

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 [X] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Wayne Butler

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

Official School Name New Buffalo Senior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1112 East Clay Street

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

New Buffalo MI 49117-1540
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Berrien

Telephone (269) 469-6003

Fax (269) 469-2028

Web site/URL https://www.nbas.org/Domain/9

E-mail wbutler@nbas.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Jeff Leslie

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

District Name New Buffalo Area Schools Tel. (269) 469-6010

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 Charles Heit

(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 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	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	20	25	45
10	27	24	51
11	20	19	39
12 or higher	20	26	46
Total Students	87	94	181

*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
 - 3 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87 % 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 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.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	200
(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: 3%
6 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 39%
Total number students who qualify: 71

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
19 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>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 8:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	93%	94%	93%	94%	94%
High school graduation rate	97%	100%	98%	96%	98%

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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	51
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	48%
Enrolled in a community college	29%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	10%
Joined the military or other public service	6%
Other	5%

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.

We provide opportunities for all students to achieve their personal best, become responsible, productive citizens, and embrace lifelong learning in a safe and positive environment.

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

New Buffalo is located in the southwest corner of Michigan, on the shores of Lake Michigan. Fewer than fifty miles from Chicago, New Buffalo serves as a desirable tourist destination, where the population more than quadruples during the summer months. In order to service this influx of travelers, the majority of our school families work in local service occupations. With such a high percentage of second-homeowners, New Buffalo High School is in a unique circumstance - we are out of formula in funding, yet 39% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

New Buffalo High School serves as a beacon for the community and a safe-haven for many children. Our proud community is comprised of several multi-generational families that have lived their lives in and around New Buffalo. Teachers, many of whom live in the community, have knowledge of students' family histories and are able to develop close relationships.

In the last decade, our high school has transformed in many ways, from academics to services offered. Ten years ago, New Buffalo High School was one of the three lowest-scoring high schools in Berrien County. Despite a nurturing environment, the high school struggled to improve student achievement. In 2009, the administration restructured curriculum and sequencing and ignited a cultural change that valued and celebrated student achievement. The administration implemented the Bison Pokagon Educational Trust Fund, named after the Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi Tribe who opened the Four Winds Casino in our township. The casino disperses a yearly PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) that is divided between local entities, including New Buffalo Area Schools. Through this yearly funding, New Buffalo High School can award each graduate \$25,000 after graduation to be used for any post-secondary education, including two- and four-year universities or vocational training.

This scholarship changed the culture of the school district, as well as the mindset of the families. Students and parents began to recognize that a secondary education was needed AND financially possible. The school initiated a progressive honor roll, rewarding students for growth. College visits at each grade level helped students envision a life outside the boundaries of a small town. Key curricular changes at the junior level, including discrete math, an ACT-focused English class, and ACT/ SAT preparatory classes enabled juniors to succeed on standardized tests, opening doors to opportunity. Students needing more practice in a subject optimized the trimester schedule. Juniors were taken off-site for standardized tests, underscoring the significance of the tests. Today, students are frequently heard discussing SAT scores, college plans, and future goals. These systemic changes enabled hundreds to pursue their dreams.

New Buffalo High School offers various programs to meet student needs. The Peer-to-Peer Program, which couples special education students with upper class mentors, lifts the spirits of both the mentee and mentor and fosters success in inclusion classrooms. Additionally, participation in the AK Smith Career and Technical Education program encourages some potentially non-college bound individuals to learn skills in auto mechanics, cosmetology, fire science, and construction trades. The physical education department created a Women's PE class for those uncomfortable in a large, competitive, traditional PE class. To support our student population, New Buffalo High School added thirty minutes to the school day for a "bonus period" of remediation, test make-up, and homework time. New Buffalo's academically-advanced students are able to take any of the seven Advanced Placement courses offered and may enroll in courses through Purdue University Northwest and Southwestern Michigan College.

In an effort to educate the whole child and meet physical, social, and emotional needs, the high school employs a full-time guidance counselor and a full-time social worker. New Buffalo offers many opportunities for students in sports, clubs, and organizations that appeal to multiple interests. In particular, New Buffalo High School is noted internationally for an exchange program with a school in Seville, Spain.

