

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

Official School Name Mendham Township Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 18 West Main Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Brookside NJ 07926-0510
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Morris County

Telephone (973) 543-7107 Fax (973) 543-4631

Web site/URL https://www.mendhamtp.org/elementary-school-home E-mail jkotcho@mendhamtp.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. Salvatore Constantino
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail sconstantino@mendhamtp.org

District Name Mendham Township School District Tel. (973) 543-7107

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. Brian Jendryka
(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
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	29	17	46
K	35	38	73
1	35	24	59
2	32	32	64
3	31	28	59
4	40	38	78
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	202	177	379

*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
 - 7 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 82 % White
 - 4 % 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: 5%

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	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	17
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	355
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0%
Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
63 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>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</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: 6
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	1
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.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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 15:1

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	96%	96%	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.

Mendham Township Elementary School, a caring and supportive school community, provides a comprehensive, high-quality educational experience for Every Student- Every Day!

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

Mendham Township Elementary School (MTES) is located in a suburban town in Morris County, New Jersey and serves 386 students in preschool through grade four. The Mendham Township School District serves more than 700 students who speak 7 languages. The MTSD has 2 schools, one middle school (5-8), and one elementary school (PreK-4). Our caring and supportive school community provide all students with a comprehensive, high-quality educational experience in a nurturing environment. We pursue this endeavor because we believe in our school and district mission that all children deserve to learn and grow in line with their potential and can reach the highest outcomes if we adopt a growth mindset and a willingness to commit to our mission, “Provide the Best Education for Every Student-Every Day!” This is the consistent driving force that guides all of our educational decisions and the reason for our continued academic growth and high academic achievement. This is evidenced by the 2017-2018 New Jersey School Performance Report that calculates a “Summative Rating” for all schools by weighting accountability indicator scores in the areas of academic proficiency and growth in English Language Arts and Mathematics. MTES received a “Summative Score” 96.31 and a “Summative Rating” 99.82. These scores are compared with other schools across the state and rank Mendham Township Elementary School 5th overall in New Jersey.

In order to support our students in all aspects of their lives, we first recognize the vital roles that our teachers have in this comprehensive educational process. MTES recruits and employs highly qualified, highly skilled professionals, whose success is measured by their ability to bring about high student achievement and growth in their students. This is accomplished through three main pathways that include inspiring and motivating student learning, developing collaborative relationships with parents and students, and a systematic approach to implementing effective instruction and assessment. This requires our teachers to have high levels of leadership qualities and the ability to identify areas of improvement, problem-solving and the development of appropriate interventions for students by analyzing and interpreting formative and summative data. This accountability and ownership over student outcomes creates an environment of continuous high achievement and learning year after year.

Our school community strongly believes that ALL of our students can achieve our rigorous learning goals and benchmarks, however, recognizes that in order to accomplish this, a more differentiated approach is needed to address specific learning needs. The majority of instructional time at MTES takes place in heterogeneous groupings, however, a variety of supplementary support, advanced and enrichment classes are also available to students. This structure allows us to provide more individualized instruction within the regular educational setting either during the school day or during our “Zero Period” (before school) classes. This approach supports our expectations that our students will reach our rigorous learning goals while providing strong levels of academic support.

A significant part of what makes our students succeed in their academic progress is related to our focus on developing the whole child. We believe that in order to be a well-rounded and productive member of our society, it is important to engage in a variety of special area classes designed to develop interests in other areas and talents. In addition to our academic program, students are engaged daily in co-curricular classes in art, music, world language, technology, physical education, library media studies, S.T.E.M., and Maker Space. Students also may elect to participate in instrumental band, orchestra, chorus, and advanced art classes which are scheduled during the school day and “Zero Period”. After school enrichment classes are also offered through our partnership with the Morris County Arts Workshop. Over 95% of our third and fourth-grade students voluntarily participate in instrumental music, chorus or advanced art classes! This unique balance between academic achievement and co-curricular engagement is maintained and held in high regard by our community.

