

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Thurgood Marshall School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4664 N. Rockton Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Rockford State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 61103-1528

County Winnebago

Telephone (815) 490-5400 Fax (815) 489-2644

Web site/URL
<https://www3.rps205.com/Schools/AS/Thurgood/Pages/default.aspx> E-mail megan.jones@rps205.com

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. Ehren Jarrett E-mail ehren.jarrett@rps205.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Rockford SD 205 Tel. (815) 966-3000

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. Kenneth Scrivano
(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 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

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):
- 29 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 41 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	64	55	119
6	73	52	125
7	71	62	133
8	57	58	115
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	265	227	492

*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
 - 14 % Asian
 - 4.5 % Black or African American
 - 10.2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 65 % White
 - 6.1 % 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: 3%

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	3
(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)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	471
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

The primary languages spoken by our ELL students are Arabic, Gujarati, Sindhi, Spanish, and Turkish.

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 20 %

Total number students who qualify: 96

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %

10 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>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</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: 8

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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
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 24:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
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 2019.

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.

Our mission at Thurgood Marshall School is to collaboratively engage students in a world-class gifted education.

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

Thurgood Marshall School is a choice school. It is one of five specialty programs in the Rockford Public School District. Thurgood Marshall School is the middle level program in the Gifted Academy, housing students in grades 5-8. Based on research and common understandings about gifted programming, we welcome any student who lives within the boundaries of Rockford Public Schools to participate in eligibility testing. We encourage anyone who sees potential in a child (parent, teacher, administrator, community member, etc.) to contact the gifted office for more information about the program and testing. Testing takes place four times a year using the CogAT. Students who do not qualify using this screener but still have high potential can also gain entrance into the program by submitting a review packet to the Gifted Steering Committee.

PART III - SUMMARY

Thurgood Marshall School serves students throughout the entire city of Rockford. This is evident in our racial and ethnic diversity as well as in socioeconomic status. Being able to educate students from one end of a large urban city to the other poses many challenges, especially with transportation. All of our students have the ability to ride a bus to and from school every day (and receive free breakfast and lunch). Not all of our students have the same social capital and support systems at home. Yet, all of our students are being academically challenged on a daily basis, learning content and curriculum that is years ahead of their same age peers. To ensure all of our students have the necessary tools to be successful, we have implemented 1) Organizational Skills, 2) Note-Taking Strategies, 3) Mustang Time, and 4) a PBIS Program.

Students are given customized planners each trimester/semester to record daily classroom agendas as well as their assignments and due dates. In addition, teachers work closely with students to maintain a zipper binder to house notes and assessments for all classes. Parents are asked to participate by checking the planner and grades online each week by providing a signature.

For consistency and skill development, the entire building uses three forms for taking notes - Cornell Notes, Sketchnoting, and Thinking Maps. Students are introduced to these formats in earlier grades and by their last year, are able to choose the method that works best for them or is most appropriate to the given assignment.

Mustang Time occurs once a week and allows teachers to work with smaller groups of students for remediation and enrichment. By adding an extra period to the day (while shortening the other classes by a few minutes each), teachers are able to connect with students in various ways. For some students, it is getting caught up from an absence. For others, it is about being taught a skill in a different way for better understanding. And yet others are given an opportunity to dig deeper and explore an area of interest or passion. Additionally, Marshall has one full-time and one part-time counselor. Because gifted students tend to have extensive social-emotional needs, the counselors use Mustang Time or push in to classes each quarter to address topics like study skills, stress, perfectionism, and friendships.

Creating a PBIS program in the last couple of years has created a more positive climate at Thurgood Marshall School. Each month, a character trait is introduced. Students are recognized for their efforts in that area as well as those learned in previous months. Students earn tickets that can be exchanged at the school store for various prizes.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

As part of the Gifted Academy, Thurgood Marshall School is currently in its final year of a 5-year Strategic Plan. One of the focus areas under the plan is Growth and Achievement. The goals for this area are to create an aligned, dynamic curriculum, develop multiple pathways for students, use innovative instructional practices, and provide differentiated, rigorous learning experiences.

Thurgood Marshall School has been working closely with the elementary and high school to ensure the appropriate Common Core State Standards are being taught and that specific skills are being reviewed for attainment.

We utilize a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model of instruction that begins with pre-assessment. Students are then placed into instructional groups based on their performance and receive specific and individualized instruction based on their needs. Formative assessments are used along the way to track student progress. Students take part in setting academic goals for themselves in addition to tracking their own progress using data. At the end of the cycle and the summative assessment, the teacher and students discuss what worked as well as areas for improvement.

