

**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 [ ] Magnet[X] Choice

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

Official School Name Bridgman High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 9964 Gast Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bridgman State MI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 49106-9750

County Berrien County

Telephone (269) 466-0223 Fax (269) 466-0355

Web site/URL https://bridgmanschools.com/ E-mail gheath@bridgmanschools.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\* Mr. Shane Peters E-mail speters@bridgmanschools.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bridgman Public Schools Tel. (269) 465-5432

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

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

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. 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	37	38	75
10	31	47	78
11	23	29	52
12 or higher	15	34	49
<b>Total Students</b>	106	148	254

\*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):
- 1.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2.4 % Asian
  - 0.4 % Black or African American
  - 3.9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.8 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 88.9 % White
  - 2.4 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 10%

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	259
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.10
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

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

Spanish

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

3 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32 %

Total number students who qualify: 81

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

21 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>8</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>10</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>1</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: 2

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 14:1

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%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	99%	99%	95%

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	62
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	52%
Enrolled in a community college	34%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	12%
Found employment	2%
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.

We provide resources to inspire resilient and collaborative critical thinkers. As a community, we prepare and support all students for lifelong learning.

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

Applications for admission from schools of choice students are to be submitted by a student's parents/guardians to the Superintendent no later than May 30th. The District will determine which applications to accept and notify the legal guardian or parent of each applicant whether or not the applicant may enroll in the District.

If there are more applicants than spaces available for a particular grade or program, the following selection procedure shall be used:

Identify students who were suspended from their home school during the preceding two (2) school years, were previously expelled at any time from any school or have been convicted of a felony. These students are not to be accepted.

Identify any siblings of students who are attending a District school under this program. These siblings are to be enrolled prior to the random selection process.

Assign a number to each application and place the numbers in a container. In the presence of at least one (1) other staff member, conduct a blind drawing of the numbers and list each number drawn in the order they are drawn. The drawing is to continue until all numbers have been drawn.

Based on the results of the blind drawing, determine which applications are to be selected and send a notification letter to parents.

The District's regular enrollment procedure is to be followed when enrolling a schools of choice student.

The District shall not discriminate against any students with disabilities (IDEA or 504). The District shall be required to provide any services or adapt any facilities for a student with disabilities in accordance with his/her IEP or 504 plan.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Bridgman is a small town located on Lake Michigan, in the southwestern corner of the state. Weko Beach and campground is a popular tourist attraction, and we have many visitors during the summer who frequent our community because of our beautiful beaches. The Cook Nuclear Power Plant is another great influence in our district, as it employs many of our students' parents.

We have an economically diverse population and are small geographically, which can make it challenging for many families to find affordable housing. We have seen an increase in our economically disadvantaged and transient population which can present challenges for our families and students. Limited year-round housing can make it difficult for families to find a home in Bridgman. However, our school district continues to be a destination district for many families, with a third of our student population being school of choice.

Supporting students academically and social-emotionally, as well as preparing them for post-secondary opportunities is our goal at Bridgman High School (BHS). We set high academic expectations for all students while promoting equity and access. All students, grades 9-12, receive Tier 1 school counseling lessons in career, academic and social-emotional topics, while our students who have more needs receive Tier 2 small group services (anxiety, coping skills, grief, and academic/social skills). Our Tier 3 strategies include one-on-one counseling and referrals to more intensive mental health support.

BHS was the first school in Berrien County to implement a Peer to Peer support system in all three buildings. Same-age peers, as well as older peers, mentor our students with special needs. Our high school students receive class credit for mentoring students each day. Not only do the mentees greatly benefit from the program by gaining academic and social skills, our mentors also gain leadership, resilience, and empathy.

We are committed to preparing students to be life-long learners by making sure all students are prepared for post-secondary opportunities. We believe the SAT is a strong measure of post-secondary success. Four years ago, our counseling department received a small grant which spurred our SAT preparation strategies. We purposefully gave our teachers professional development time in each department to break down SAT data, examine instructional strategies, and design curriculum to align with nationally approved standards. We intentionally set aside time each week to allow our students to work on SAT preparation. We steadily saw an increase in SAT scores, and in 2019 we were first in not only Berrien County but the tri-county area with an average SAT composite score of 1113, up from 1064 in 2016. In addition, we had 80% proficiency in evidence-based reading and writing and 69% proficiency in Math; with 67% of students meeting both benchmarks, a 15% increase from 2018. While we were extremely proud of our high average SAT composite score, we were even more pleased with the high number of students meeting both reading and math benchmarks, as our goal is equity and access for all students.