New Buffalo High School values teaching leadership skills through organizations such as Student Senate, Leadership Academy (Rotary International), sports leadership groups, and both National Honor Society and Spanish National Honor Society. Group leaders mentor younger children in the district's month-long Summer Day Camp program. As the heart of the community, our gyms, weight rooms, and cardio rooms are

open to all in the early mornings, evenings, and weekends, further supporting the health of not only students, but also community members. Free breakfast is available throughout the school year, as well as free lunch during the summer, in order to help overcome issues associated with hunger.

New Buffalo High School strives daily to enrich the lives of all of our students. Ten years ago, we envisioned a school where success was based on student growth and achievement, not on family income. Today, New Buffalo has evolved into a world-class high school, providing students with opportunities for success and skills for their futures.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

New Buffalo High School's core curriculum is based on Michigan's Common Core State Standards and is aligned with School Improvement Plan goals. Fostered through student-centered learning using collaborative groups and partner work, ELA courses are designed for students to demonstrate growth in reading, writing, thinking, and listening. As a result, all core English classes demand a close reading of varied texts to deepen student understanding of the ways writers use language to make meaning. The literature component encourages students to understand the shared human experience while demonstrating that cultural values are mirrored in literature. The informational text component provides the opportunity to reinforce analysis while emphasizing how writers use language to influence audience. With instructional approaches that include both teacher-directed and independent reading, students increase reading comprehension, love of reading, and critical thinking skills through written response. Writing skills highlighted in ELA include analysis, synthesis, argumentation, and evaluation. Grammar instruction fortifies students' writing skills through a modeled approach to lessen the zone of proximal development. Students are consistently challenged to express ideas clearly and fluently in oral and written communication as these skills are essential to both college and career goals.

Interventions within ELA classrooms include small class size, which facilitates one-on-one teaching; modifications for IEP and 504 accommodations; and differentiated instruction. The trimester schedule allows students to revisit a course failed for credit recovery within the year and remediation courses are also offered.

While self-reflection is used to measure student growth and personal success, assessments include both formative and summative in all of the core classes. PSAT/SAT data is analyzed to drive instruction, and College Board AP Literature and Language standards are utilized to enhance instruction.

Ultimately, the reading, writing, thinking, and listening focus in the English courses promotes life- long learning.

1b. Mathematics:

New Buffalo High School math courses, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry, are taught using the Big Ideas Math series by Larson Texts, Incorporated. This series is aligned with Common Core State Standards for math. In the third year with the series, positive trends are evident. Math courses are split into an A and B sections, each a trimester long. If possible, all students are scheduled into A course sections during the first trimester of the school year. Being on a trimester schedule allows students to repeat a course in the following trimester if unsuccessful, which allows students to still complete the course within the school year. The math sequence for most students is Algebra 1 for freshmen, Algebra 2 for sophomores, Geometry and Discrete Math for juniors, and Trigonometry, Calculus, Personal Finance, or Accounting for seniors. Advanced students can begin this sequence in 8th grade. The math course sequence includes a three trimester Algebra 1 course. One section of the Algebra 1 course is general and special education co-taught. Discrete Math class, an SAT preparation course that all juniors take, is a significant piece of the course sequence. The goal of this class is to provide reinforcement with math skills from Algebra 1 through basic Trigonometry in order to improve SAT math test scores. A cumulative testing policy and common assessment practices are utilized within the math department. Test scores are analyzed during department meetings and during regularly-scheduled morning collaboration time. A strong emphasis is placed on vocabulary terms in all courses, ensuring students can apply these terms to word problems. Instruction is provided in both whole- and small-group format, and student-to-student talk strategies are used frequently. Learning is enhanced through integrated technology pieces available through Big Ideas, Khan Academy, and USA Test Prep.