1b. Reading/English language arts

The ELA department teaches the Common Core State Standards. They adopted a new resource for the current school year. After weighing many options, SpringBoard by College Board was chosen because it offers an accelerated curriculum and aligns with the Advanced Placement (AP) courses that students will be taking at the next level in high school. Utilizing this resource, writing instruction is emphasized through narrative, argumentative, and expository modes. Attached to reading and writing tasks, teachers include grammar and usage exercises. All assessments are embedded and include a writing task.

Students in grade 5 are taught using an integrated literacy approach that entwines social studies and science. These students also take part in National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) beginning in the month of November. Before the end of the year, each student has written and published their own book!

Because students in grades 6 and 7 take separate literature and English classes, their teachers work together as a team to share the resources and instruction. These students also take part in reading and writing workshops and participate in project-based learning. In particular, 7th grade students complete a Passion Project around a personal area of interest.

Students in 8th grade take one ELA course that combines both reading and writing. These students are involved in multiple interdisciplinary projects throughout the year that connect to what they are learning in United States History.

All students at Thurgood Marshall School compete in various writing competitions throughout the school year such as Money Smart and Scholastic Arts and Writing contests.

1c. Mathematics

The math program at Thurgood Marshall School is designed to accelerate and enrich the Common Core State Standards. Each grade level offers acceleration of one to two years for each student. From the 5th grade grouping students between their classrooms to the 8th grade offering high school level classes in Algebra and Geometry, Thurgood Marshall School challenges each student to reach their full potential.

To enrich and differentiate curriculum, teachers use a variety of strategies. Pre- and post-testing is one key

strategy. Technology is also employed as much as possible from free online programs to in-class graphing calculators. The use of Khan Academy and other sites is prevalent in all grades. NWEA MAP scores are used from fall testing to set up individualized pathways for learning. Those pathways help teachers differentiate the curriculum and drive their instruction. A variety of projects are offered to supplement learning at most levels. There are also opportunities for group work on projects that allow for each student to utilize and share their strengths with their peers.

1d. Science

Because science is at the heart of innovating, leading, and creating jobs for the future, the science department is currently revising our courses and curriculum to align with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The courses offered at this time are Earth Science (6th Grade), Chemical and Physical Science (7th Grade), and Biological Science (8th Grade). In order to follow best practices, the team will be implementing a spiraled approach that is "grounded in students making sense of phenomena and solving problems using the three dimensions of science together" (NSTA, 2020). Beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, science will follow a framework based on NGSS standards. Students will learn about the scientific process in 5th grade. All areas of science will be taught in 6th - 8th grades with the level of complexity increasing at each grade. Additionally, students will be exposed to argument-driven inquiry and storyboarding.

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

The social studies program at Thurgood Marshall School is designed to guide students through a comprehensive skill-based study of social science. Curriculum objectives include opportunities to demonstrate understanding through inquiry-based engagement. Students benefit from acquisition of rigorous content and are provided with opportunities for application of key instructional goals intended to build upon their natural curiosity and guide their learning toward further inquiry. Students' grasp of real-world problems allows them to make connections which enhance understanding of their world and create momentum towards becoming model citizens and agents of change.

Students begin their study of social science by looking at the world through a geography lens. Fifth graders are engaged in a Global Studies curriculum which helps establish a basis for middle school experience. Sixth grade students are immersed in the study of Ancient History and engaged in interactive and collaborative efforts that enrich their study of the Ancient World. Seventh grade students, within their study of 19th Century America, become Constitutional scholars, learning how the U.S. Constitution serves as a guide to governing. Their study of the Constitution in the context of both current and historical events, helps them understand how it is a "living document." Eighth grade curriculum brings the 20th Century alive. Understanding America's role in global affairs as well as challenges at home, provides our students with a complete and comprehensive social sciences program.