In addition to our high rigor and academic expectations, we are also committed to offering students many college-credit and career opportunities in high school. Since we do not have a community college in close proximity, we offer 6 in-house AP classes and 6 additional classes in which students can take the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) test for college credit. Even though we are a small school, we want to give students the opportunity to earn college credit. We also support students in Career and Technical Education (CTE). We have over 70 Bridgman students participating in CTE programs at BHS and all over the county in classes such as Welding, Marketing, Sports Medicine, Certified Nursing Assistant, and Culinary, to name a few. We believe by giving students hands-on career experience, they are more well-rounded students with future employability skills.

## **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

We want all Bridgman students to be:

Quality producers who cooperatively and/or independently create intellectual, artistic, practical, and physical products that reflect originality, high standards, and the use of advanced technologies. Responsible learners who formulate constructive, positive attitudes and values in order to create a vision for their future, set priorities/goals, create options, and take responsibility for pursuing these goals while monitoring and evaluating their progress. Critical thinkers who identify, access, integrate, and use available resources and information to question, reason, and make decisions and solve complex problems in a variety of contexts. Effective communicators by using process skills and creative expression. Community and global contributors who use their time, energy, and talents cooperatively to enhance the quality of life, preserve the environment, and promote mutual respect. Effective life managers who develop constructive interpersonal relationships and strive for physical, emotional, and social health.

Bridgman Public Schools has invested financially in Kagan Cooperative Learning training. Bridgman High School has two teachers that have been trained as Kagan coaches. These coaches are paid a stipend to work with the faculty on developing cooperative learning strategies across the curriculum. Classrooms are set up to allow for a smooth transition into cooperative activities.

BHS has invested time in department planning on breaking down assessment data and developing an SAT preparation plan for students. After an instructional plan is developed, 9th - 11th grade students spend a minimum of 6 hours preparing for SAT style questions. When researching department level curriculum, teachers search for models that contain real-world SAT style questions.

Every person on the BHS staff, all the way up to the superintendent, encourages student self-advocacy. We want students who know how to speak for themselves. We feel as a school that advocacy is an important trait that students must master moving into the next step in their life. As an overarching philosophy, the BHS staff strives to produce students that not only know the importance of teamwork but can think and speak for themselves.

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

The Bridgman High School English curriculum was updated in 2017 to address alignment for the Common Core and integration of our 1:1 technology initiative. In grades 9-12, we use the Pearson myPerspectives curriculum that implements whole class instruction, small group practice, and independent reading and learning. Each English course is taught in a year-long format in two semesters split into quarters. ELA courses are designed for students to demonstrate growth in reading, writing, thinking, and listening across a variety of literary genres (short stories, novels, plays, and informative non-fiction). With the introduction of proper annotating techniques, all English classes demand a close reading of varied texts to enhance student comprehension. Following a thematic-based structure, the literature component encourages students to broaden their world-view and gain a deeper understanding of the range of human emotions. The informational text component provides the opportunity to reinforce analysis while emphasizing how writers use language to influence the audience. The textbook is available in two consumable workbooks (as well as online) that the students are expected to annotate as they read, as we stress at all levels the importance of engagement in close reading for comprehension.

BHS approaches instruction through fully inclusive classes and differentiated instruction according to the needs of students with special education accommodations (IEP and 504). Small class sizes provide the opportunity for one-on-one teaching and foster individual teacher-student interaction. AP English Literature is offered as an elective for seniors. The curriculum prepares students for advanced college-level reading

and writing expectations and for the May AP exam where students can earn college credit.

The myPerspectives curriculum instruction and assessment are aligned with the SAT. Assessment is both formative and summative, along with student self-reflection used to measure growth and personal success. PSAT/SAT data is analyzed to drive instruction, and College Board AP Literature and Language standards are utilized to enhance instruction.