The Mendham Township Elementary School community stakeholders are invested in the belief that to foster a love of life long learning in our students, we must create a safe and supportive school climate where students can take academic risks, learn valuable character traits, develop appropriate social skills and engage in service to others. This starts with helping our students develop positive self-esteem, citizenship, leadership skills, and stewardship. Our school begins each day together with our “Morning Messages”. This is an opportunity to connect the school together and focus on our common goals, special activities and

recognizing students for their positive behaviors and contributions to the school and community. An example of this is how we support our students' character development by recognizing how they "Shine" each day by demonstrating good behaviors. Students are recognized daily for acts of kindness, demonstrating friendship, perseverance through challenges and many other positive behaviors. Student certificates are displayed on our "Hall of Shining Stars" which runs the length of one of our main hallways for all to view as they walk the building. In addition, students are taught Mindfulness strategies (i.e. mindful breathing, listening) which are highlighted each morning for the students to practice throughout the day. This helps our students to learn how to self-regulate and be aware of their feelings and emotions to better manage their actions. MTES is proud to maintain low levels of chronic absenteeism, below 10% as measured by the New Jersey Department of Education and low levels of Violence, Vandalism, HIB and Substance Offenses reporting 0.84 incidences per 100 students enrolled. This is a direct result of the positive school environment our teachers, administrators, parents, and students have created over the years and continues to have a huge impact on our students overall academic success.

In summary, Mendham Township Elementary School is dedicated to high academic standards while maintaining a strong belief that all students can and will achieve when they are engaged in high-quality learning experiences, delivered by highly qualified teachers in a supportive school environment. It is our school's mission to ensure that our students are successful at learning and in life by "Providing the Best Education for Every Student-Every Day".

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Reading and writing instruction is delivered through a balanced language arts literacy program. Students are encouraged to view themselves as readers and writers in all subject areas. Kindergarten through fourth-grade students receive six hundred minutes of direct, guided and independent instructional time during the week. Students receive direct reading instruction, at their instructional reading level, and taught specific reading strategies to improve comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Students are engaged in whole group, small group, paired and independent reading activities. As their skills increase, students are encouraged to work with more challenging levels of text. Students are asked to read daily through the school day and at home. Teachers assess student reading progress through observation, running records and grade level assessments. Students in kindergarten through grade four receive writing instruction in the three core genres of narrative, opinion, and informational writing. Writer's Workshop goals include opportunities to analyze, synthesize, critique and rewrite text. Students are taught to express their ideas clearly using an organized writing structure. Students learn appropriate sentence structure, paragraphing and essay construction. In addition, students are engaged in creative writing and poetry. Grammar, vocabulary and spelling/language strategies are taught using Wilson Reading Foundations. These hands-on learning activities teach letter/sound relationships, spelling rules and how words work. Teachers assess student writing progress through process writing activities, on-demand performance-based writing tasks (PBT), spelling assessments, and published writing pieces and essays. Additionally, progress in reading and writing is measured using standards-based indicators aligned with New Jersey Student Learning Standards four times per year.

1b. Mathematics:

The math curriculum is designed to advance students through grade-specific standards, develop a deeper understanding of skills, and work toward meeting the expectations of mathematics to prepare students for college and careers in order for them to succeed in the future. The goals of this curriculum will develop in our students the ability to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure, and look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning. Mathematics instruction is designed to meet the goals of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Mathematics and the Standards for Mathematical Practice are integrated throughout the program. Students are supported as they advance from concrete to abstract content and encouraged to use a variety of mathematical strategies to solve multistep problems. Students learn that they can reach solutions to problems in different ways and practice how to articulate their process to others orally and in written form. Our students are required to attain math fact fluency during their elementary experience. By mastering the basic addition/subtraction and multiplication/division facts by the end of third grade, our students are able to achieve higher levels of problem-solving with increasing accuracy. In addition to 80 minutes of regular daily math instruction, students in grade three and four receive an additional 40-minute problem-solving period. This additional instructional time focuses on learning specific problem-solving strategies, math vocabulary and how to express solutions in clearly written responses. Teachers track student progress by collecting data from a variety of sources such as fact fluency assessments, problem-solving math tasks, and unit assessments. Student data is maintained on student data sheets which are shared with other grade level teachers and principal and reviewed at grade level meetings, parent/teacher meetings, and monthly PLC meetings. Math support, enrichment, and advanced math classes are available to students through recommendations from their teacher and evaluation of assessment scores.

