

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Michael H Robinson  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2580 Mount Zion Parkway  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Jonesboro State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30236-2500

County Clayton

Telephone (770) 472-2838 Fax (770) 472-2839

Web site/URL https://316.clayton.k12.ga.us/ E-mail michael.robinson@clayton.k12.ga.us

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Morcease Beasley E-mail morcease.beasley@clayton.k12.ga.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Clayton County Public Schools Tel. (770) 473-2700

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. Jessie Goree  
(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**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. 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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 38 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 17 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 12 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 67 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)  
 Suburban  
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	56	115	171
10	33	116	149
11	34	87	121
12 or higher	35	100	135
<b>Total Students</b>	158	418	576

\*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
  - 6 % Asian
  - 77 % Black or African American
  - 12 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 3 % White
  - 2 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	597
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 576

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %

15 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>7</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</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: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
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.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 34:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%

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 2019.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	172
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	94%
Enrolled in a community college	2%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	1%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
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.

To develop 21st century thinkers to become global leaders by providing the highest quality of education in and through the arts.

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

Students must submit an application and meet a minimum grade point average of 2.7. Applicants meeting this requirement will be scheduled for an audition. A passing score on the audition results in students being placed into a lottery system to determine acceptance.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts, a Title I Magnet School receiving students from every high school within the Clayton County Public School System, reflects the diverse learning cultures within the district. The demographics of our student population is 77.8% African-American, 10.8% Hispanic, 5.8% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 6% other ethnicities. Ninety-three percent of our students are deemed economically disadvantaged, of which 3% are students with special needs. We actively collaborate with teams of stakeholders including parents, teachers, and administrators, which has greatly influenced our favorable results with closing achievement gaps and promoting academic equity. Furthermore, the successfulness of integrating collaborative teams, a Rigor and Relevance Framework, and the Arts into our core curriculum has granted us the opportunity to establish a variety of protocols and tools. Our reservoir of tools and empirical data helps us to identify root causes for low student performance in core subjects. Moreover, we are able to determine and implement innovative initiatives that enhance student achievement for all of our subgroups. Three guiding questions drive the demand for collaborative work and continuous improvement:

1. How will the strategy close achievement gaps?
2. How will we know the reform strategies are successful?
3. How will we make changes to our reform strategies if they are not effective?

As we work to ensure that our students are college and career ready upon graduating from Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts, our data supports that we are doing the right work. Our 2019 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score revealed that 89.6% of our 2019 graduates participated in advanced level courses and/or activities preparing them for post-secondary education and career readiness. Our Special Needs, Economically Disadvantaged, and Hispanic student populations were factored in as well. As a part of the continuous improvement framework, we will continue to identify what experiences we should provide our students and what 21st-century skills they should possess to be successful in our ever-changing global society.

While the focus of our magnet program is centered around the visual and performing arts, the school's leadership also understand the importance of incorporating technology into our curriculum. Our technology-infused classes offer multiple ways to accomplish success in the classroom alongside already established curricula. As we infuse technology for creative pursuits (i.e., Google Classroom, Georgia Virtual School, Odysseyware, USA Test Prep, etc.), our teachers are able to introduce and reinforce concepts that have been previously taught by more traditional teaching methods. In doing so, this infusion allows for individualized, differentiated instruction to meet the various needs of all students in the classrooms. Ultimately, we believe it is of utmost importance that our students get the support they need to learn to use the tools and features of the technology. In order for our students to have relevant 21st-century skills, it is extremely important that teachers are knowledgeable and are able to adapt their teaching of content to ensure that is student-centered. Our culture of collaboration and strategic partnerships supports our staff in this creative process and provides resources for a classroom environment that has not only access to technology but also effective use for learning. As a result of our teachers combining the arts with technology, they have created new and exciting instructional strategies that keep students motivated and engaged in the learning process and allows for the opportunity to deepen understanding of concepts and connect their learning to the world around them. Finally, The Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts' culture is one built on a foundation steeped in providing students the best opportunities to be successful academically, socially, and personally. Hence, staying in constant communication to support each other and remaining on the cutting edge of educational happenings through professional development, collaborative, planning, and conferences our school continues to thrive. In addition to providing academically stimulating classroom experiences for our students, our school also focuses on their social and emotional growth. Small group sessions and classroom guidance lessons centered around anxiety and stress management, appropriate peer communication, relationship building are a few social emotional interventions that promote confidence and self-efficacy among our students. By rendering strategies that support the whole child and striving to dedicate at least 80% of our services to direct interaction with students, we will continue to cultivate a social emotional conducive climate throughout our school.

