

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 Mr. David Lutz

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

Official School Name Wayzata West Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 149 Barry Avenue North

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

Wayzata MN 55391-1012
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Hennepin County

Telephone (763) 745-6400

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Web site/URL

https://www.wayzataschools.org/w

ms

E-mail david.lutz@wayzataschools.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. Chace Anderson

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

E-mail

chace.anderson@wayzataschools.org

District Name Wayzata Public Schools Tel. (763) 745-5000

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 Ms. Sarah Johansen

(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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 12 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	121	132	253
7	132	109	241
8	146	114	260
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	399	355	754

*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
 - 16 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 70 % 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: 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.

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	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	43
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	55
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	771
(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%
8 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Bengali, Chinese/Mandarin, Dutch, French, Harari, Hindi/Hindustan, Kannad, Korean, Malayala, Nepali, Oromo, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8%
Total number students who qualify: 64

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
64 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>11</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>2</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>18</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	37
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.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	96%	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 2018.

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

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

Yes No

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.

The Mission of Wayzata Public Schools is to ensure a world-class education that prepares each and every student to thrive today and excel tomorrow in an ever-changing global society.

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

The Mission of Wayzata Public Schools is to ensure a world-class education that prepares each and every student to thrive today and excel tomorrow in an ever-changing global society.

Wayzata West Middle School (WWMS) is one of three middle schools in the Wayzata Public School District (WPS). Wayzata is a western suburb of Minneapolis, Minnesota, located on the north shore of Lake Minnetonka. In addition to Wayzata, WWMS serves families from portions of the surrounding communities of Plymouth, Minnetonka, Corcoran, Medina and Orono. WWMS originally opened in 1951 as a secondary school for students in grades seven through twelve. When Wayzata Senior High School opened in 1961, WWMS became a junior high school. The middle school model was adopted at Wayzata West, Central, and East in 1997. While Wayzata is rooted in a rich and treasured small-town history, the city and the surrounding communities served by WPS are experiencing steady growth. A prominent feature of this growth is the large amount of new home construction taking place highlighting Wayzata Public Schools as the primary attractor on sales signs.

While all schools in WPS share the “Wayzata” label, only WWMS resides within the city of Wayzata. The historic and geographic connections of WWMS to its namesake city have helped foster a strong sense of school pride among students, families, staff and community members. The school currently serves 754 students in grades six through eight. The demographic makeup of the school includes approximately 16% Asian, 4% Black, 4% Hispanic, 70% White and 6% students who identify as two or more races. Just over 8% of students at WWMS receive special education services, and the same number of students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

WWMS embraces the district mission of “ensuring a world-class education that prepares each and every student to thrive today and excel tomorrow in an ever-changing global society.” One way this mission is realized is through the use of the middle school model. By splitting the typical WWMS grade level of 250 students into smaller teams of approximately 125 students, a more personalized experience is provided. Staff work each day to form and maintain meaningful relationships and respond to the individual needs of the learners they serve. All students start their day in an Advisory period, where they hear about school happenings from a student-run and produced news program and engage in lessons supporting schoolwide positive behavior expectations.

WWMS is in the first year of implementation as a Minnesota Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school. The purpose of PBIS at WWMS is to provide a positive and safe learning environment that prepares each student to thrive in middle school and beyond. With parent, student and staff feedback, teacher and school leaders collaboratively developed the core value slogan of “Be BOLD, Be West,” an acronym that stands for “Build Community, Own Your Learning, Lead Positively, and Develop Balance.” Staff teach and reteach students specific positive behaviors within each of these values as they apply to the classroom, other areas of the school and the use of technology. PBIS is instrumental in creating a schoolwide common language shared by all staff and students. This common understanding allows for consistency in the teaching and reteaching of positive behaviors, as well as the redirection and intervention when student behavior falls short of expectations.

An academic focus on state and national standards has driven course and lesson design at WWMS. The continuous refinement and reflection of grading practices at the middle level in WPS over the last decade has increased emphasis on quality feedback for students, clarifying learning objectives and success criteria, and emphasizing student growth. Additionally, the current practices have increased consistency in the student experience in alike classes across the school and district. The implementation of a content rich and rigorous curriculum with a focus on monitoring and responding to the progress of individuals has led to relevant, challenging and personalized learning experiences for WWMS students.