1c. Science:

The MTES science curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards. Students are exposed to Disciplinary Core Ideas that are built upon as the students move through the grade levels. Lessons are hands-on and inquiry-based so students can develop an understanding of the skills necessary to function

productively as problem solvers in the world. Unit lessons engage students in first-hand exploration and investigation of the topic. Instruction enhances our students' understanding of the four domains of science, including Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering Design. Students in kindergarten through fourth grades receive one 40 minute period of science instruction daily.

Investigations are guided by focus questions based on a real-world phenomenon. Students are then led on a journey which allows them to make discoveries through the investigative process and the exploration of materials. Students are required to ask questions and define problems, develop and use models, plan and carry out investigations, analyze and interpret data, use math and computational thinking, construct explanations and design solutions, engage in arguments from evidence, and obtain, evaluate, and communicate information. This leads to the development of scientific ways of thinking. Most often, the science exploration is done in small groups with the teacher as the facilitator. This approach allows the students to engage in an argument using evidence to support their findings. Guided conversations encourage students to synthesize the information and form a new schema. Reflection on response sheets, graphic organizers and science journals elicit individual connections with various real-world topics. Student progress is measured by standards-based indicators four times per year.

Our annual MTES Science EXPO encourages students to explore one of the following project formats (invention, demonstration, or experiment). Participants have the opportunity to solve problems, think creatively, conduct experiments, and analyze data, while completing individualized or group projects on topics of their choice. Participants are required to display and explain the process of their scientific observations and reflections by putting together a trifold display filled with data and conclusions drawn. This event is open to all student in kindergarten through grade four.

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

The MTES social studies curriculum prepares our students for citizenship in a democratic society as well as an increasingly interdependent global community. The curriculum offers courses of study and experiences that foster a sense of social responsibility and geographical and historical perspective necessary for responsible citizenship. Social studies is a broad subject area that includes all the disciplines considered to be part of the social sciences. The ability to participate as an informed citizen is primary to the continued progress of one's community. The MTES social studies program endeavors to provide our students with interactive experiences that integrate the content of the various social science disciplines: geography, history, economics, political science, anthropology, and sociology. It is designed to help students develop an appreciation for the values and processes of our own democratic political system as well as to develop an understanding and acceptance of the different perspectives that have created systems other than our own. An emphasis on critical thinking empowers students to become thoughtful, articulate, and active members of our society. Students are asked to use reading, speaking, and writing skills to formulate and express their views. The use of maps, globes, and other graphics tools to acquire, interpret, and process information are important skills that students practice at each grade level. Students in grades kindergarten through grade four receive one 40 minute period of social studies instruction daily. By gaining a general knowledge of the geographic, economic, political, social, and cultural forces that shape society, our students become informed and active citizens and are better equipped to make reasonable and responsible civic choices. The MTES social studies curriculum is aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and student progress is assessed through class participation, lesson activities, unit assessments, and research projects. Students are evaluated using standards-based indicators four times per year.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

The Mendham Township Preschool educates children ages three to five years old in an enriching play-based curriculum, focused on social-emotional growth and academic development. Our classrooms provide a safe and nurturing learning environment, that foster a love of learning.