The English department utilizes Socratic Seminars to support dialogue about the readings along with group discussions to support everyday learning, instruction and participation. Team discussions use a mix of round-robin and rally-robin discussion activities where students can engage with their desk teammates and share responses to questions before discussing it as a whole group.

As for social-emotional learning, the English department has observed numerous benefits from incorporating mindfulness into the classroom (with Mindful/Music Mondays and sometimes even just taking a minute to "arrive"). Mindful/Music Mondays alternate between mindful meditation and a music-based whole class engagement activity to lead into the academic week.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Bridgman High School math courses - Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry - are taught using the Glencoe Math series by McGraw-Hill, Inc. This series is aligned with Common Core State Standards for math. In the 5th year with the series, positive trends are evident. Math courses are all year long, taught in 2 semesters, and those split into equal quarters. The math sequence for most students is Algebra 1 or Advanced Geometry for freshmen, Geometry or Advanced Algebra 2 for sophomores, Algebra 2, FST or Pre-Calculus or AP Statistics for juniors, and AP Statistics, AP Calculus, Personal Finance, or Accounting for seniors. Advanced students can begin this sequence in 8th grade where they take an Algebra 1 course.

This year, 25% of the senior class is taking an AP-level math class. SAT prep and practice is implemented starting in February one day a week via online sources. Students in the junior class also attend a half-day seminar about the SAT and prepare for the test on this day. A cumulative testing policy and common assessment practices are utilized within the math department. Test scores are analyzed during department meetings and during regularly-scheduled morning collaboration time. A strong emphasis is placed on vocabulary terms in all courses, ensuring students can apply these terms to word problems.

Instruction is provided in both whole and small group formats and student-to-student talk strategies are used frequently along with district-wide Kagan strategies. Learning is enhanced through integrated technology pieces available through Albert, Khan Academy, and ALEKS.

The Math department uses self-reflection objective sheets. Students reflect on their learning the following day in each class and then submit the sheet prior to the review. Students that are struggling are assigned small groups where they receive individual instruction while the rest of the students work independently. This method gives students ownership over their learning. The "scribe" strategy is utilized in portions of the lessons. One student does a problem while another student checks as they are doing it, then they switch.

The Math department uses "brain breaks". When a class is having a hard time focusing or working on a challenging concept, the class will stop and play a quick brain teaser game. This is used as a social/emotional stress reliever for students.

### **1d. Science**

The Bridgman High School Science department offers a wide range of courses to challenge students at their different learning levels. The curriculum begins with Integrated Science or Biology their first year and then advances to either Biology or Chemistry. From there, students can take Chemistry or Conceptual Physics. As a fourth-year science option, students may choose from advanced classes like Physics, College Biology, Advanced Chemistry, or Anatomy/Physiology. These class sizes are kept small to maximize teacher-student interaction.

Our approach to curriculum is blended; it includes phenomena-based activities from designing models and laboratories to direct instruction. We emphasize students designing, creating, and investigating their own scientific questions, producing evidence that supports their ideas. Students have access to a wealth of tools including Vernier real-time data collectors, 1:1 Chromebooks, and tactile laboratory equipment. Students spend time in groups analyzing their collected data and coming to a consensus about what it means. They are challenged to connect the data they are collecting, as well as their conclusions, to real-world situations.

There are a number of measures in place to aid each student in constructing their own understanding of science. We recognize that all students, at one time or another, need specific interventions to achieve at a higher level. Teachers in our science department use online quizzing platforms to identify specific Next Generation Science Standards-aligned content that students are struggling with in real-time. The content is re-taught and practiced further through independent and group activities. Another mode of formative assessment we use is written quizzes, where students construct more in-depth explanations of scientific processes. This allows the teacher to better gauge the depth of understanding of the student. On a larger scale, teachers in the science department review Michigan Merit Exam data, as well as PSAT/SAT data to identify areas where we can improve our curriculum. Engaging students in SAT style reading activities and assessments is one way we have used the data from these tests to help our students achieve.

The Science department also uses inquiry-based learning, following the steps of generating questions, building a model from data, critiquing each other's models using a gallery walk, consensus-building through debate, and revising models, to further student learning. Additionally, meta-analysis is used to identify general science principles across labs.