The WPS motto of “Excellence. For each and every student” highlights the high academic expectations for all held in the district. The history of the strong academic achievement of students at WWMS is evidence of staff, students, and families embrace of this charge. WWMS students take the Measure of Academic

Progress (MAP) in Reading, Math and Science and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) in Reading and Math annually. Eighth grade students also take the MCA Science exam. While progress on MAP and MCA exams are not a single measure of overall school excellence, WWMS students have demonstrated consistently high levels of achievement on these assessments.

The staff at WWMS recognize that middle school can be a challenging time for both students and parents. They strive to partner with families to ensure students are supported, challenged, and connected in their learning experiences. It is through this collaboration the mission of WPS is achieved, and is the lens through which the recognition of WWMS as a National Blue Ribbon Exemplary High Performing School is viewed.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The Language Arts curriculum supports students in developing critical thinking skills through careful reading, textual analysis, discussion and writing. Thematic units are used to meet and exceed the expectations of the Minnesota State English Language Arts Standards. Students use anthologies and novels to explore genres of literature and examine text for a deeper understanding of literary elements and author's craft. Fictional work is regularly connected to real world experience through the study of related nonfiction material. Students learn vocabulary within class texts that help them determine word meaning in context. Reading and vocabulary instruction are interwoven, and students are asked to compose in several styles such as narrative, poetry, and expository writing. Grammar and usage instruction are embedded during writing instruction. Students often compose for an authentic audience, validating the need to compose clearly and purposely. Various modes of discussion are utilized throughout the year to help students tease out meaning, deeper understandings and express their insights. Performance rubrics are an essential component of assessment and feedback in the Language Arts classroom. Teachers utilize rubrics to provide success criteria to students at the onset of compositions, to give opportunities for self and peer assessment during the writing process, and to create a strong connection between student performance and mastery levels in summative evaluations.

Eighth graders take an additional Communications course designed to support writing and speaking skills and the critical analysis of the media. Students study investigative journalism, craft a news story, and compose a position paper on a relevant community issue. Student voice is at the center of the curriculum as teachers work to support their understanding of the many sources of information that saturates their world. Expressing ideas through clear, informed writing and speaking is a primary objective spiraled throughout the course.

Classroom teachers collaborate with the Gifted and Talented Coordinator at WWMS to provide enrichment for students within the Language Arts classroom including use of alternate texts and different products. Teachers utilize differentiated feedback on rubrics to propel learning and engage students in the process. Additionally, reading intervention courses support striving readers and boost their participation and success in the Language Art classrooms.

1b. Mathematics:

The WWMS math program seeks to deepen conceptual understanding and improve students' skill base in mathematics. Students participate in the College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM) Core Connections curriculum where they employ problem-solving strategies, question, investigate, analyze critically, gather and construct evidence, and communicate rigorous arguments to justify their thinking. The middle school mathematics curriculum is comprised of pre-algebra and algebra units of study with emphasis placed on numbers and operations in 6th grade, ratios and proportions in 7th grade, and expressions, equations and functions in 8th grade. Using instructional materials, students tackle mathematical ideas set in everyday contexts to help them make sense of abstract principles. Students are taught how to gather and organize information, break problems into smaller parts and look for patterns that lead to solutions. Students often work in heterogeneous groups and rotate through defined roles that emphasize collaboration as they share information, expertise, and ideas. Group roles are designed to prepare students for the type of work that their future educational and vocational pursuits will require.

With an emphasis on problem solving instead of the rote memorization of math concepts, students build problem-solving strategies that apply to most academic disciplines and daily life. This approach encourages students to grow and learn together as they work to improve as mathematicians, problem solvers, and communicators. When providing feedback on the learning process or assessing summative work a student has produced, teachers utilize specific feedback and rubrics with success criteria that goes beyond reporting

the correctness of a final answer. Consistent with the CPM philosophy, in the evaluation process teachers and students recognize and make known when the student's problem solving process is valid, even with an incorrect final result.