Our preschool program provides special education students with academic instruction and related services. The goal of these services is to prepare all learners, no matter their disability, for a transition to kindergarten in the least restrictive environment possible. Currently, our programs include an inclusive classroom and a classroom for students with autism. While each classroom program is driven by the student's IEP, there is also a focus on kindergarten readiness and providing successful learning experiences to remediate learning gaps. As a philosophy, we believe that by providing meaningful and essential interventions, we can prepare all of our students for a successful elementary school transition.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Mendham Township Elementary School provides comprehensive special area classes including fine arts, music, physical education and health, technology, library media, world language, S.T.E.M., and Maker Space. Curricula aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and student outcomes are assessed using standards-based indicators. Special area curricula are evaluated on a five-year cycle to analyze instructional approaches, unit goals, materials, resources and make recommendations for revision.

The fine arts curriculum utilizes a system of art history, criticism, production, and reflection. Students are encouraged to develop their aesthetic and creative abilities through various artistic learning opportunities. Young artists develop skills by experiencing media, thinking critically, creatively, collaboratively, and independently about art. All students preschool through fourth grade participates in one forty minute art class per week. In addition to the regular art program students in grades two through four can attend our Art Explorers group. This is an elective class outside the regular program designed to encourage experimentation with projects and media that are unique and unconventional. The Advanced Artist group is a special accelerated class for third and fourth graders. Students are required to apply by submitting a portfolio of work. They are challenged with higher level skills and materials and final projects are presented during class presentations and our Festival of the Arts show at the end of the year. The art room is also available to students during our recess periods.

The general music curriculum focuses on music appreciation, music history, musical literacy, and how music connects our global community. All students preschool through grade four participate in one forty minute general music class per week. Students are taught through active listening, creative movement, playing instruments and cooperative musical games. Our third and fourth-grade chorus meets twice per week after school and is open to any student wishing to learn group choral and performance skills. Our fourth-grade students can select to learn one or more instrumental band or strings instruments. Groups meet once per week on a rotating schedule to receive small group instruction on their instrument.

The physical education & health curriculum (P.E.) is designed to promote healthy choices and an active lifestyle. Learning how to make healthy choices related to exercise, nutrition and wellness are paramount in our program. Our curriculum focuses on team, individual and cooperative activities, as well as fitness skills, and movement education. Students preschool through fourth grade attend three forty minute periods of P.E. per week in one of two gymnasiums or outdoors fields. Formative and summative assessments are used to help track student progress and level of fitness. Mindfulness, Yoga, and relaxation techniques are also embedded in the program. Students and staff participate in events and fundraisers that promote physical and mental well-being including the MTES Health and Wellness Fair, Girls on the Run, Giving Tree Program that supports a local special needs school, dental health presentations, staff CPR/AED training, breast cancer awareness volleyball games, The American Heart Challenge and school-wide field days. This approach helps to support our students in multiple ways so they are better able to learn and grow to their potential inside and outside of school.

The library media program is the hub of our school and a vital part of our academic success. Preschool through fourth-grade students visit the library once per week for forty minutes to learn essential skills in reading, research, digital content, and book selection. The program supports all curricula by planning and collaborating with teachers on daily lessons, activities, and projects. Our Tiger Times school newspaper is published biannually and run by fourth-grade students who have an interest in journalism, research, and writing. Students search for topics of interest, formulate questions, conduct interviews, write articles and

engage in revision and publication of work. Third and fourth graders may select to join one of the many weekly Book Clubs that help students learn important discussion skills and promote the love of reading! spark the love of reading!

The technology curriculum is designed to foster critical thinking, communication, and collaboration while allowing students to express creativity and innovation using digital tools. Preschool through grade four students visit the computer lab once per week for forty minutes. Students in grades two through four are assigned their own Chromebook for the school year. Our program supports the integration of technology in all content areas.

The STEM/Maker Space curriculum integrates the four core disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math. Students in grade one and two receive one STEM class per week for forty minutes. Units topics focus on real-world problems and students use critical thinking skills to complete hands-on design challenges, inventions, creative building lessons, and reverse construction lessons. Our STEM lab provides a space ample space for groups of students to work collaboratively on projects and engage in presentations. Our Maker Space lab allows students to work with various materials to design, construct and make modifications to their projects. Students in grade four attend Maker Space Lab once per week for forty minutes.