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

The Bridgman High School Social Studies department has added several advanced courses to our list of offerings. In addition to Civics, Economics, U.S. History, World History, Psychology/Sociology, BHS offers AP U.S. History, AP Government, and AP Macroeconomics. The school also offers a robust selection of technological aids in preparation for AP tests, as well as other standardized tests (SAT and PSAT). These include Albert, Connect-Ed, and Pear Deck for interactive lectures.

In addition, the department regularly revisits state standards to ensure that it is in compliance with Michigan's teaching goals, and has adjusted course sequencing and offerings to support student needs. Teachers also revisit assessments via frequent department meetings, giving educators the chance to assess data and better improve instructional techniques for success.

BHS History classes participate in "Mystery Document Monday". Students have to analyze historical text and give it a place in history, an author, historical context, etc. In the same fashion as the English department, Socratic Seminars are used in portions of the lesson to create powerful dialogue and friendly debate. "Speed-Dating Debate" is a powerful structure implemented in social studies classrooms. It's a discussion strategy in which students have mini "speed" discussions with peers. Each round, students rotate to a different peer and discuss a different topic on their discussion "dates." It's engaging because it's student-centered, kinesthetic, interactive, and attention-span friendly. Government classes participate in "Mock Trials" where BHS administration and central office staff can be seen sitting in as jurors. The class also conducts a "Mock Congress" or a simulation of "How a Bill Becomes a Law".

The community and current events play a role in social studies classes. Students participate in current event discussions helping students to relate with the content. Students are assigned the task of attending and taking notes at either a school or community board meeting. Students are a constant presence at school and/or city board meetings.

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

College and Career Readiness is a top priority at Bridgman High School. We implement the comprehensive XELLO career development curriculum in grades 9-12 which allows students career exploration

opportunities while updating their educational development plans. The High School Counselor also implements lessons in college and career development by exploring college academic and financial readiness, soft skills development, and job readiness skills. BHS was recently recognized by the Governor as the top school in our region and the Top Ten in the state of Michigan for an outstanding FASFA completion rate percentage.

The district works with the local trade and manufacturing industry to provide apprenticeship and job opportunities to our students. We encourage students to be a part of Career Technical Education throughout the county and to get career experience in high school. We also host trade industry tours for educators and parents to visit our local manufacturing companies. We also have partnered with our industry neighbors to hold a job fair for skilled trades in our building. In addition, we work with our local military partners to showcase careers in the armed forces and to give students additional post-secondary education options.

For the past four years, we have taken students in grades 9-12 on college visits. Freshman year, they visit a small private school, sophomore and senior years, they visit our local community colleges, and during their junior year, students visit a large state university. This gives them the opportunity to see three different college environments prior to applying to college.

Finally, we feel that the SAT test is a strong indicator of college and career readiness. We have worked hard in helping our students prep for the test from 9th grade on. Our teachers also spend time breaking down data and aligning the curriculum with the SAT. In 2019, our juniors were ranked first in Berrien County and first in the tri-county area for SAT scores.

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

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

The Bridgman High School offers a variety of additional curricular courses designed to enhance core curricular classes. These courses are available to all students, 9-12 grade except CTE which is designed for juniors and seniors. Students participate in these curricular activities daily as a part of their class schedule. Students register for these classes to enhance their career development skills as well as to meet Michigan Merit Curricular expectations. The Bridgman Board of Education requires students to successfully complete one credit of physical education/health, one credit of visual/performing/applied arts, two credits of a foreign language, and four other credit hours of electives or career and technical education programs throughout their high school career.

The Bridgman High School Visual Art department instills creativity and innovative thinking. The students gain an appreciation for artists throughout history as well as current artists to gain a worldview of career opportunities. Professional artists are invited to the classroom to further student understanding and interest in art as a profession. Students utilize technical skills they gain through working with various mediums both within the art room but also in other classes. The young artists display their work in the community and through various art competitions. Bridgman offers high school visual art classes starting in 8th grade and continuing throughout their high school years, grades 9-12. Students specifically in our Graphic Design program (grades 11 and 12) gain real-world experience working with clients in our community to produce various advertising needs utilizing Adobe programs.

The BHS band program includes a marching band, concert band, pep band, and an optional jazz band for students in grades 9-12. Over the past 5 years, we have grown in both numbers and quality. Not only does the band represent more than 20% of the school population, but they consistently earn top awards. The program has become a source of great pride in our community!

