships.

West Middle School is a school where teachers and staff members feel valued and supported. The PLC structure gives teachers the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and receive professional development on a weekly basis. The teachers know that if they do not feel like they are reaching their students, they can be vulnerable and transparent in a supportive and caring environment. Each PLC begins with celebrations. Teachers share how their actions impacted students or colleagues in a positive manner. These celebrations alone help teachers understand how valuable they are to our school. If teachers struggle with student behaviors, classroom management, or instruction, there are a plethora of people willing and able to support them. Each grade level is assigned a counselor and an assistant principal. These positions work alongside the teachers to support them in creating the most productive environment for student growth.

West Middle School provides a safe, respectful, and caring environment for both teachers and students.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Brownsburg Community School Corporation is the largest employer in Brownsburg. Our town takes great pride in our schools, and our parents are active partners in their child's education. We begin developing these partnerships before our families even come to the middle school level. First, we invite all 5th grade families to attend an athletic night at West for free. During this event, we give our incoming students a free t-shirt and concession stand item and use this opportunity to get to know our new families. Later in the school year, we host an orientation for our 5th grade families. This helps bridge the gap between elementary and middle school and makes the transition as smooth as possible. Orientation provides parents with the opportunity to learn our school's structures, expectations, and opportunities. At the start of the school year, all parents are invited to an Open House to meet their child's team of teachers and learn what they can expect to experience over the course of the school year.

Parents are kept abreast of their student's academic achievements or challenges. First, our parents have access to our student management system where they can regularly monitor their child's grades. Teachers also set up consistent forms of communication with parents through emails, websites, and remind accounts. If a student is struggling academically, parents can expect to hear from their child's teacher or counselor. Academic teams might also request a meeting with parents to brainstorm how to best support students. We

believe strongly in partnering with parents to help our students find success.

Parents support our school in many ways. We have a strong parent teacher organization. They host or support numerous opportunities for our students such as socials, extra-curricular events, and school spirit days. Parents also support our teachers by volunteering in the media center, chaperoning field trips, and helping with various team or school events. Parents are invited to school for special activities such as award programs and concerts.

The staff at West Middle School believe strongly in developing the whole student. We work with community partnerships to provide service opportunities for our students. For example, our athletic teams worked with various non-profit organizations around our town to help people in need. The basketball teams assisted some of our elderly neighbors with landscaping, and the wrestling team collected hundreds of sweatshirts for our local food pantry. Our students, parents, and staff are always looking for ways to partner and support our community.

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

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) is the key component to Brownsburg Community School Corporation's professional development approach. Teachers and administrators participate in PLCs weekly provide the time, structure, and collaborative opportunity for student-centered data analysis. A PLC at West Middle School consists of teachers teaching the same grade level and content area. Working from a common curricular framework, teachers use PLC time to evaluate the effectiveness of our core instruction as measured by summative state assessments and local formative assessments of varying magnitude. Data is also analyzed to determine necessary interventions to close achievement gaps. PLCs allow teachers and administrators to evaluate varying instructional strategies and approaches to teaching the content. Teachers are participating in weekly action research and are consistently learning from their colleagues. Part of the PLC process is to discuss common student misconceptions for an upcoming learning objective. By using PLC time to discuss misconceptions, teachers are intentionally planning strong core instruction while also collaboratively planning for interventions to support students who might still struggle mastering the content. Teachers share ideas and refine their content delivery during this process. By discussing the core instruction's effectiveness and interventions, teachers and administrators are building their own capacity.

The other component of our professional development approach is the learning we do in our faculty meetings. Data from administrators' observations, our teacher evaluation rubric, and our school and district goals drive the content for these meetings. Over the past two years, the West Middle School teaching staff has reflected on the types of questions we use when delivering instruction and how we pace our instruction to best meet the needs of our students. Teachers have analyzed the level of rigor in their questioning during each component of lesson design and how to best use the data collected from questions to drive future instruction. As a West Middle School staff, we have evaluated how to collect student data during a lesson, adjust our instruction without interrupting the flow of the lesson, and scaffold our instruction to keep all students purposefully engaged. By fine-tuning our instruction to best meet the needs of our students, our students are able to master our academic standards and consistently perform at a high level on student achievement assessments.