The world language (Spanish) curriculum teaches our students the importance of understanding other cultures and learning a new language through fun and engaging lessons that include music, dancing, and art. Preschool through fourth-grade students attend one world language class per week for forty minutes.

Stewardship is also a significant part of our school program. In 2016, MTES became a Sustainable Jersey for Schools Certified Bronze Award recipient. The certification process requires a significant commitment from our students, teachers, parents and the community to pursue environmental sustainability programs and activities to go green, conserve resources and reduce our carbon impact on the environment. MTES is one of only 242 schools in the state of New Jersey to hold this certification and is currently applying for recertification for the 2020 award cycle. Our school's Green Team serves to support sustainability efforts and includes teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders. Students are engaged in learning opportunities embedded in our science and social studies curriculum and use our Outdoor Learning Center (OLC) which includes five garden growing beds, fruit trees, composting area, weather station, a large Monarch Butterfly Weigh Station and outdoor chicken coop. Students in all grades help maintain the OLC with their classes by preparing/planting/harvesting vegetables for the school, hatching and releasing butterflies and recycling food waste and composting. MTES believes that teaching our students how to be responsible environmental citizens will have a lifelong impact.

3. Special Populations:

All academic abilities are recognized at MTES and are identified using multiple measures. Our highly qualified teachers identify student needs using a variety of assessments designed to determine what levels of intervention or advancement are necessary. The teachers work with the students at their own ability level until interventions become necessary. Teachers or parents may refer students to our Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) committee or Child Study Team to identify problem areas and develop an intervention plan.

Students who required a more specialized education are identified through educational testing and receive an Individual Education Plan. Parents, teachers, and Child Study Team members discuss the student's progress and academic recommendations are made which may include but not limited to, small group instruction, in-class support, and classroom aide support. We believe that all students can achieve academic success with the right supports, interventions, and instructional approaches. This drives our special education program to follow the appropriate grade level curriculum while working on individual learning goals and objectives outlined in their (IEP).

The Mendham Township Elementary School offers a variety of enrichment and advanced classes through our Gifted and Talented Program. Students beginning in kindergarten are identified for these services.

Students in grade two are assessed using multiple measures for our Quest Program. This advanced specialized program engages students in collaborative work, two 40 minute periods per week, that requires high levels of critical and creative thinking. Students are challenged to use effective oral and written communication skills to research, collect data, analyze information and provide a strong rationale for outcomes and proposals.

Gateways is an advanced academic program which provides parallel and accelerated instruction in language arts and social studies for students kindergarten through fourth grade who need additional or advanced coursework to continue his or her academic growth. Students demonstrating advanced academic skills above their peer group are recommended for the program by the teacher and/or parent.

Math enrichment and advanced math groups are available for students and are designed to provide more depth in the grade level curriculum or advancement to the next grade level math curriculum.

The Math Learning Lab supports general education students who have not obtained grade level benchmarks in mathematics. Support classes are offered three times per week for forty minutes during zero period. Lessons are designed to improve basic mathematical number sense, basic skills, fact fluency, computation, and problem-solving.

The Learning Lab for reading and writing supports general education students who have not obtained grade level benchmarks. Students are provided with small group instruction, three 40 minute sessions a week, by a Reading Specialist, who differentiates tasks according to student need. Criteria for identifying and screening for support in the Lab include below benchmark levels from the DIAL-4 for Kindergarteners, the Words Their Way Spelling Inventory and The DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) for grades K-4, ELA scores from standardized state assessments for 3rd and 4th graders, Writing Task scores, and Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS) recommendations.