Students are placed in either a grade level math course or an accelerated math course. Placement is based on several criteria including the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) in Math, Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) Quantitative/Nonverbal scores, and FastBridge aMath assessments. Students have the opportunity to move into accelerated courses at several entry points.

1c. Science:

At WWMS, Physical Science is taught in sixth grade, Life Science in seventh grade and Earth Science in eighth grade. All three science courses are taught using a hands-on learning approach, with an emphasis on lab-based, constructivist activities. Physical Science includes topics related to force, motion, energy, engineering and chemistry. Life Science units include chemistry, cells, human biology, genetics, evolution, diversity of life and ecology. The Earth Science curriculum includes units in chemistry, meteorology, geology and astronomy.

The Minnesota State Science Standards are the foundation of all three courses, which emphasize using the processes of science to solve problems over memorizing facts, adhering to the guiding principle that the best way to learn science is by doing science. Activities, including building models, designing and carrying out experiments, analyzing data, and using critical thinking skills, are regularly used to support this belief. Technology is integrated into science classes through the use of virtual experiments and simulations, digital probes to collect and analyze data, and a variety of applications. Summative tests and projects are designed to assess student understanding of the essential course concepts, while lab assessments allow students to demonstrate the skill-based components of standards. Opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of learning beyond the level of the standards has been an emphasis in WPS middle schools, which is evident in the design of science common assessments.

Science teachers at all three grade levels often adjust their lessons to meet the individual needs of students. Personalized supports are used to ensure that all students are being challenged at the appropriate level. This could look like re-teaching/re-learning opportunities for those not yet meeting expectations, or different challenging work for students performing above expectations. The belief that all students can learn and use the processes of science to help solve problems is a driver behind the design of differentiated learning activities.

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

The social studies curriculum immerses students in the studies of history, geography, economics, and citizenship and government. Throughout the curriculum, students engage in historical inquiry, analyze important trends in the world, and develop critical thinking skills as they deepen their historical, civic, economic, and geographic understandings. Beginning with Minnesota Studies in sixth grade, students learn about state history and government and explore Minnesota's role within the larger context of the country. This is followed by United States Studies in seventh grade, when students examine the country's history and government from 1800 to contemporary times. Students engage in debate and analyze how perspective and power influence history and how it is told. Social studies in eighth grade culminates in the experience of Global Studies where students apply spatial and chronological perspectives as they study geography and contemporary world history. Social studies teachers rely heavily on performance rubrics to assess the various projects, simulations and discussions students complete. These rubrics provide students with success criteria for different performance levels at the onset of an assessment, are utilized as a key resource for feedback and progress checks during the activity, and allow for clarity and accuracy in the summative evaluation of the final product.

Across all three grade levels, teachers integrate literacy standards and content knowledge. Students read, write, and debate regularly, applying their historical knowledge to make claims, draw conclusions, and pose questions about the various texts that they read. Teachers provide reading strategies as a scaffold for those

needing extra support, and enrichment opportunities are regularly available and encouraged. For example, in Minnesota Studies, sixth graders research complex topics from multiple viewpoints, develop opinions and questions from the research on the topics, and engage in an extended fishbowl discussion to synthesize their ideas. In United States Studies, seventh graders delve into serious historical research by analyzing primary and secondary sources to create an exhibit, website, performance or documentary that chronicles the impact of a historical event for Minnesota History Day. In Global Studies, students are encouraged to delve deeper into historical events through the creation of political cartoons and are encouraged to read world literature that brings issues to life.

1e. For secondary schools:

The middle school serves a vital role for the beginning of many college and career readiness conversations, with a focus on curiosity and exploration. All curriculum is designed for relevancy and real world application. An example of this includes the units in Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) on career exploration, goal setting, and personal financial management. In Engineering, Technology, and Design (ETD) the goal is to develop 21st century competencies for an ever-changing, technologically rich environment. All WPS middle school students are provided a district-issued iPad and are coached to manage devices productively, demonstrate good digital citizenship, increase digital literacy and skills, and develop a more global perspective. Additionally, WWMS staff work collaboratively with Wayzata High School staff to ensure students and families have the support they need for a smooth transition.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At WWMS, courses beyond the core curriculum areas are referred to as “encores” and account for two periods of the six academic period day. The middle school encore programming allows students to identify and develop interests. During one period students alternate between Music and Physical Education, while the other period includes classes like Art, Engineering, Technology and Design (ETD), Family Consumer Science (FACS), and Spanish. Each course aligns with college and career pathways at Wayzata High School.