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

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

The curriculum at Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts is guided by the Georgia Standard of Excellence (GSE) set forth by the state of Georgia. GSE was designed to ensure Georgia's students are ready for college, on pace with other states, and to increase academic rigor across the board. The essential elements of performance tasks, setting clear expectations, greater depth in problem solving, and making connections are all a part of the Common Core Standards expectations.

In an effort for students to master aforementioned standards, teachers at Martha Ellen Stilwell School use a variety of resources and strategies. An Explicit Instruction and the Rigor and Relevance Frameworks are implemented to ensure lesson plans are designed around standards and involves a series of scaffolds and supports where students are guided through the learning process with clear explanations and demonstrations supported by effective guidance and feedback. Formative as well as summative assessments are administered to monitor student progress and guide instruction. Remediation opportunities are also available for students who display a need for additional support in meeting the standards.

As a means to ensure knowledge and skills for students to be college and career ready, our district has outlined the following instructional priorities: critical thinking, integrated technology, and literacy across the curriculum with an emphasis on explicit vocabulary instruction. Teachers are provided with on-going professional development opportunities to enhance their skills in preparing 21st century leaders.

**1b.** Reading/English language arts

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts utilizes academically challenging materials that develop students as critical thinkers preparing them to be college and career ready. Although traditional instructional methods of lecture and class participation are used as needed and when dictated by the content; students are immersed in authentic, engaging, inquiry-based learning. Teachers utilize a variety of blended learning resources which include Springboard and on-line resources in addition to county adopted texts. Classroom instruction is student-focused allowing for a deeper understanding of concepts and students to engage in real-world learning experiences. Students also improve literacy skills by reading a variety of text, context-based vocabulary instruction, writing across the curriculum, monthly timed writing, and constructed response assessments. All students are held to high standards of achievement and are expected to meet and exceed requirements on state-mandated tests.

An individual instructional plan is created by the teachers and students at the beginning of the year which serves as a foundation for learning and instruction. Stilwell's class sizes allow teachers to know their students as individuals. Teachers gain insight into their attitudes about literacy, but also their personal interest, home, school, and community experiences. This collaboration fosters instruction that is differentiated and ensures that a variety of methods and strategies are implemented daily to address the needs of all learners through flexible grouping and individualized instruction. Classrooms are print-rich and instructional methods are utilized to provide multiple learning experiences including guided reading, literature discussion circles, and student-led writing conferences.

A variety of literary text, both fiction and non-fiction, are provided to address individual learning needs in order to build student capacity and familiarity with texts on and above their lexile levels. Teachers provide students with opportunities to read and respond to various topics across content areas and engage them in a variety of authentic literacy experiences. Students are instructed to use effective reading strategies such as self-monitoring for meaning and self-correcting, note-taking methods, and annotation tools that assist in their understanding of complex text. Reading instruction is differentiated to ensure mastery of content standards; together teachers and students take ownership of tracking and improving lexile levels throughout the school year by utilizing Achieve 3000 reading software platform to enrich and remediate reading and

writing skills, provide whole group, small group, and individual learning experiences and provide specific feedback that is standards-based and goal-oriented.

Using a variety of 21st century best practices for assessments, teachers provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of content standards through various formative and summative assessments. Rubrics are used to outline expectations for all tasks and assignments. Teachers provide commentary and immediate feedback to highlight areas of strength and address areas of need for each student. Students are provided multiple opportunities to reflect on their learning through conferencing to help increase student understanding and make corrections as needed. Ongoing support such as after school tutorial, additional student-teacher conferencing, and Saturday School is provided to students who need additional assistance.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts' Mathematical instructional methods vary greatly depending on the student and the instructor. Our math teachers utilize strategies such as think-pair-share, group activities, student teaching, ACE (Answer, Compute, Explain), and the use of dynamic graphical representation, among many others. In addition to the experience of the teachers in the classroom, assessments such as MAP, used in tandem with linked technologies, Odysseyware and Khan Academy, enable teachers to create individualized instructional plans (IIP) for each student, which are used to help drive instruction. Teachers are able to efficiently pinpoint need and assign instructional material along with exercises to students based on individual strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, in our foundational courses, Algebra 1 and Geometry, this plan contains the recommended number of weekly tutorials students should attend, as well as the number of GMAS Boot Camp classes the students should join in order for them to be successful on the assessment.