The BHS Concert Choir (offered for grades 9-12) has a tradition of excellence and high standards. In the last couple of years, this performance group has grown to over 35 members and added a Glee Club for grades 7-12. We have had the honor to sing with the legendary rock band, Foreigner and Damian McGinty. The choir has also received "Excellent" ratings while attending the Trills and Thrills festival in Johnsburg, IL.

The goal of the BHS PE/Health department is to introduce and participate in a variety of lifetime and team sports for grades 9-12. Basic skills and concepts are taught for each sport. Having fun, interacting with others, showing respect for others, teamwork, and leadership skills are stressed. In Health, the goal is to learn about health topics that impact the immediate and future development of the student. Students are given the knowledge to aid them in healthy decision making, building healthy relationships, and refusal skills for a variety of risk behaviors. The course takes a comprehensive look at reproductive health, healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, and the dangers of alcohol, tobacco/vaping, and drugs.

In the Spanish program, students have the opportunity to take Spanish for high school credit beginning in the 8th grade and continuing through 12th grade. From the beginning, students develop both written and spoken proficiency, as well as an appreciation of the many cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Upper-level students take the CLEP Spanish Language Exam to earn college credit. Courses focus on acquisition through authentic, comprehensible materials (input) including reading, listening, writing, and speaking according to national proficiency standards set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Bridgman has a strong and effective Business Academy for grades 9-12, which are all included as part of our Career Tech Education programming.

Accounting is the language of business! Students learn how accounting relates to different careers, learn accounting terminology, concepts, principles, and procedures. Accounting for proprietorships and corporations are covered as well as corporate and personal money management, ethics, and being productive in the global marketplace.

Business Management is designed to train students for the “real world of business” and/or the college-bound student entering a business curriculum. A variety of other activities are covered such as employability skills, career exploration, communication skills, ethics, leadership, project management, and international business.

In Marketing 1, students are introduced to the role of marketing in the U.S. and the global economy. Students learn about the marketing core functions which include channel management, marketing information management, market planning, pricing, product/service management, promotion, and selling. Marketing 2 is designed to help students expand on the basic marketing concepts acquired in Marketing 1 through project-based learning. There is a major emphasis on entrepreneurship, business plans, marketing your own business, distribution, promotion, and selling. Marketing 3 is designed to challenge experienced marketing students through project-based learning in the areas of economic understanding, human relations, marketing, promotion, and product and service knowledge.

In all levels of CTE business, learning is reinforced through the Whirlpool Innovation Challenge, where students create and write a business plan or Merit Award Project, and various other projects and activities. Students can also join DECA, a student organization focused on marketing, finance, hospitality, and management that promotes competition in these areas.

Beginning in 11th grade, our students can take any number of off-campus CTE classes in learning centers from 13 school districts, two colleges, a local university, and countless local industrial and community organizations collaborating to offer unique opportunities for students. CTE is an essential component to the overall preparation of our students to be BOTH college and career ready. Our students must leave our programs prepared to compete and excel in our global economy. Whether their next step involves pursuing a two, four, or more years of advanced degrees, trade schools, the military, apprenticeships, or pursuing their career choice through on-the-job training, our goal is to ensure they are equipped to take those next step

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

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

Bridgman High School offers a Response to Intervention (RTI) hour in which an academic teacher works with a small class, (no more than 10 students), to help them progress through a class they have previously

failed. We utilize an online curriculum, with intensive teacher intervention to help students break down the questions, and give them individualized help and time to work through the answers.

In addition, we offer a Pass Lab, an after school time to receive extra help. It is supervised by certified teachers. Also, a high school volunteer student tutors classmates, providing peer support. Further, we pair struggling students with National Honor Society student tutors to receive tutoring help 2-3 times/week to give them extra assistance.

Finally, we have our Peer to Peer program, in which students are helping students for an hour every day. They are paired with a student during a class, and they assist that student for the entire hour. If a student struggles in math, we place the Peer to Peer tutor in the math class with the student. Both the tutor and the student receiving support gain many benefits from the program, both academically and socially.