ARTS (visual and/or performing)

The arts program at WWMS includes both music and visual arts. Students in all grade levels participate in a required every-other-day music class. Students may choose from performance based courses in vocal music, orchestra or band or an exploration in musical styles for eighth graders. In these courses, students are introduced to reading and performing music. Most music groups perform several concerts throughout the year. Approximately 43% of students participate in the vocal music program, 34% participate in band, and 23% participate in the orchestra program.

The mission of the Wayzata Visual Art Department is to prepare globally aware, lifelong artful learners by teaching and implementing challenging and comprehensive art curriculum focused on critical and innovative thinking skills. All sixth graders participate in a quarter-long visual arts course where they further develop foundations from elementary art. Eighth graders have the opportunity to elect a semester visual arts course where they explore the theme “identity” with clay, self portraits, graphic art, mixed media and cast jewelry. Approximately 40% of WWMS 8th grade students enroll in this course.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH/NUTRITION

All students at WWMS participate in physical education class on an every-other-day basis. Physical Education classes focus on three areas: fitness, lifelong recreation and skills related to sports and activities. The overarching goal is to increase students’ physical activity to enhance their overall health. All sixth graders participate in a developmentally appropriate family life unit during their science class. Additionally,

eighth graders participate in a semester long health course where students discuss the foundations of health, mental health, drugs and alcohol, nutrition, relationships and sexuality, first aid and CPR.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The middle school Spanish program, a continuation of the elementary Spanish experience, is focused on the three modes of communication, as recommended by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). All sixth and seventh graders at WWMS study the Spanish language for one semester. These introductory courses, when combined with the optional 8th grade Spanish course, provide students the opportunity to complete the first level of high school Spanish while in the middle school. This leads to higher levels of language proficiency. Approximately 70% of eighth graders at WWMS enroll in the Spanish course.

TECHNOLOGY/LIBRARY/MEDIA

All sixth and seventh graders at WWMS take a quarter-long course in ETD. In this robust STEM experience, students complete activities that support their technical literacy and understanding of the design process. Skills are developed through robotics engineering, and include coding, 3D printing and CAD concepts. Students in eighth grade have the opportunity to elect an additional semester with a deeper dive into either wood production techniques or robotics engineering, 3D printing and CAD concepts, or a combination of both. Approximately 40% of WWMS eighth grade students enroll in ETD. The Media Center at WWMS is staffed with a full time media specialist and paraprofessionals who provide support to teachers and students. Students' media literacy, research skills, and reading habits are enhanced through direct instruction and collaboration among staff.

FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCE

All seventh graders at WWMS participate in a quarter-long course in FACS. Here they investigate concepts related to careers, personal finance, consumerism, nutrition, food preparation, and wellness. Decision-making, technical reading and math skills are emphasized along with time management, goal setting and the value of being an informed consumer. Interested eighth graders have the option of taking an additional semester course in Family Consumer Science, where the class examines teen nutrition, food preparation, regional and global cooking. Approximately 40% of WWMS eighth graders enroll in FACS.

OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

One of the most memorable experiences for WWMS sixth grade students is a week-long trip to Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center located in the bluffs of Lanesboro, Minnesota. Students examine environmental science, cultural history, contemporary environmental issues, personal growth, team building and outdoor recreation. The Eagle Bluff trip occurs early in the year to help foster a sense of belonging and well-being.

3. Special Populations:

A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) model is used at WWMS to identify academic, social and emotional needs of students, determine a potential antecedent and implement a targeted intervention. Progress is monitored to assess the impact of the intervention and determine future steps. This process is initiated at the grade level team weekly meetings with collaboration between administrators, interventionists and support staff. Interventions can support a large number of students, a small group of students or individual students, highlighting the "multi-tiered" aspect of the model. Particularly challenging situations are referred to the school Problem Solving Team (PST). The PST works to support teachers ensuring a range of efforts are attempted and assessed for effectiveness.