Our English Language Learner (ELL) program is designed to help students acquire their new language through fun and engaging activities. Reading, writing and vocabulary instruction is provided daily to support the student's acquisition of the English language. Students are identified for the program using ACCESS for ELLs and progress is monitored annually. Students and their families also receive online access to the Rosetta Stone language program for home use.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Mendham Township Elementary School Counseling Program aims to provide a learning environment that helps ALL students realize and enhance their strengths and reach their highest level of academic, personal, and social-emotional achievement. We provide a variety of proactive comprehensive services that play a critical role in supporting the “whole” child to reach their highest potential and maximize their success. The program is based on and supported by the national standards of The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) model and aims to address students' academic, personal/social, and career needs. The MTES comprehensive school counseling program consists of four main components, short-term solution-focused school counseling services, collaboration, coordination with teachers, administrators, school specialists, parents and community resources to advocate in the best interest of all students, and classroom guidance lessons. The classroom lessons are drawn from an evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum. Lessons are designed to promote school success, self-regulation, and a sense of safety and support. Through age-appropriate monthly school-wide classroom lessons, students learn how to make and maintain friendships, manage their emotions, solve problems, and deal with peer pressure. Lessons include content with catchy songs and several engaging activities requiring analytical thinking and role-playing. Parent letters and activities are also sent home with lesson content and extension activities.

Mendham Township Elementary School is committed to minimizing bullying, harassment, and intimidation from our school community. Our anti-bullying specialist and coordinator attend annual meetings to stay current on updates to the law. All school staff is trained at the beginning of the year and required to complete Safe Schools training to further their knowledge on harassment, intimidation, and bullying. All stakeholders are asked to report incidents involving such behaviors. Our character education program promotes monthly character traits, including respect, gratitude, generosity, tolerance, friendship, honesty, responsibility, fairness, and citizenship. All classroom teachers utilize at least 15 minutes per week for character education during morning meeting. Throughout the school and in classrooms, these character traits are announced, displayed and modeled on bulletin boards, posters, and during morning announcements. Character Education assemblies are held throughout the year, which includes student-skits demonstrating these traits, mindfulness activities, and student-led discussions on effective problem-solving strategies. Our “Shining Stars” recognition program highlights all students throughout the year for demonstrating exceptional character.

Mendham Township Elementary Schools offers a fantastic leadership program called, Tiger Leaders. The objective of this fourth-grade program is for students to actively engage in responsible leadership roles, such as practicing good citizenship, communicating effectively in an organized forum, and volunteering their time towards service projects that will help others in need. The Tiger Leaders focus on important social causes in the community and/or throughout the world. Our theme is “Helping our School, Our Community, Our World.” The Tiger Leaders help plan and organize school activities and service projects based on this theme.

To support the social and emotional needs of children in our community, each week MTES highlights a different mindfulness skill, allowing every student to create a suitcase of skills to rely on when needed. Whole school activities have been introduced to center around mindfulness, including school assemblies, morning announcements, and hall anchor charts and visual aids. Classroom teachers lead their students through weekly lessons and guided practice using specific Mindfulness strategies. Moreover, teachers can also help students identify whether they have a fixed or growth mindset within a specific subject area. Lessons on growing intelligence, perseverance, and changing mindset are incorporated throughout the year.

The Mendham Twp. School District values those teachers and staff members who exemplify the highest level of customer service and collegiality in all interactions. Our RAVE Award recognizes those who have made a significant and positive impact and exceeded expectations in our school. Teachers and staff can be nominated by any member of our community by completing an anonymous form on our school web site. The RAVE Award is given out each marking period and celebrated with staff and the school community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Mendham Township Elementary School strongly believes that engaging our families and community is paramount to our success. We have a variety of pathways that build high levels of communication and service to include all stakeholders in the educational process. This process starts by creating a welcoming school environment where parents and families are greeted daily as they arrive at school by our teaching and office staff. Visitors to our building are efficiently and securely checked-in and our main office staff is there to assist by answering questions, providing high levels of service and support. Our staff welcomes the students off the bus or from their cars with a “Good Morning” and our younger students are escorted to their classrooms. New families are welcomed into our school family by receiving a guided tour that highlights the facilities, classrooms, schedule, and connections to currently enrolled students. Families are also paired up with a “Tiger Buddy” from their grade level to help them adjust to their classroom and school. Teachers and administration communicate regularly with families via email, by phone, and in person to discuss student progress, academic and behavior interventions, instructional goals and outcomes. Our staff and administration truly practice an “open door” policy with our families as we believe that this bridge is what creates a trusting and long-lasting partnership between home and school.