1c. Science:

At New Buffalo High School, science programs are based upon state and national standards that align with state initiatives. The program consists of two Physical Science modeling courses in 9th grade, two modeling/online Biology courses in 10th grade, and an all-online Earth Science course in 11th grade. This sequence is geared toward all students meeting each NGSS standard prior to taking the SAT and Science M-Step (Michigan Test of Educational Progress) their junior year. In addition to these requirements, many elective courses are available including AP Biology, additional Chemistry and Physics classes, Robotics, Anatomy, Environmental Science, and Engineering. Students are required eight courses of science for graduation with each course equaling .5 credit. All science courses lead students toward the Michigan STEM Endorsement. Much of the curriculum embraces modeling as it develops skills for student interactions and peer relations while approaching unknown content; students learn both the methods for approaching new science and the course content. Students learn essential lab-based skills in all science courses using labs based on claim, evidence, and reasoning (CER) to support understanding and develop argument for mental models. Students are constantly encouraged to think outside the box with many project-based learning tasks such as 3-D printer construction, student-led demonstrations in class, and windmill/solar oven constructions in Physical Science, just to name a few. Students are assisted in finding internships, scholarships, and science summer programs while guiding for the state STEM endorsement. The goal is to prepare students for STEM-based careers and excite them about present and future opportunities. We utilize data from our various tests, including common assessments, to inform decision-making in instruction and professional development.

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

Social Studies curriculum is driven by the idea of students becoming well-rounded, active, and engaged global citizens. There is an intentional focus on scope and sequence, which includes US History, World History, Economics, Integrated Social Studies (a course developed by our social studies department with intentional focus on core social studies review prior to the students taking the Michigan Merit Exam), Government, three Advanced Placement courses including AP Macro, AP Micro, and AP Government & Politics, as well as two direct college credit courses in the areas of Sociology and Psychology. Courses are strategically aligned to the State of Michigan Standards, and this intentional sequencing allows students to finish their education ready to engage and participate in the world around them as active citizens and post-secondary students. The department annually reviews data from state standardized tests, allowing for a focus on items to identify strengths and weaknesses so that teachers can purposefully incorporate practice and preparation to focus on weak content areas. The district has provided intentional professional development for the department that has allowed the opportunity to implement differentiation, such as sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) and Kagan strategies. USA Test Prep, Nearpod, Actively Learn, Flocabulary, Newsela, and Teacher's Curriculum Institute (TCI) are also used in order to differentiate instruction and help students reinforce key concepts. The students come to high school well-versed and fluent in technology as we have a one-to-one program. The continuous use of formative and summative assessments ensures that the pre- and post-tests drive focused instruction. During collaboration times, teachers are given opportunities to continually look at student performance on standardized tests and analyze the instruction that may need to be modified in order to help students become 21st Century learners and ready to enter the workforce or post-secondary education.

1e. For secondary schools:

At New Buffalo High School, our curriculum supports student college and career readiness in several ways. We provide exposure to many different opportunities. We utilize a career pathway program and an interest inventory to provide reference. Students have the opportunity to realize their talents and aptitudes through our rich curriculum, through career and technical trades courses, by taking college-level courses and by participating in summer internship programs in local business and industry.

We also take our entire school to a university each fall. This supports our scholarship program and shows students some of the opportunities that are available to them.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

New Buffalo's elective offerings are a point of pride. Non-core subjects are highly valued and provide creative and practical outlets for our students to grow and express themselves.

The Visual Art Department instills in all students the ability to create. Students are immersed in examples of artists throughout history. They develop a working knowledge of the role that artists play in our society and the careers that are available to them. Students at New Buffalo leave with the technical skills to use a variety of art media to convey personal experiences, narratives, abstract ideas, and philosophical questions, as well as the vocabulary to discuss artwork at a high level. Students exhibit work in the community and through local and regional art competitions. Visual Art classes 1-4 are offered as electives.

Music education in New Buffalo focuses on developing confident student musicians in grades 6-12. Approximately 30% of our high school students are enrolled in band. Band students have the opportunity to perform in Concert, Marching, Jazz, Pit, and Pep Bands. The band performs at State Marching and Concert Band Festivals and consistently earns Awards of Excellence and Superior ratings in Music, Marching, Percussion, and Color Guard. Students are frequently selected via audition to perform in Honor Bands and at Solo & Ensemble Festivals. With the addition of an after-school choir, as well as courses in Musical Theater, Guitar, and a Music Appreciation course for college credit, music at New Buffalo High School is thriving.

The physical education department focuses on providing a curriculum that embodies the principles of being a physically-educated person. Students learn, practice, and implement components of physical fitness, sports skills and strategies, and positive affective values in relation to physical activity. Offerings include Fitness for Life, Resistance Training, Life Sports, and Women's Fitness.