We also encourage our students to take advantage of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs both in house and around the county. We have partner programs in a neighboring district, Welding and Machine Tool, that offer our students Algebra 2 credit. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students who struggle in math, and are more hands-on learners to earn the required Algebra 2 graduation requirement and learn a high wage career skill, thus leading to future employment opportunities. In addition, students often have the opportunity to earn articulated college credit through these CTE programs.

We are committed to preparing all learners for post-secondary opportunities, and realize our struggling learners may need extra assistance while in high school, to ensure success later in life. We feel equity and access are key for current and future success.

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

We continuously promote rigor and push all of our students to excel and prepare them for post-secondary opportunities. We offer 6 Advanced Placement (AP) classes and 5 college-level direct credit or CLEP tested classes to earn college credit. We teach these classes at a very high level, thus preparing our students for future college opportunities. We are a small school, but give our students “big school” options through our plethora of AP and college credit-bearing classes. Our local community college is not close, so we offer as many college opportunities as we can in-house to give our students the ability to earn college credit at BHS.

Even though BHS offers many college opportunities inside the building, we also partner with our local Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) and community college to provide students the opportunity to attend a 5th Year Early/Middle College (E/MC) program. Students who elect to enroll in the Berrien County 5th Year E/MC program commit to attending a mandatory week-long Summer College Success Boot Camp during summer vacation between 10th and 11th grade. Students successfully complete college course work in their junior and senior years of high school and extend their high school graduation date by one school year. They do, however, participate in commencement with their original graduating class. EMC students graduate from high school with a high school diploma and significant college credits, a career certificate, an associate degree, or a MEMCA Certificate.

BHS students not interested in enrolling in a program still have the opportunity to earn credit from the local community college. Students can enroll in a dual enrollment course to earn high school and college credits in a specific course.

### **3c. Special education**

At Bridgman High School, special education students are fully included in the general education setting for all academic content areas. We follow the general education curriculum and our students take all state standardized tests with given accommodations. Each student is assigned a Study Skills hour where the curriculum is broken down, re-explained and accommodations are implemented. Our special education students are held to very high standards, which requires constant communication between special education and general education teachers on a daily basis. Our special education system at BHS is an extension of the general education curriculum, setting, and environment. Due to the fact that our students are totally included

academically and socially within the general education setting, our special education students' graduation rate is 100% for those who stay within the district.

Our special education students are held accountable to the same standards and have access to the same programs that our general education students do. This opportunity allows the special education population to thrive within BHS, and it is very seldom that we distinguish the difference between the two populations.

Our administration supports our department's ability to support our students by providing accommodated technology, devices, and supports within the general education curriculum.

With the general education teachers, special education teachers, students, administration, parents, and the community partnering together our special education students show a sense of pride in every accomplishment they achieve. We partner together enabling our students to become successful adults who are able to transition easily into their post-secondary goals.

**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:**

At Bridgman High School, we promote our “BEE Expectations” (our mascot is the Bee), throughout our school environment. Through our Student Achievement Teamwork, we were able to develop the four key components to creating a positive learning environment for our students. Each year at the beginning of the school year, we review what it means to Bee Responsible, Bee Respectful, Bee Honest, and Bee Safe.

Students give suggestions for what those expectations mean across all aspects of our school and learning environment. These are our school norms and classroom rules.

Our entire staff also focuses on building positive relationships with students and letting students know how much we care about them and their learning outcomes. We consistently hear from alumni, how much it meant to them that they had teachers at BHS that genuinely cared about them and encouraged them to do their best. We realize if students feel support and unconditional positive regard, they want to work hard and perform. We do set high learning expectations for all students, but our students know we are there with them, encouraging them the entire time to be successful.

In addition to our BEE expectations, we also have a Comprehensive School Counseling Program, which involves academic as well as social-emotional support. Our school counselor provides Tier 1 instruction to all students via classroom lessons on academics and social-emotional learning, as well as career and post-secondary opportunities. We offer Tier 2 and Tier 3 social/emotional support through small groups and individual counseling.

We feel that a holistic approach to learning, by educating the entire student, academically, and socially/emotionally is a key factor in student success.

BHS uses Kagan Cooperative Learning in the classroom to increase active engagement, boost academic achievement, close achievement gaps, promote the development of personal and social skills and replace racism, bullying, and miscommunication with empathy and understanding.