Literacy is believed to be a major component of the success our school has experienced with mathematics. Hence, that from the math class to the performing arts classroom, all teachers participate in the development of student literacy, requiring students to write in all eight of their subjects. In the math class, students are often required to provide justification of their answers which illustrates their true understanding of the mathematical process they are implementing to solve problems. Teachers are able to easily assess mastery of concepts by reviewing student justifications.

Student assignments are created with individual skill levels in mind. Students performing below grade level are provided with multiple opportunities for remediation. Above grade level students are enriched with real-life problem-solving opportunities. After school tutorials are offered throughout the school year, while focused topical tutorials and Saturday School Boot Camp sessions are held in the last months of the year as high stakes tests near. Our math teachers provide motivational support and celebrate each student's success. Those students who excel in mathematics are prepared and encourage to compete in county/statewide math competitions. However, all students benefit from the high expectations set forth by our math faculty.

Technology is used not only to foster mastery of mathematical concepts, but also to add depth of understanding, as well as increase wonder in the beauty of mathematics. While high school level math classes require the use of scientific calculators almost daily, we strive to further enable our students with the skills to use graphing calculators and other online resources proficiently, beginning in Algebra 1. Additional technologies used consists of multimedia, power points, interactive whiteboards, online learning software such as Khan Academy, Odysseyware, and Class Pace, as well as online applications such as Desmos and Geogebra. The implementation of these technologies allow students to see math in motion and to receive immediate feedback for on the spot verification or correction of understanding. These tools assist our teachers in gaining and retaining student engagement during class and in assignment completion.

### **1d. Science**

The science instruction at Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts follows the Georgia Standards of Excellence which centers around three dimensions of learning: Disciplinary Core Ideas, Cross-Cutting Concepts, and Science and Engineering Practices. The core ideas provide the content and standards that we

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teach. The cross-cutting concepts consist of unifying science themes that are interwoven through all science grade levels. The science and engineering practices are how we engage our students in the scientific process and are used to develop student critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These three dimensions of learning are what drive the development of our lesson and unit planning. Most of our students take biology or environmental science when they enter as a freshman and then have the opportunity to choose the type of science courses that best support their career paths or interests for their remaining three years. These courses range from chemistry, physics, anatomy and physiology, forensics, as well as Advanced Placement courses i.e., AP biology.

Our lessons are centered around science anchoring phenomena, which are observable events that occur in nature related to real world situations that motivate students to want to explain. This shifts our students' perspective of merely learning about a topic to figuring out why or how something happens. We choose science phenomena that also incorporate our students' cultural, personal, or consequential perspectives. For example, in a biology course, students may explore sickle-cell disease and how it can be advantageous for people living in areas affected by malaria. We also utilize the argument-driven inquiry (ADI) pedagogy with our students. The ADI process gives students a real-world problem to solve in which they are required to plan and carry out an investigation, collect and analyze the data, and then provide a claim supported by the evidence collected to justify their reasoning.

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

While traditional instructional methods of lecture are reserved as needed, Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts' Social Studies teaches provides inquiry-based learning, project-based instruction, document-based questions, Socratic methods, and other higher order thinking strategies. Strategies are implemented by all department members and are meant to promote high achievement on state testing.

Every year, the department meets to review the positives and negatives of the academic year and collectively create department norms for academic and behavioral expectations for the students. These norms include frequent department collaboration, comprehensive late-work policy, commitment to writing across the curriculum through the Document-Based Question process, and a willingness to participate in school and district programming for social studies curriculum.

Students are presented an opportunity to practice research and writing on a topic of historical interest by participating in the Social Studies Fair. Teachers provide students with processes for research, such as analyzing primary and secondary sources, utilizing the library and internet as places of research, constructing works cited and outlines, and how to write a strong introduction and conclusion to a historical paper. Finally, each student presented their project with an oral presentation and/or visual presentation board.