WWMS uses two critical intervention programs in reading and math. Read 180 and Math 180 have set curricula that identify areas of concern, target instruction, and monitor and assesses learning. The intervention teacher sees students for both increased instructional time and a decreased student-to-instructor

NBRS 2019

ratio. The students continue to receive scaffolded support in the MTSS model after exiting the Read 180 and Math 180 program.

The WWMS Gifted and Talented Program provides additional experiences to meet the needs of high achieving and high ability students. The program coordinator works with teachers in all content areas to facilitate differentiated learning opportunities. Examples include book groups from classic literature, website creation for plate tectonics, and compacted units for world religions. The MTSS model incorporates flexible grouping allowing students to participate based on talents, passion or interest. Grade level seminars focused on affective needs including topics such as managing relationships, finding coping skills for stress and perfectionism, and exploring the importance of personal goals. Additionally, students whose standardized reading test scores are in the 97% percentile or above are placed in a cluster grouping within the regular Language Arts classroom.

The WWMS Young Scholars Program is an academic program used to support students with high potential from underserved populations who are less likely to be considered for gifted programs using traditional methods of identification. Young Scholars promotes access, affirmation, and advocacy for continuous academic growth. The program is coordinated by the gifted and talented coordinator and includes individual and group coaching, in addition to the grade level affective needs seminars.

Students with identified special needs have Individualized Educational Learning Plans (IEPs) and are supported by case managers and specialists, grade level teachers, resource classrooms and push-in or pull-out instruction based on need. WWMS has a clustered, team-taught Language Arts class at each grade level that customizes learning experiences based upon student needs. The special education teachers work closely with teams on a daily or weekly basis to monitor and adjust for student progress. Specially Designed Classrooms (SDC) meet the needs of learners with Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD) and students who qualify for more intensive emotional behavioral support. WWMS has an English Language Learner program supporting students who qualify for service.

WWMS uses standardized assessments to monitor student academic achievement and growth. Each summer, a leadership team of teachers and administration meets in the summer to analyze data trends. School improvement goals are created in math or reading, student engagement and equity and integration. Current school improvement goals include efforts to increase school wide reading achievement, implement PBIS school wide and decrease the gap in achievement between the highest achieving student population at WWMS and the Black and Latino student groups in both reading and math. Teaching teams receive student results, create targeted interventions and supports and progress monitor during the year. Progress on student achievement goals, including SIP goals, are reviewed as part of the peer coaching and Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) processes at WWMS. Continued professional development on instructional and behavioral best practice, along with targeted training on student mental health and behavior analytics have supported staff in their gap closure efforts.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At WWMS, the culture of our building is a primary attractant for current and prospective students, families, and staff. The cornerstone of this culture is meaningful relationships, which are prioritized in everything from the design of the school day to the supports and opportunities provided by the school. With a total attendance of approximately 750 students, WWMS is large enough to provide a variety of opportunities and deliver a quality middle school model but is small enough to know the classmates and colleagues that walk the halls each day.

An important part of establishing a positive school culture is welcoming new students. The transition for new sixth graders to WWMS begins in the spring with a New Student Orientation Night, where students and families learn about the school and building tours are given by seventh and eighth grade student leaders. Families with students new to the district are welcomed with a smaller summer orientation, where they learn about school and district information, take any placement tests and meet with the counseling staff. Student leaders assist with transitions for students who join mid-year, providing a friendly connection for the first few days of school. They help students meet peers, find classes, and feel comfortable in their new school.

Welcoming efforts continue into the fall for all students where “Day 1” festivities kick off with a student-led assembly, headlined by friendly grade-level competitions and activities to introduce PBIS concepts. As mentioned before, the environmental field trip for 6th-graders is a unique culture-building opportunity for five days of school in an outdoor arena. Students and staff spend the week forming new friendships and developing the skills to collaborate, persist, and experience success.