Communication and service support is our way of ensuring that families are kept abreast of all school events, instructional or curriculum changes, professional development goals, and other relevant topics. Weekly news is sent out in our Friday Tiger Folder which is emailed out to all of our families. The Tiger Folder is archived on our website and updated regularly. Our school also connects our families to their own parent calendar that is accessed digitally or in print upon request. The parent calendar posts all daily activities at the school, important dates and special activities. Our school’s Instagram pushes out information on daily classroom activities and highlights for parents what goes on when they are not visiting the school. Our school hosts quarterly Home & School Association (HSA) meetings in our Staff Development Room (SDR). The building principal reports out on curriculum updates, instructional changes, school-wide special groups, and projects. Parents engage in conversation with the principal through Q&A about school policy, safety and security, instructional practices and other school topics. Our parents are encouraged to problem solve and make contributions to school policies and procedures that impact the students and small advisory committees are formed to address areas of school improvement. These committees serve in an advisory capacity and make valuable contributions to the administration. The process includes all parents and guardians in the school process and ensures that all voices are valued. In addition, the building principal and teachers participate in our district’s strategic planning. This process is guided by the New Jersey School Boards Association and allows teachers, students, administrators, and community members to work together to develop goals and objectives that move the district forward to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

3. Professional Development:

Mendham Township Elementary School staff believe that we are all lifelong learners. Our world continues to evolve and become more interconnected. Skills once touted as essential, continue to transform to meet the growing needs of our new globalized society. Technology has shifted our teaching paradigms and opened doors to learning that were not accessible in the past. As educators, our main goal is to prepare our students to live and work in a 21st Century world and develop knowledge and skills commensurate with 21st Century jobs and careers. To that end, teachers and administration continually engage in a cycle of professional learning that is focused on strengthening our ability to provide our students with the tools necessary for success not only for today but for the future.

Our approach begins with the collection and analysis of multiple sources of student assessment data. This is accomplished over a period of time through focused grade level team meetings, faculty meetings, and bi-monthly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. Various areas of student achievement are evaluated by grade level and schoolwide. Teachers and administration zero in on specific areas of improvement based on this data and deliberate to decide on the best goals and interventions needed to meet desired outcomes. The principal collects feedback from teachers, administrators and parents to determine three specific building goals for the year. S.M.A.R.T. goals are written using the following components: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. Teachers focus on developing a Professional

Development Plan that includes three specific areas connected to our building goals or personal goals they have set. In addition, all teachers develop short term Student Growth Objectives (SGOs), which are required by the New Jersey Department of Education and monitored as a part of the teacher evaluation process. SGOs are based on a pre-post assessment format with very specific interventions that are designed to improve student learning outcomes. In addition, the school district provides financial support for teachers to enroll in higher education course work and participation in professional organizations.

This school year we decided to engage in a year-long study of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Science, based off of the Next Generation Science Standards and the three main dimensions of learning science, Disciplinary Core Ideas, Science and Engineering Practices and Crosscutting Concepts. We began with a review of the unit topics and a curriculum audit to better align our instruction to the standards. A review of student performance on unit assessments and previous years' NJASK Science scores lead to the development of a specific kindergarten through grade four building goal to address the identified gaps. Although the New Jersey Department of Education no longer assesses science for fourth graders, it was evident from our analysis that important shifts were needed to address the standards appropriately and prepare students for the new fifth grade New Jersey Student Learning Standards Science Assessment (NJLSA-Science). The teachers participated in fifteen rigorous staff development sessions with a science and STEM professor from Columbia University. Teachers' schedules include release time, common grade level periods and two PLC meetings per month to support their professional development and goals. Results are evaluated using multiple measures and reported out to our parents and the Board of Education during our triannual review meeting.