Classrooms are organized according to flexible grouping and seating for students. Students are also given opportunities to work individually or collaboratively on assignments. Social Studies creates lessons that follow Bloom's Taxonomy and multiple learning styles by incorporating the arts into lessons throughout the year.

Teachers create opportunities to expose students to a broader understanding of social studies through a variety of programming, including Constitution Day, Latino-Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, voter registration, mock elections, National History Day, and field trips to the State Capitol, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

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

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts students are required to participate in field experiences, performances, and competitions, along with successfully completing rigorous core classes. As a result of implementing these strategies in to our curriculum, our school has experienced high gains in student performance and graduation rate. In 2019, 100% of our seniors received their high school diploma. As our students are earning their high school diploma, they are eligible to apply and complete a capstone project to

receive an International Skills Diploma Seal and/or a Fine Arts Diploma Seal upon graduation. The International Skills Diploma Seal is awarded to graduating high school students who complete an international education curriculum and engage in extracurricular activities and experiences that foster the achievement of global competencies while the Fine Arts Diploma Seal is awarded to graduating high school students who complete a Georgia Fine Arts Pathway and engage in creative industry focus courses, extra-curricular activities, and experiences that foster fine arts mastery

Additionally, our students are eligible to earn a Seal of Bi-literacy. This seal recognizes graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English. Over 100 students from the Class of 2019 earned a state seal of distinction in one or more of the diploma seals offered. This class consisted of 170 students and of this 98 % were admitted to 2 and 4-year colleges or universities. The other 2% of students went into the military or workforce. Finally, 63% of our students earned the Hope Scholarship and overall, this class earned a total of \$10,207,116 in scholarships. Along with earning a high school diploma, the quality of instructional programs and support offered at our school are ensuring that students are college and career ready.

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

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

At Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts, we know the implementation and sustainability of our arts-infused education magnet program helps our students acquire critical 21st century skills: creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. Our course progression provides all students with a challenging learning opportunity that ensures they will be able to compete globally upon graduating from high school. We offer fine arts courses in the areas of dance, theatre, vocal music, orchestra, band, guitar, piano, and visual arts. Additionally, students attend field trips, participate in performances and competitions while working with professionals to become familiar with careers in their chosen performance area. We believe the premise of arts-infused learning will give our students a better understanding of a concept at a deep, life application level. It also provides learning opportunities of more than one viewpoint, multiple examples, and complementary ways of understanding. Moreover, our school has partnered with the Arts Now Foundation and Crayola as a part of a grant initiative to infuse the Arts into our curriculum. This is one of the many innovative ways we build the creative capacity of the school and increase art-infused education. The Crayola grant addresses specific needs and interests of our professional learning community to include our Music Technology and Visual Arts teachers collaborating with the faculty. Considering how we create our professional learning communities, we have crafted a common vision, charted a strategic plan, embraced art-infused teaching strategies, built creative confidence, taught design thinking, aligned standards, embedded creativity into the school culture and, used professional development, peer observation, and coaching to implement the grant.

As for World Languages, our school currently offers Spanish and French at levels I to IV primarily for 10th to 12th grade students. Our World Language department has continued to thrive and consistently enjoyed positive participation. Our teachers are certified to implement the IXL Personalized Learning program which they incorporate weekly by embedding it in the curriculum for all classes. The IXL program is a certified technology infused program that gives our students the opportunity to practice their World Language skills while helping them achieve proficiency in the targeted language while competing with other schools across the county. Additionally, the IXL program allows students in our World Language classes to develop fluency and, real-world communication skills while working with Duo lingo and Mango. Ultimately, we believe the IXL program will give our students innovative learning solutions and technological skills that will prepare them to be lifelong language learners and global citizens.