Kagan fosters the following interpersonal skills: social interaction, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making. The seven key concepts of Kagan include structures, teams, management, class building, team building, social skills, and the basic principles of PIES (positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, simultaneous interaction).

Recently, BHS began a professional development plan training teachers on structures to build students' growth mindset in the classroom. As a staff, we feel this is the next step in building student engagement and inspiring productive citizens.

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

The Bridgman High School staff understands the value and importance of engaging students' families and community members to increase students' success. Partnering with families is done through a multitude of programs at BHS. Incoming freshmen participate in two different high school readiness orientations. National Honor Society (NHS) members are present at these events to help answer questions and offer building tours to students and parents.

Families receive communication about events and school information through a weekly parent e-newsletter and social media posts including Twitter and Facebook. This district also partners with city hall to develop a newsletter, The Bridgman Buzz, that provides school updates to the larger community. School stakeholders can also receive up to date information by visiting the "Daily Announcements" link on our school website.

Teachers and school staff are available to talk with families during parent/teacher conferences as well by

phone and email during the course of the year. Parents have access to their student's academic progress through PowerSchool. The staff at BHS works diligently to communicate with parents and work alongside families to improve student success. Families are able to meet with the school counselor as needed to discuss students' academic success, social and emotional wellbeing, as well as get connected to needed community resources and supports.

The community of Bridgman is an integral part of our school network. BHS works with local community agencies and businesses through several service organizations. These include NHS, Key Club, Interact Club, Student Senate, and Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). In the Spring of 2019, BHS partnered with the Berrien County Sheriff's Department to provide a parent forum for the community in understanding the dangers of vaping. They followed up that forum with a parent showing of "Screenagers" followed by a presentation of healthy technology use by an instructional technology consultant from our local RESA.

The District also supports the Blue Jean Scholarship where teachers pay a monthly fee to wear jeans on Fridays. The donations raised by this program are intended to be used toward a camp or enrichment programs that students plan on attending over the summer. Bridgman Cares, a group of community members, partners with the school to provide food, clothing and resources for our students in need.

BHS seniors participate in a Portfolio Day (graduation requirement) where they develop a cover letter, resume, and letters of recommendation. In April, students use these materials to participate in two mock interviews with our local business professionals. As a part of our CTE Marketing class, students participate in the Whirlpool Innovation Challenge. Students are tasked to develop a product to provide a solution for a problem in the appliance industry.

The Bridgman Foundation for Educational Excellence is a group of community members that volunteer to help enhance the learning opportunities for our students. The funds raised are utilized to create opportunities for learning above and beyond what the district funds. The Foundation is committed to ensuring that the children of today and tomorrow are provided with opportunities to successfully compete in the ever-changing global community.

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

Bridgman Public Schools has an Instructional Council. The Council is comprised of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, building-level principals, teacher representatives, and instructional technologist. Each teacher representative serves as a member of their Building Leadership Team. This structure gives teachers a voice in decisions related to curriculum, instruction, and professional development. Each teacher representative is assigned to collecting information from their colleagues to help the leadership make sound decisions in the direction of the district. Information is also collected through an annual professional development survey sent to every teacher in the district.

Bridgman High School has a Building Curriculum Leadership Team (BCLT). This team consists of the principal, school counselor, and a teacher leader from each department. The department leader is responsible for collecting information from their department. This information is used in making important decisions on the direction of the building. The Instructional Council representative also sits on the BCLT team to provide consistent and effective communication between the two committees.

BPS has subscribed to Solution Tree to have access to their professional learning community library. This provides a virtual platform allowing principals to design building-specific professional development. The library can also be used for teachers to receive training in areas where they need to improve.

BHS teachers are encouraged to attend conferences in areas that interest them. BPS makes these professional development opportunities a priority making sure that the conferences are in the budget on an annual basis.

Another priority for BPS is teacher input regarding curriculum. BPS has a rotational curriculum calendar where each year a different department's curriculum is updated. Teachers from the department in

consultation with the building principal and assistant superintendent (director of curriculum) research new strategies and delivery methods to select a new curriculum and the resources to support it. The district allocates over \$100,000 every year on new curriculum materials.