Our health department focuses on a healthy mind and body. The Michigan Model is followed for health education, which requires students to take at least one health class. This model is sequential, comprehensive, aligned with health education standards, based on research, and skills based. The healthy relationships unit was recently updated and approved by our sex education board and school board. In addition to the Michigan Model training, students also get trained in First Aid/CPR/AED. If they pass all areas of the test they receive an American Red Cross certification.

Our business department offers both Accounting and Personal Finance. In Accounting, our goal is to provide students who intend to pursue business degrees in college with a solid understanding of accounting principles and the importance of integrated technology. We also cover ethical dilemmas faced by accountants daily in order to help students with their decision-making skills and critical thinking in light of current events -- highlighting the ethical policies and business decisions in real companies.

In Personal Finance, students begin to focus on their role as a citizen, student, family member, consumer, and active participant in the financial world. They learn how to write checks, reconcile bank accounts, and prepare government information forms and basic tax returns. We work together to help students become aware of their various financial responsibilities while providing opportunities for self-awareness, expression, and satisfaction in a highly technical and competitive society. Students discover new ways to maximize their earning potential, develop strategies for managing their resources, explore skills for the wise use of credit, and gain insight into the different ways of investing money.

The Spanish department provides students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to communicate in an environment where Spanish is spoken while offering high school credit grades 7-12, including college credit and AP. With a focus on spoken communication from level 1, students are taught the skills to utilize their Spanish in their future workplace and travels. Many graduates go on to earn a degree in Spanish in college. Through a biannual exchange with a school in Seville, Spain, for the past eight

NBRS 2019

years, close to 100 students have had the opportunity to utilize their hard-earned skills in an immersion environment, along with hosting those same students in New Buffalo. Our focus and rigor have resulted in a 100% pass rate on the AP test and non-native speakers receiving the Seal of Biliteracy.

3. Special Populations:

New Buffalo High School is unique in the way that instruction, interventions, and assessments are tailored to meet individual student needs. Special education caseloads are small. This allows for increased direct instruction time between the student, the special education teacher, and the general education teachers. New Buffalo High School's Peer-to-Peer program affords students with additional assistance in both general education and special education courses. A Resource Room course is built into daily schedules for all students who receive special education services. This allows time for students to meet with a special education teacher one-on-one, to receive assistance with homework completion, to give opportunity for the teacher to use reinforcement strategies, to reteach, and to provide time for progress monitoring. The Resource Room also provides an opportunity for students to take ownership in making progress on Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and objectives. An in-district speech-language pathologist assists students with speech, language, and social skills. Both the special education teachers and the speech-language pathologist provide students with frequent opportunities to practice self-advocacy techniques, such as speaking with general education teachers about their accommodations.

Transition planning is an important part of developing an IEP for a high school student. An Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale is administered to each student before an IEP Team meeting. The results of this assessment, along with input the student provides on the "Annual Transition Summary-A Student's Perspective" form, are used to develop the student's transition plan. The student then develops a Google Slides presentation to share with all participants of the IEP Team meeting.

Teachers at New Buffalo High School have implemented the "Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol" with English Language Learning (ELL) students. This allows teachers to accommodate ELL students with supports for vocabulary and communicative activities. An ELL coordinator serves as a contact point for families, providing translation communication between school and home. The coordinator is also available to students needing accommodations, such as reading tests, assisting with homework completion, and assisting with written expression. Translation services by the coordinator are available at New Buffalo High School during both parent-teacher conferences and in IEP and 504 Plan meetings.

Algebra Essentials courses and English Essentials courses are offered to students who are in need of skill building within a small class that is co-taught. Skills such as note-taking and binder organization are explicitly taught in the essentials courses. In addition to these scheduled opportunities, teachers and student tutors are available for assistance before and after school. These all work in concert to close the achievement gap. For high-achieving students, New Buffalo High School offers seven Advanced Placement courses and direct credit courses through Purdue University Northwest and Southwestern Michigan College. Transportation is provided for those wishing to take college courses off campus. To gain a jump-start on the New Buffalo High School graduation requirements, eighth grade students are given the opportunity to earn high school credit in English, Algebra, and Spanish. Summer courses and programs, such as a Spanish course, are also available to students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