Finally, our school is built on personalized instruction for each learner. Academic and social support will continue to be oriented toward student success. Student support strategies that are used to address the needs of all students include identifying students by subgroups and learning deficits. Our counselors closely monitor students' academic eligibility in grades 9-11 to ensure that they are meeting the criteria to remain enrolled in the school. We routinely review grades at each grading period in order to identify at-risk learners. The academic information provided is used to design and implement learning supports that will

help these students get back on track. By analyzing each at-risk student's academic performance, we are likely to determine their strengths and weaknesses and subsequently construct a generalized plan to promote improvement in most challenging areas. We use our counselors and Health and Physical Education teachers to help identify not only academic supports for our students but also social supports. Counselors conduct monthly guidance sessions with students to help them set goals, review their progress toward goals, and plan for college or careers. During the last two school years, one hundred percent of the special needs and economic disadvantaged students who were placed on probationary status have met the qualifications for being removed from probation. Students are given a single semester to show improvement and meet the magnet requirements; such results are indicative of the consistency and efficiency of our counselors' efforts towards implementing academic and social emotional support for all students.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts' academic support strategies that are used to address the needs of all students include identifying students who need support by subgroups and learning deficits. By analyzing each at-risk student's academic performance, we are likely to determine their strengths and weaknesses, and subsequently construct a generalized plan to promote improvement in most challenging areas. In addition to providing academically stimulating classroom experiences for our students, our school also focuses on their social and emotional growth. By rendering strategies that support the whole child and striving to dedicate at least 80% of our services to direct interaction with students, we will continue to cultivate a social emotional conducive climate throughout our school. Although the remaining 20% of our aid is indirect, it is pertinent that we devote this time to analyzing data, building relationships with parents, collaborating with teachers, and focusing on expanding our knowledge in order to better support students who may struggle with social barriers.

After a review of our 2019 Georgia Milestone Assessment System (GMAS) data, all domains of Algebra I and Geometry indicate a high need for learning support. The domains of Algebra I are expressions and Functions, Algebra Connections to statistics, and Algebra Connections to Statistics and Probability. The domains in Geometry indicate students need support in congruence and similarity, circles, equations, measurement, statistics and probability. In Biology, the students need support in the following areas; cells, cellular, genetics, heredity, classification, phylogeny, ecology, and theory of evolution. As far as US History, industrialization, reform, imperialism, and establishment as a world power and Economics will focus on personal finance, micro-economic concepts, and fundamental economics concepts.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Our school's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) Content Mastery performance data provides yearly evidence that our students are achieving at the level necessary to be prepared for the next level. Content Mastery performance trends have been consistent for the past 5 years. Since 2015-2016, our students have demonstrated academic growth in all content areas. Content Mastery increases include a 23.4% increase from 76.6% to 100% in English/Language Arts, an 11% increase from 75 to 86 percent in Mathematics, a 9.7% increase from 84.1% to 93.8% in Science, and a 4.2% increase from 91.1% to 95.3% in Social Studies. Furthermore, our CCRPI Progress score increase of 11.4 points indicate that students are demonstrating academic growth from one year to the next. The CCRPI Closing the Gaps score for 2018-2019 provides evidence that all subgroups continue to show growth and improvement in each content area with the school receiving a 38.9 point increase in the score for this component. At the conclusion of the 2018-2019 school year, 97% of students were reading at or above the required grade level.

Stilwell's performance in all of these categories can be contributed to the implementation of the Explicit Instruction and Rigor and Relevance frameworks, ongoing tutorial support, root cause analysis discussions, devotion of class time to practicing concepts and discussion, flipping of classrooms, as well as intentional and effective use of various programs and resources used to support individualized learning. To this end, we will continue with ongoing planning to accelerate student learning by use a variety of instructional support programs i.e., Achieve3000, Odysseyware, Khan Academy, CommonLit, and USA Test Prep as academic

supports to tailor instruction to support the acceleration of those student who are performing above grade level.

**3c.** Special education

**3d.** ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

**3e.** Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts uses collaborative meetings, shared groups through Microsoft, Google, and several other electronic platforms to disseminate information. The culture of our school is focused on keeping all stakeholders up-to-date with information so that we are working on one accord in order to ensure our students are actively engaged with their own learning. It has been demonstrated that Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts has effective practices and conditions in place to support the efficacy of engagement.

Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts' leadership team has emphasized the importance of maintaining active engagement within classrooms across the curriculum. Students are to be involved with whole and small group discussions and activities, demonstrate achievement on formative assessments, and monitor their own progress through paper and electronic platforms. Our school's leadership extends their reach into staff and community in order to maintain a culture of high achievement for students as well as to prepare them to be contributing citizens in a global society. Our culture lends itself to supporting high achievement by being transparent with scores throughout the community and state. Additionally, our school's leadership seeks to receive feedback from all stakeholders, and strives to improve, in light of these correspondences.

Additionally, the leadership and faculty of Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts understands that communication is one of the most important keys to engaging all stakeholders in continually improving both the process of learning and the progress of our learners. We seek to engage all parties, from administration, to faculty, staff, students, parents, and caretakers. It is our goal to join forces with all who have a part in the teaching and learning process. Stakeholders are kept informed with regular weekly communications as well as bi-yearly communications, in which greater depth into the on-goings of the school are revealed or reminded, in newsletter form.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

The Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts leadership prides itself on maintaining a supportive, and collaborative school culture for all stakeholders. We know that a school's culture is essentially the character of the school. To ensure we are accomplishing this, here at Stilwell we provide Parent Informational Nights for each grade level, have school wide parent/teacher conferences for the parents to come in and discuss their concerns as well as be involved in what is going on at Stilwell. We encourage participation in community via our various community services activities. By inviting companies and organizations to our school's career and college fair, we are committed to exposing students to various careers by working closely with the community to help improve our students' educational outcome.

Moreover, Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts' implementation and sustainability of its arts-infused education magnet program help our students acquire critical 21st-century skills: creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. We believe the premise of arts-infused learning will provide our students the opportunity for a deeper understanding of concepts through real-life application. Learning through the arts allows study of multiple viewpoints, exposure to different mediums of expression, and provides complementary ways of immersing students in concepts promoting deeper understanding. Stilwell's strategic partnership with the Arts Now Foundation and the implementation of the Crayola Arts Grant is an integral part of our instructional framework. This grant initiative has aided in providing the instructional support and resources necessary to infuse the Arts in the general core curriculum. This innovative collaboration builds the creative capacity of the school and increases art-infused education in core area subjects. The Crayola grant addresses the specific needs and interests of our professional learning community.

Finally, Martha Ellen Stilwell school of the Arts seeks to engage all parties in our learning community to ensure that all are informed of our goals, challenges, and expectations, as well as our current standing as it pertains to these factors. One way in which we disseminate this information is through department-run Core

Curriculum Nights. During these events, students and parents are invited out to learn more about curriculum details, where each department is in the curriculum, how parents can help improve learning outcomes, and in many cases, view samples of their student's work, ultimately providing insight and perspective on the content.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

The administration at our school takes pride in creating a professional cultural that gives all staff members a sense of pride making them feel valued and appreciated. Hence, our school's administration has implemented an "Open Door" policy for all staff and students. As long as the principal and assistant principals' doors are open, faculty, students, and stakeholders are not required to schedule an appointment. Our Open Door policy has encouraged open communication, feedback, and discussion around any matter of importance to our stakeholders. Hence, we believe this practice has aided us in earning the perfect 5 Star Climate Rating for five consecutive years.

Our school's approach to professional development is to provide training and resources to teachers and staff to ensure they are prepared and provided with the support needed to effectively instruct and meet the needs of students. The professional development provided includes selected topics from administrators, district personnel, and from teacher needs assessment surveys. Our school's professional development activities cover many topics and areas, which include instruction, accessing and using student data, how to effectively communicate with parents, and how to interpret school data including test scores and student performance. In understanding how to interpret test scores and student and school data, teachers and staff can break down student performance and determine academic standards that may or may not have been met. Teachers can further breakdown information for individual students and provide differentiated instruction to better address the needs of the students. Additionally, our school district provides early release days throughout the school year which allows our teachers and staff the opportunity to participate in the professional development activities within the school day.

Finally, our administrators always encourage faculty and staff to reach their optimal professional potential. One rewarding experience that is available for department chairpersons, school counselors, and other selected teachers is the Summer Leadership Retreat. Participants have the opportunity to take advantage of free resources, research, and knowledge that supports pedagogical enhancement. The purpose of the retreat is to ensure that members feel connected and develop a better understanding of how efficient their role is in building a professional cultural. The Summer Leadership Retreat is a chance for our faculty to develop interpersonal relationships while simultaneously being acknowledged as leaders and commended for their selfless contributions to the school. Although there are traditional professional development seminars during the retreat, the ultimate goal is to empower participants and show that their guidance is an essential catalyst for systemically fostering a positive school climate for everyone in the building.