The faculty input in the areas of professional development and curriculum provides a voice for teachers in the direction of not only the building but also the district. These structures are fully supported by the Bridgman Board of Education.

BPS offers a mentoring program for new teachers. Mentors and mentees are given a handbook and attend a 1/2 day training program. Mentors provide guidance to new teachers by meeting with them on a regular basis.

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

Bridgman High School is committed to empowering our staff members to allow them to have ownership and be invested in our educational outcomes. BHS offers a Building Curriculum Leadership Team (BCLT) which is composed of department leaders in all disciplines as well as the school counselor and principal. Our team meets monthly to discuss topics and issues that are essential to BHS. The district has also created an Instructional Council including teacher representatives from each building. Team members get feedback from other teachers and staff members prior to the meeting to ensure that all voices are heard. Our Principal operates very openly and democratically by often surveying teachers and getting feedback prior to decision-making.

The leadership of the district including the principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent has an open-door policy in addressing questions and concerns of the staff. It is a normal occurrence to see the principal, assistant superintendent, or superintendent in a classroom visiting with a teacher or the hallway talking to a student. It is a priority of every administrator to create a family atmosphere in the building. The assistant superintendent and superintendent are regulars in the high school office engaging in friendly conversation with visiting parents.

It is not uncommon to see an administrator stepping in to fill the role of an absent staff member including substitute teaching, filling in for a custodian, mowing the lawn, etc. The most recent example of this is when the entire administration passed out student meals to families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The superintendent has a professional relationship with the teacher's union, meeting with union representatives on a monthly basis. The district engages in interest-based bargaining when negotiating teacher contracts. This bargaining structure allows every voice on each side to be heard.

In the last two years, the district has invested in an assistant superintendent whose main focus is special education, technology, and curriculum/instruction. The assistant superintendent is present and plays a role in almost every IEP meeting across the district. He is an instrumental leader in helping special education teachers establish accommodations for students.

The BHS superintendent is a fixture in the community taking on leadership roles on several community boards. This gives the Bridgman Public Schools a voice in the community and the opportunity to develop a productive relationship with our community stakeholders.

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

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The most instrumental practice at Bridgman High School (BHS) has been the examination of curriculum strengths and weaknesses by utilizing item analysis of the SAT.

Teachers are given time to breakdown SAT data to analyze curriculum strengths and weaknesses. The department develops a plan of instruction to close the identified gaps. A schedule is developed to give students the opportunity to focus on these areas. Starting in February until the end of March, students are given one hour a week to concentrate on closing the educational gaps.

BHS uses online tools including Khan Academy and Albert to help build personalized learning plans allowing students to work at their own pace and accelerate their learning. Both online tools use high-level questions in an SAT format. BHS uses the same Albert platform for every AP class and recently purchased a subscription to allow teachers to use it in their general education classes.

The identifying of gaps has also led the discussion when researching a new curriculum. The English department just invested in the myPerspectives curriculum, a curriculum that reinforces proper annotating techniques (an area of weakness that was discovered during an SAT analysis). The BHS Science department recently implemented a curriculum that emphasizes problem-solving. Through the examination of their curriculum, the department realized that critical problem-solving skills needed to be strengthened for students to be college and career ready.

Through this analysis, teachers realized to close the gaps they would need to do more than break down the data and change the content. They would need better student engagement in the classroom. This led the district in exploring Kagan cooperative learning strategies. These strategies helped teachers create lessons where all students would be engaged in working in teams using their peers to strengthen their problem-solving skills. The Kagan structure has now branched into the development of a professional development calendar to train teachers in growth mindset strategies.

The expansion of using SAT data to examine the BHS curriculum has lead our staff down a road of discovery, a road that has prepared us to best support our students. AT BHS, we want to empower students to respectfully think and speak for themselves. We feel that those skills will help our students be college and career ready and live up to the Bridgman Public School values of being quality producers, responsible learners, critical thinkers, effective communicators, and effective life managers.

Not only did the item analysis make our students better learners, but it also raised our SAT scores. This growth was acknowledged by Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) when they invited the BHS school counselor and two teachers to their 2020 Conference to present on SAT strategies. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the conference was canceled and they never received the opportunity to present. We are looking forward to a rescheduled opportunity in the future.