1f. For secondary schools:

The goals within our Strategic Plan align with those of the District. Our vision is for all of our students to leave middle school, graduate from high school with marketable employment skills, and to enroll in some form of post-secondary education. Some of the skills and values that we focus on at Thurgood Marshall School are achievement, active engagement, inclusivity, innovation, inquiry, learning for the sake of learning, organization, perseverance, and resilience. We do more than just teach students the meaning of these terms. We help them embody them so that they can and will be successful in their educational journey as well as be contributing members of their community.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students at Thurgood Marshall School take elective courses. Students in 5th grade take art, music, and physical education in addition to their core subjects. These students have one elective every day. Students

in 6th grade are given the choice of taking band, orchestra, or the Wheel. The Wheel is composed of four courses - art, computer applications, multi-language lab, and theater. Each course is offered for one quarter and provides an introduction to the elective content that is available further in future grades. Students in 7th and 8th grades have a variety of electives opportunities to choose from such as art, band, beginning computers, business and technology, health, Mandarin, orchestra, physical education, publications, Spanish, STEM, and theater.

All of the elective courses offered teach specific skills while also allowing students to showcase their talents and demonstrate creativity. Our hope is that students will walk away with more gratitude for the arts, knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy, the ability to use technology to aid in their learning, and an appreciation of other cultures.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Thurgood Marshall School uses the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment as well as teacher created formative assessments to determine individual student needs and to monitor their progress. MAP is given early in the fall then again in the winter and spring. Using a variety of assessments as well as daily performance tasks, teachers group students and differentiate their instruction.

Students that are struggling academically in multiple courses and/or do not have a support structure at home, are placed in an RtI class in place of an elective. The class provides students with extra time within their school day to get help from a certified teacher while also providing additional time to complete their assignments. The skills taught in the class focus on study habits and organizational strategies. The goal is for students to "graduate out" of the class and return to their chosen elective once they are demonstrating success with passing grades.

In addition, Thurgood Marshall School offers Lunch Tutoring and Homework Club to all students. Tutoring is available every day at lunch. Students can have lunch while getting help from a teacher. Homework Club is another support that is offered Monday through Thursday after school and provides students with a quiet place to work and with computers and other resources that they may not have at home. It is also an opportunity for students to work together outside of the school day on group projects. Activity buses are available for students who choose to participate.

Because Thurgood Marshall School is an academic program, it has a formal review process that brings the student, parent(s), teachers, administrator, and counselor together as a team to set appropriate goals for improvement. The team convenes approximately every 30 days to monitor progress and adjust supports for the student as needed.

Mustang Time is also utilized on a weekly basis for remediation. Students that are struggling or performing below grade level are given this time to receive additional instruction, ask questions, and remediate assessments.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Most students at Thurgood Marshall School are performing above grade level in one or more areas. In mathematics, these students can be accelerated into the appropriate course. In other areas, teachers provide individualized instruction and challenging assignments for these students. While some teachers are working closely with small groups of students that are struggling during Mustang Time, others are using the time to provide enrichment for students that are excelling. This instruction looks different week to week and class to class. One teacher might be hosting a book club while another teacher might be building hot air balloons with a group of students.

3c. Special education

Thurgood Marshall School has one special education teacher that is shared with the elementary building. Because she is only in the building in the afternoon, students with an IEP are scheduled with her for one period each during that time. The teacher helps provide organizational and instructional support for each student during that class period. This is often in the form of checking their student planners, providing copies of teacher notes, ensuring assignments are in the appropriate folders, collecting completed work for turn in, offering an alternate location for testing, and so on.

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

Currently, there are few students at Thurgood Marshall that are English Language Learners. Those that are ELL are close to testing out of the program so their time with the ELL teacher is anywhere from one to two class periods a week. These students meet during an elective class so as to not miss core class instruction.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Thurgood Marshall School recognizes students for their academic achievements as well as for demonstrating positive behaviors. Each quarter, students are recognized for making the honor roll during grade level ceremonies. These students are brought on stage and given a high honor roll or honor roll pin that they can put on their school lanyard. Students enjoy and appreciate being recognized in front of their peers.

A Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program is utilized at Thurgood Marshall School to promote and encourage a positive school culture and climate. Each month a different character trait is taught and recognized. We specifically focus on friendship, respect, integrity, responsibility, compassion, resilience, tolerance, commitment, and accomplishment. Each month, posters are hung in classrooms and common areas. Homeroom teachers discuss the trait with their classes. For example, they would share that resilience is the capacity to successfully manage high levels of change. It involves humility, self-confidence and empowerment, flexibility and creativity, and initiative and effort. During that month, teachers hand out PBIS tickets to students that exhibit resilience in one or more of these ways. Students turn in their tickets for prizes in the School Store that is open every Friday during lunch hours. Having this program has made staff and students more cognizant of their behavior and how it impacts others. The climate has always been fairly positive, but there has been a shift to a stronger family culture since implementing PBIS.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Thurgood Marshall School recognizes that families and community members are important stakeholders. They were a part of developing our Strategic Plan and will continue to be included in future plans.