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

The school's leadership at Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts is comprised of two teams, Administrative and Leadership. Our school's Administrative Team protects and supports the autonomy of our school Leadership Team to enhance teacher quality and improve student outcomes. The Administrative Team provides resources and support personnel in an effort to carry out the school's mission and meet our goals. The principal is responsible for clearly articulating the mission and vision of the school and the philosophy that all students can be successful and that failure is not an option. While this school wide vision of commitment is established, the principal must ensure that all stakeholders remain committed. The principal also works to cultivate leadership, monitor student growth and progress, gauge instructional climate through evaluating formal and informal focus walks, surveys, build a climate of support and trust, build a healthy, safe, orderly environment and maintain processes.

The school's mission and vision statements are revisited annually and surveys assess school satisfaction in carrying out the mission and vision of the school. The level of expectation is communicated to all stakeholders and continues to be communicated via the school website, newsletters, school council meetings, conversations with stakeholders, the school creed recited daily, grade level meetings, and parent

meetings.

This work cannot be managed alone. The assistant principals collaborate with the principal in providing supports and seeking ways to uphold the legacy of the school. Their duties include conducting walk-throughs, reviewing data, echoing the mission and vision, reviewing current trends in education, maximizing talents, and being proactive. Shared leadership and consensus building are practiced at Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts through the leadership team. The leadership team meets regularly and serves as a liaison between the principal's administrative team and the school's faculty and staff.

The leadership team consists of department chairs (including Special Education), the media specialist, and the Magnet Coordinator representative. Under the facilitation of our Curriculum Assistant Principal, the Department Chairs and faculty meet weekly to review data, discuss student progress, discuss curriculum and participate in professional development, as well as help coordinate and plan school-wide events. All leadership team members participate in the development of the school improvement plan which is written based on data and is used to guide our actions and to decide next steps. Department Chairs report concerns from the faculty to the administrative team to ensure immediate and appropriate feedback is provided. This helps us develop and maintain a culture of trust among the leadership and staff.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Creating an effective collaborative planning protocol has been the one innovative initiative implemented at Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts over the past three years. Using this job-embedded professional learning approach has been an integral part of our academic success for all of our students on the State and Norm Referenced assessments. Our teachers are grouped in professional learning communities by subject and meet twice a week during their planning periods. During the collaborative planning sessions, a Rigor and Relevance Lesson Planning framework is implemented to ensure lesson plans are designed around standards that involve a series of scaffolding strategies where students are guided through the learning process with clear explanations supported by effective guidance and feedback. Formative and summative assessments are developed to monitor student progress and guide instruction. Utilizing the aforementioned assessment data to drive instruction has been at the core of our improvement efforts; this data is posted on our data wall and utilized during our strategic planning sessions. The assessment data is also utilized for effective lesson planning, identifying areas of concerns in student performance, and to improve lessons in order to support students who are struggling with mastery of concepts. The data is then analyzed and used by our administrative team to monitor instruction and track student growth in subject content areas throughout the course of the year. Progress monitoring allows administrators to continuously analyze and review achievement data in order to determine the needs of our teachers and students thus promoting growth for all.

Without a doubt, our job-embedded collaborative planning framework has proven to be a major factor of our academic success. The implementation of this framework has earned Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts the Gold Award from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement for greatest gain on the State assessment for three consecutive years in 2017. Additionally, our school has experienced a steady increase on its SAT test scores for the past three years moving from a total mean score of 947 in 2016 to a total mean score of 1040 in 2019. Our students are exposed to twenty Advanced Placement courses and exams. The Advanced Placement participation rate at Martha Ellen Stilwell School for the Performing Arts is 73%. The total minority enrollment is 98% and 100% of students are economically disadvantaged. Noteworthy too, all of our subgroups met the Closing the Gap targets on the 2019 State assessment. Hence, receiving the Distinguished Title I School Award ranked our school among the top 3% of the highest performing high schools in Georgia in 2019.