As mentioned previously, the “Be BOLD, Be West” core values and positive behaviors are taught school-wide and emphasize the importance of positive climate. Students and staff are recognized through the use of “Bold Notes,” a positive note to strengthen and reinforce BOLD values. The classrooms and hallways of WWMS include prominently displayed signage reminding all to “Be BOLD, Be West.”

Staff culture has been a primary focus at WWMS with the addition of the PBIS framework this year. A positive student culture starts with a positive staff culture, and the staff at WWMS are very supportive. One of the characteristics of a positive staff culture is participation.

Finding teachers for building leadership roles is never a challenge, and staff do an excellent job contributing to, communicating and supporting decisions that impact the school. Additional appreciation and recognition for staff has been intentionally implemented during building-wide meetings. Various staff members have also assembled a “Sunshine Committee,” a group that provides support and celebration where it is needed at WWMS.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Clear, timely and relevant communication is perhaps the most important tool in keeping stakeholders engaged in events, initiatives, and happenings. The Skyward Student Information system is used to report academic progress, manage student information and attendance, and send mass communications from teachers to families. Families are also able to access Canvas, a learning management system, to get more information about course activities and resources as they pertain to the progress of their student.

Families and community members are regularly invited to WWMS to celebrate an accomplishment, view performances, check out student projects, volunteer in a classroom, attend a PTA meeting or stand in as a guest speaker. The Student Stars recognition ceremony takes place at the end of each quarter. Teachers nominate students who have excelled that quarter with the BOLD expectations, and families are invited to attend a morning celebration for the students. Each of the musical disciplines have seasonal performances, and the theater performances are well attended by the community. The parking lot fills up for Minnesota

History Day, with visitors arriving to check out the projects of the student groups and help with judging and feedback. Parent and community volunteers are a part of the culture at WWMS from helping new students with their lockers on the first day of school to guest speakers contributing their expertise on topics like The Holocaust or microbiology.

The primary student leadership group at WWMS is the BOLD Ambassadors, which is in alignment with the school core values previously described. While student BOLD Ambassadors lead multiple charitable and service campaigns throughout the year, one community entity they support annually is the Interfaith Outreach and Community Partners (IOCP). Last year, BOLD Ambassadors organized drives that brought in nearly one ton of food and cash donations to support local services including family support and education, housing, employment and transportation.

School happenings are communicated using a number of digital communication tools. A family newsletter with upcoming events, dates, and important information is delivered via email every Wednesday. Students and activities are celebrated through the WWMS school twitter account and website. The school and district websites have been recently redesigned to be easier to navigate.

Excellent schools become a hub of the community they serve, and WWMS is definitely that.

3. Professional Development:

WPS believes supporting student growth begins with a dedication to continuous personal improvement and growth from the staff, teachers, and administrators. To this end, the district has provided multiple opportunities for learning during teacher workshop sessions, trainings for new curricula (math and ELA most recently), evaluation and implementation of common middle school grading practices and district PLC collaboration time. Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) serve as specific content leaders supporting the core content areas. Technology implementation is encouraged and supported by technology integration coaches, “Tech Training” summer bootcamps, and sessions to encourage use of creative approaches to teaching and personalized learning. Finally, the Minnesota Quality Compensation (Q-Comp) peer coaching program provides ample opportunities for learning and reflection, and the Academy of Wayzata Educators (AWE) offers classes for teachers run by peers.

WWMS teachers guide and shape learning opportunities and experiences through a shared leadership model. Input on pedagogical best-practices, community values, and relationships shapes the culture of the building and the desire for excellence. Most professional development opportunities are coordinated and guided by the Professional Development Committee (PDC) which is comprised of administrators, grade-level, and encore representatives. They are responsive to teacher and student needs. In the past five years, multiple sessions have been presented by teachers for building staff including literacy across content areas, differentiation with depth of knowledge, the use of standards-based grading practices, homework effectiveness, mental health needs for students, mindfulness practices for staff and students, human development training, and PBIS.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership vision for WWMS aligns with the vision outlined in the Wayzata Public Schools Strategic Roadmap. The three core components of the district vision include “Exceptional student learning, experiences and relationships; community trust, confidence and partnership; and operational excellence.” The school administration, which includes a principal and associate principal, work collaboratively to support each of these entities with structures that include various aspect of staff and student leadership.