Our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meets with administration monthly and is active in supporting staff and students through grants that help purchase much needed books, supplies and equipment as well as provide opportunities for staff to attend professional development.

In order to stay connected to our families, Thurgood Marshall School uses a variety of methods such as email, Facebook, flyers, Google Classroom, newsletters, REMIND, and websites.

In our efforts to bring more real-world connections to the classroom, we look to our local businesses for support. Over the years, Thurgood Marshall School has reached out to various individuals, companies, and organizations for guest speakers, field trips, and other volunteer support. Our hope is to continue to grow in this area to create an even stronger community presence at Thurgood Marshall School.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Thurgood Marshall School is proud to say that we have had the highest employee engagement in the school district for the last three years! We attribute this to building relationships, using survey data to make change and grow, and providing our staff with autonomy. Our teachers feel valued and supported because our building leaders respect all staff members, listen, take a positive approach in all matters, and use the power of praise. When survey data showed that teacher to teacher trust was an area for growth, the staff worked together to determine how best to address this. It was decided as a group that peer observations could build trust by providing an opportunity to experience one another's classrooms and teaching. The observations were non-evaluative and a way to share something positive with one another. As an incentive, administration put participant names in a hat and drew for prizes each round. Though it's been a few years since this was instituted, teachers continue to take advantage of peer observations because they value learning from one another and strengthening their teams.

Most professional development is provided through the school district, however individual teachers and content area teams are also encouraged to take advantage of other opportunities in areas of need and interest. Specific PD related to gifted education and instruction is presented to staff each year prior to the start of

school. Throughout the year, additional information is shared around that topic. For example, Thurgood Marshall staff received a full day of inservice last summer around differentiated instruction. Throughout the year, grade level and subject area teams have been given more information about how to differentiate content, process, product, and environment for students according to student readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

Overall, the culture at Thurgood Marshall School is teamwork. Vertical teams meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Grade level teams meet daily with one another and weekly with administration. Committees are also in full swing. It's an "all hands on deck" atmosphere.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of the administrators (principal and assistant principal) at Thurgood Marshall School is student-centered and focused on the betterment of all students we serve. Our goal is for every activity that occurs in the building to revolve around what is best for students. If it is not beneficial for students, then it should not continue. Our mission as leaders is to create a society of learners where students are constantly challenged by one another and by their teachers and where teachers accept the challenge every day to be the best they can be. We want teachers to be facilitators of learning opportunities for students. We also want students to experience meaningful personal growth every day. Our hope is to also involve the community in the learning process because we realize there are many community resources that can be utilized to promote growth throughout a school.

Thurgood Marshall School has a Building Leadership Team (BLT). The team is made up of administrators, teachers, counselors, and support staff from all content areas and grade levels. The team meets at the beginning of each month to plan PLC meetings, look at school-wide data, review policies and procedures, and discuss programmatic needs. The focus of every meeting is student growth and achievement. Examples of questions that we frequently ask include 1) What instructional practices can our vertical teams utilize to increase student achievement? 2) How are we using pre-assessment to group students? 3) In what ways are we differentiating our instruction to meet individual student needs? 4) Looking at our MAP data, how can we achieve our goal of 64% of our students meeting or exceeding their projected growth in both reading and math? 5) How can we ensure that students use their planners to record their assignments and due dates? 6) How can we involve our families? 7) How can we better engage students in learning?

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been the most instrumental to our success at Thurgood Marshall School is motivating students to reach their full potential. "When you have confidence about the potential of students, you help to push them to the outskirts, the limits of their mind," says Dr. Yvette Jackson, adjunct professor at Teacher's College at Columbia University and senior scholar at the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education. In order to motivate our students to grow and achieve, teachers have created classroom environments that are conducive to learning using popular themes, flexible seating, and resources that are accessible to all students. They identify students' passions and integrate those interests into their instruction and choices for student projects. Staff work to boost students' self-esteem through frequent feedback on assignments, opportunities for improvement, and positive praise. Teachers involve students in planning and learning utilizing the PDSA model. Teachers utilize best practices and creative strategies to engage students through hands-on activities, inquiry, project-based learning, real-world connections, and the use of various technologies. Classroom and school-wide incentives are offered to students for participation and measures of growth. And last but certainly not least, teachers and students set goals together.