New Buffalo High School engages students and provides a positive environment to support their social, emotional, and academic growth. Our students have access to a school social worker and guidance counselor. The social worker provides individual services, group counseling sessions, and family supports. Students are able to seek individual help for stress, anxiety, depression, and varied mental health concerns. Students also have access to group counseling focused on coping skills, a designated group for young teen females, and a grief group supported by Lory's Place (a local community grief resource). The high school guidance counselor assists students with scheduling classes, academic planning, and college and trade school opportunities. The guidance counselor also works diligently with students and parents to fill out financial aid application paperwork and to seize opportunities for available scholarships. The social worker and guidance counselor offer additional support, providing interventions to increase students' growth academically, socially, and emotionally.

Due to the high school's smaller population, the social worker is able to collaboratively work with the teaching staff and connect with students. New Buffalo High School has implemented an "I STAND FOR" program where ALL staff are vested in the wellness of and success of targeted students that need extra support. Thus, teachers and staff work one-on-one with designated students.

School staff works tirelessly to create a safe, engaging, and supportive climate for all students and staff. A number of extra-curricular programs increase the support of creating this environment at New Buffalo. These programs include but are not limited to Peer To Peer, The Diversity Tolerance Acceptance Team (DTAT), Robotics, and Theatre. New Buffalo additionally has an active National Honor Society, Spanish National Honor Society, and Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD). We held staff training with The Out Center to address our LGBTQ population. We also stress Social-Emotional Learning techniques in our classes and lessons. For the past four years the Academic Challenge Team has qualified for state-level competitions, as has the district's Robotics and Envirothon teams.

Teachers feel valued and supported through the Building Council and the School Improvement Team where their voices are collectively heard and district policies and practices get formed and implemented. Our teacher contract provides a set collaboration time, which encourages and nurtures teacher-leadership. Teachers have a built-in 80 minutes per week to collaborate with each other on topics that they select. We also administer perception surveys that serve to drive some of our decision making. These efforts, along with our school improvement team and building council structure, provide avenues for showing teachers that they are valued and supported.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

New Buffalo High School is committed to partnering with students, families, and community members. The New Buffalo High School staff understands the value and importance of engaging students' families and community members to increase students' success. Partnering with families is done through a multitude of programs at New Buffalo High School. Incoming freshman attend an orientation prior to the beginning of the school year. Parents are also encouraged to participate through the Parent Advisory Group, which meets monthly.

Families receive communication about events and school information through "Bison Bits," a weekly parent e-newsletter. Teachers and school staff are available to talk with families during parent/teacher conferences offered three times per year, as well by phone and email during the course of the year. Parents have access to their student's academic progress through PowerSchool. The staff at New Buffalo High School works diligently to communicate with parents and work alongside families to improve student success. The guidance counselor and school social worker collaborate with families. Families are able to meet with the social worker as needed to discuss students' academic success, social and emotional well-being, as well as get connected to needed community resources and supports.

The community of New Buffalo is highly involved in the school system. New Buffalo High School works with parents of students as well as local community agencies and businesses. These include the Pokagon Fund, Harbor Country Newspaper, The New Buffalo Times, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Edgewater Church (to provide snacks to students), and Barney's Grocery (Benevolent Fund). New Buffalo High School partners with these agencies and businesses to provide informational forums for the community, such as the mental health forum presented in the fall of 2018. Future presentations for parents and community members include a Human Trafficking 101 Forum and a forum for understanding vaping and the dangers to youth. Other avenues of community involvement include the Clothes Closet for students unable to afford clothing, a summer day camp that employs high school students where local elementary students attend, and a community-wide 5K honoring cancer survivors. We also employ a school resource officer who is in our building daily, working with students, and developing goodwill between the school, parents, and the community. We promote a secure and nurturing learning environment where students feel safe to come forward with problems and concerns.