Each summer, a team of teacher leaders is assembled by middle school administrators to meet and review progress on the previous year’s Site Improvement Plan (SIP), analyze any new and relevant data, and establish building goals for the upcoming school year. The WWMS SIP for the current school year includes a reading achievement goal, which is tied to a Minnesota Quality Compensation (Q-Comp) program the district participates in. It also includes the goal of reducing the achievement gap in MCA scores at WWMS in Reading and Math, and continued development of the implementation of PBIS to

positively influence student engagement and achievement. These goals help inform the work of our school leadership teams, PLCs, and individual teachers.

Staff leadership teams at WWMS include a Building Leadership Committee (BLC), a Professional Development Committee (PDC), a PBIS Leadership Team, a Problem Solving Team (PST) and a Child Study Team (CST). The BLC has representatives from each core team, the encore, and a paraprofessional rep. This team meets monthly with administration to discuss upcoming school events and projects, provide feedback on pending decisions, and to help communicate back with the group they represent. The PDC mentioned previously is also a representative group that, in addition to planning professional learning opportunities for staff, works to review and approve the use of school professional development funds, ensuring fiscal responsibility and alignment with school goals. The PST supports our MTSS model and the CST supports Special Education referrals and assessments. In addition to working with staff on leadership teams, administration also visits teacher team meetings to provide more specific communication and supports.

In addition to staff voice, student and family voice are priorities at WWMS. Student leadership opportunities include the BOLD Ambassador group previously described, and the Principal Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC meets with administration quarterly and is comprised of twelve students per grade level that were selected by their teachers. Teachers were charged with nominating a representative group of students, that would provide a diversity of perspective. PAC students are asked to discuss various school initiatives, projects, and ideas to provide the student perspective.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The middle school model is a primary key to the success at WWMS. Wayzata West, East and Central moved to the middle school model in 1997, when ninth grade students were moved from district junior high schools to a new high school and sixth grade students were added from elementary schools. Since its inception, WWMS has utilized guidance from the Association of Middle Level Educators (AMLE) to inform its structures and practices as they relate to academics and social and emotional support.

The design of the student day at WWMS is reflective of middle level best practice. Students in all grades are placed on academic teams, creating consistency in the students that teachers on a team see, and also making a larger school seem small for students. The first class of the day for all students is advisory, a period dedicated to strengthening relationships, learning about school expectations, and providing social and emotional supports to students. The relationships that advisors form with their students allows for challenging topics like school safety and bullying to be authentically discussed.

Teaming provides many instructional benefits that would be challenging if not impossible in other school models. One of these is interdisciplinary instruction. Several units throughout the year have shared components that cross curricular areas, which teachers are able to implement and monitor due to common team planning times. Another benefit is the ability of core teams to meet regularly, discussing successes and challenges in supporting students, and collectively brainstorming and implementing academic and behavioral interventions for individual or groups of students. This common team time is also utilized by student support services, interventionists and specialists to collaboratively plan supports and enrichments for students.

In sixth and seventh grade, a full period is dedicated to reteaching, guided practice, independent work and sustained silent reading with the MTSS framework. Flexible grouping is utilized to send students in need of reteaching to the corresponding teacher, while other team teachers absorb students to provide a small group setting for reteaching. MTSS is also commonly used as a time to access students for intervention services and enrichment. While a period is not dedicated to MTSS in eighth grade due to additional course requirements, the model is utilized by teachers by establishing a rotation of MTSS sessions that move through various core areas. A targeted intervention MTSS course run by interventionists in reading and math is held during encore time for identified students. The ability to focus on quality first-time instruction with the support of a middle level team and a building PLC partner with the option of pulling students for reteaching has allowed staff to ensure high levels of proficiency and growth.

In the middle school schedule at WWMS, two class periods are dedicated to the exploratory Encore offerings described in a previous section. In these courses, students are introduced to many of the specific college and career pathways they will choose from at the high school.

When analyzing the sum of the parts that make up the middle school model, it is undoubtedly a primary practice that has led to the success at WWMS.