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

At West Middle School, we believe in collaborative leadership. There are very few decisions made by a single person, and in most situations, the people closest to the problem have the greatest input on the solution. There are many layers of leadership working together to best serve our students academically, socially, and behaviorally. All decisions that must be made are guided by a simple vision: At West Middle School we do what is best for our kids.

Our administrative team consists of the principal, two assistant principals, and an athletic director. This team meets weekly to discuss intervention plans for struggling students, discuss personnel concerns, review observations from visiting professional learning communities and discuss appropriate feedback to those leaders, plan professional development, and review school wide expectations and norms. This

meeting time serves as our own administrative professional learning community while also ensuring that our school's leadership has a common understanding of programs, policies, and expectations. Each month, the assistant principal and counselor also meet with academic teams of teachers to discuss students who are struggling, create intervention plans, and ensure that students are making adequate progress and that intervention plans are being implemented with fidelity. These two groups of leaders are focused on student achievement and creating an environment where all students can reach their full potential.

Our school leadership team consists of building level department heads for each content area (English, math, science, social studies, special education, and related arts), team leaders of our academic teams, the head guidance counselor, and the administrative team. This team meets monthly to provide feedback on professional development, discuss building concerns, brainstorm best practices for increasing teacher capacity, and determine ways to increase or sustain building morale. This team of teacher leaders is vital in making sure West Middle School is a positive place for both students and teachers. The building level department heads also meet with the superintendent and assistant superintendent on a quarterly basis to provide feedback at the district level. This time is spent reviewing curriculum maps and making recommendations to adjust instruction based on student needs. Staff feel ownership because they are actively engaged in the decision-making process.

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

---

The implementation of true professional learning communities (PLCs) has been the most instrumental to West Middle School's success. Brownsburg Community School Corporation implements PLCs with fidelity. Every Wednesday, teachers gather in our media center in their grade level content area groups to review the curriculum, discuss performance expectations, share effective instructional strategies, and use relevant data sources to determine what needs to be done for students struggling to master the content or to enrich those who have already demonstrated mastery. Teachers are vulnerable and transparent with their data and have rigorous dialogue about best practices for our students. This open dialogue often highlights a less effective instructional delivery method or student performance that falls short of expectations. Teachers in Brownsburg open themselves up for constructive feedback and readily admit when their instruction was not as successful as they had originally hoped. Brownsburg teachers value the feedback from their colleagues. The teachers celebrate each other's success and collaborate on strategies to improve student achievement.

Every PLC begins with a celebration. During this time, teachers discuss the specific ways their actions impacted their students or colleagues. Teachers learn from one another successful strategies that they might want to implement in their own classrooms. After celebrations, the PLC dives into the data. Typically, the teachers are bringing back data from a common formative assessment. This assessment is usually in the middle of the learning process. The teachers then use this data to inform their instruction. The teachers look at the data to determine common misconceptions and discuss appropriate strategies for addressing those misconceptions. If one teacher had more success than others, the teachers discuss how their facilitation of the content might have been different. Teachers also discuss how they might intervene and enrich moving forward. Once teachers are done analyzing formative data, they determine the content of the next formative assessment and where in the lesson design the formative will take place. As a PLC, they preemptively discuss misconceptions they believe their students will have and think of ways they might proactively address them. The teachers discuss intentional questions they ask within the lesson to evaluate students understanding and collaborate on ways they might respond to student answers.

PLC is where the magic happens in lesson design. It is where teachers intentionally and collaboratively respond to student data. Brownsburg West began seeing consistently high academic achievement scores once PLCs were implemented with fidelity.