In summary, our school is highly supportive of our teachers' professional development endeavors and encourages a continuous process of inquiry and application of effective instructional interventions that are connected to positive learning outcomes in the classroom and on New Jersey standardized tests.

4. School Leadership:

Mendham Township Elementary School is one of two schools in the Mendham Township School District making up a total population just over seven hundred students. Our administrative leadership structure includes one superintendent, one business administrator, two building based principals and one Director of Special Education. The administrative team communicates regularly to develop short and long terms goals and a shared vision for the district. The administrative team members each bring a unique set of experiences and skills to the district which allows for efficient and focused decision-making. This strong collegial relationship is built on mutual respect for the district mission and the belief that all students deserve the best education every day.

At MTES, the principal is viewed as the educational leader of the building and empowered to make educational decisions based on best practice and comprehensive analysis of assessment data. Teachers take a vital leadership role in the educational process and serve in other capacities that enhance the program. Staff provide insights on school improvement and frequently offer ideas for new innovative programs and support services. Examples of this are our STEM program, Maker Space Lab, School Sustainability program, Green Team, Tiger Times Newspaper, Mindfulness program and our Outdoor Learning Center (OLC). This culture of ownership and responsibility is an essential part of why our school consistently brings about positive learning outcomes and is what helps to make our school successful on many levels.

Building administration and teachers work in concert on other committees that focus on school crisis management, safety and security, character education, teacher evaluation through our School Improvement Panel (SciP), food safety and health and wellness. The building principal communicates information about the work of these committees as well as other important curriculum and instruction work, at "Principal Chats" scheduled throughout the year, quarterly Home and School Association meetings and Board of Education meetings.

In summary, our school maintains a shared vision of leadership where teachers, principal, and other administrators participate in the process of guided decision-making and the mission of creating a strong, safe and healthy learning community for every student, every day!

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The entire MTES community's common goal is that every student attains academic success. The means by which academic success is achieved not only differ by the student but also in strategies, programs, and teaching practices. This is the one practice that has brought about the best and most consistent outcomes for our students. By collecting, analyzing and interpreting both formative and summative data on all of our students, our teachers are better able to provide the appropriate interventions and track progress to ensure they are meeting their goals.

Additional supplemental support classes are provided during our "Zero Period" (before school) such as SMART Time, Math Blasters, Problem Solving, and Sight Word Sandwich. These classes provide struggling students with additional support outside of school hours and allow more time to work on specific weaknesses without missing valuable instruction within the classroom. Learning Lab for reading and math enrichment sessions take place within the school day. Students may receive support 1-3 times per week in forty-minute blocks during the day. Students needing special education or other accommodations receive Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans designed specifically to work toward the academic success of students.

Multiple strategies within classrooms and other areas of the school community add to our academic success. At MTES we are fortunate to engage in building based decision-making practices. Teachers have the ability to write and update curriculum and in doing so work across grade levels to ensure vertical curriculum alignment. Furthermore, this collaborative effort aligns academic instruction to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards to ensure that our students are meeting required grade level standards in all curriculum areas. Our teachers also have the autonomy, within the approved curriculum, to determine the most appropriate instructional practices and materials necessary to meet the needs of the students. As a means to this end, many teachers use cutting edge technology and research to develop and carry out their lessons. Differentiated, small group and 1-1 instruction are evident daily as teachers work to ensure comprehension and mastery of the material. The continuous and frequent interactions between teachers, students, administration and parents create strong, trusting relationships that accelerates learning and academic success. We recognize that in order for all students to succeed, we must provide a more differentiated approach that focuses on the specific learning needs while upholding the standards and desired academic goals.