3. Professional Development:

Our administration focuses on a well-developed school improvement plan (SIP) in planning and executing a school year. Our SIP is strategic and intentional in helping us allocate resources and funds. We ask teachers to analyze their data and identify goals for the upcoming year(s). Their data is reflective of the academic standards (learning targets) and student growth percentiles established by the state. When we have teachers with common needs, we bring in trainers or we send teachers to appropriate group conferences. Where there are singular or unique needs, we are able to send teachers as well. Because of the infrastructure established in our teachers' contract and the capacity developed through personalized professional development, our staff is highly motivated to constantly analyze and improve. Our vision includes obtaining the supports and the materials our teachers need to be successful. We value our teacher experts by promoting peer observations where our teachers can study and learn from each other. In addition, the built-in, weekly collaboration time provides time for teachers to discuss, implement, and troubleshoot curricular and student issues to improve the school's mission. The supports and the expectation for growth and improvement create an atmosphere where all teachers can grow and develop into teacher-leaders. By promoting these goal-oriented processes, our professional development program inspires teachers to keep getting better at their craft. Stakeholders have a voice, and they are supported. Because administrators are able to closely align professional development to the needs of the faculty, we are then able to support the goals of the school.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership philosophy states that all stakeholders are leaders. Our administration and teaching faculty have put into operation a contract that builds capacity for leadership in all teachers and principals. Furthermore, the contract provides unique opportunities for our respective school leaders to focus on their role as it supports and drives our school improvement plan. We are ever conscious of the four quadrants of data available to us in schools: Academic data, Demographic data, Perception data, and Practice data.

The Building Council is a troubleshooting group that, in general, is able to discuss any items before we take them to the full staff. Beyond data, this group also looks at issues of climate and culture. Our Building Council primarily focuses on perception data (from surveys) and practice data (policies).

Our school improvement team or SIP team also serves primarily as the data team. The mission: to analyze trends from multiple data measures and make recommendations to the Building Council. We are small enough that many of the same teachers are on both teams. This allows us to be informed and intentional in executing plans, recommending professional development, and impacting student learning.

Our principals are tasked with keeping our committees and faculty focused on our strategic plans and goals. Principals attend Building Council, SIP, and collaborative meetings. Principals also spend time mentoring committee chairs and working to empower faculty members to be involved. The superintendent keeps all of the members focused on the district SIP and the district strategic plan. The contract and infrastructure in

place allow us much freedom within the constraints of the following goals: to improve student learning and to promote climate and culture. Finally, our students utilize Student Senate to provide feedback to teachers and principals about matters that motivate the student body. They also facilitate activities to promote school spirit and to promote a positive climate.

Many opportunities for leadership and developing leadership competence are in our system. We are in a unique position to maximize our individual talents and develop strong relationships between all stakeholders, both within our school walls and in our community at large.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In 2010, the culture of New Buffalo Area Schools was changed dramatically by the introduction of the Bison Pokagon Educational Trust Fund. Through this fund, graduates can utilize up to \$25,000 to further their education through any post-secondary training. This fund had an immediate and lasting impact on our community, and students and families were able to envision pursuing further education, increasing the motivation to do so. Many students are first-generation college students whose parents did not encourage them to further their education because it was not financially possible. With this assistance, students may pursue any avenue of interest, including study at a community college, a four-year university, or any trade school program.

Because of this fund and our small school size, staff are able to focus individualized instructional strategies on getting each student to their post-secondary goal. Furthermore, our trimester system has allowed students to take courses that not only align with their interests, but also prepare them to be successful in their post-secondary career, ultimately making their education more meaningful. If the student is interested in attending a traditional university, they may focus on advanced courses during their junior and senior years. To assist them in earning their best standardized test score, all juniors take SAT prep courses. To help them earn early college credits, we provide transportation to Purdue North West to take courses on campus, we provide direct credit courses through Southwestern Michigan College that are taught by our teachers, and we provide seven AP courses taught by our staff. Students who are interested in exploring the trades have a wide range of options as well. They may participate in our in-house Building Trades program and learn home construction, enroll in a Fire Science program, or attend the AK Smith Area Career Center where they can take courses in Auto Mechanics, Welding, Culinary Arts, and Early Childhood Education. By connecting with our students and learning what their post-secondary goals are, we are able to ensure that each student takes full advantage of this incredible fund.

The Bison Pokagon Educational Trust Fund significantly impacted our school and our community. It changed the way that our students and our entire community think about and view the future. As a result, our staff can effectively engage and motivate our students to set and achieve their goals while they are enrolled at New Buffalo High School.