

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 [X] Magnet [] Choice

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

Official School Name Piedmont IB Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1241 E 10th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Charlotte State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28204-2048

County Mecklenburg

Telephone (980) 343-5435 Fax (980) 343-5557

Web site/URL
<https://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/piedmontMS/Pages/Default.aspx> E-mail jackie.barone@cms.k12.nc.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Earnest Winston E-mail earnest.winston@cms.k12.nc.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Tel. (980) 343-3000

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 Ms. Elyse Dashew
(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):
- 113 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 42 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 32 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 187 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	180	203	383
7	167	206	373
8	147	195	342
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	494	604	1098

*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7.2 % Asian
 - 56.8 % Black or African American
 - 14.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 19.1 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 2%

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

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

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	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	1087
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Arabic, Bengali, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Lao, Liberian English, Malayalam, Punjabi, Romanian, Spanish, Tagalog/Filipino, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Wandala/Montagnard

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %

Total number students who qualify: 436

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %
9 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>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

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	5
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	49
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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

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	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
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. 2011

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

To inspire a passion for learning, commitment to integrity and academic excellence, help students demonstrate self-confidence and creativity, and display social responsibility and global awareness

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

As a magnet school, students are chosen to attend through an online lottery. The lottery includes academic entrance requirements in which students must score "proficient" (level 3, 4, or 5) on their reading state test scores. Entrance requirements do not apply to all students entering Piedmont. Students who attend a Primary Years IB Program do not have to meet academic entrance requirements, as the Middle Years Program at Piedmont is considered a continuation.

PART III - SUMMARY

Built in 1925, Piedmont became one of the first magnet schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in the early 1970s. Our original magnet theme was Open Education which, while not a formal program in our district anymore, is evident in all we do and believe. We are currently a whole-school International Baccalaureate (IB) magnet program for 6th through 8th graders and serve nearly 1,100 students from across the county (and over 50 different elementary schools) each year. Our student body is truly a microcosm of the city of Charlotte and a highly diverse environment. Our student demographics for this past year are as follows: 56.87% Black or African-American, 19% White, .3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 7.2% Asian, 14.4% Hispanic or Latino, .2% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 2.2% two or more races. Forty-five percent of our students are male and 55% are female, 1% are Students with Disabilities (SWD) and 1% are English Language Learners. Additionally, approximately 40% of our students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Academic excellence is an essential component of our mission. In order to foster academic excellence, our teachers utilize the North Carolina Standard Course of Study in conjunction with the IB curriculum aims and objectives. Each of the core content areas, along with elective courses (known as "Encore"), is equally valued and teachers are encouraged to work in interdisciplinary teams. Interdisciplinary teams are most evident in the assessments and projects that our students complete. Recent examples include, but are not limited to, a school-wide book read, 6th grade Greek Day, the 7th grade Water Project and the 8th grade Sing the Blues Project.

For our schoolwide book read of *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, we incorporated all grade levels and disciplines in the creation of pamphlets and brochures, highlighting the setting of the book, Malawi, Africa. Students spent a half-day of school analyzing applications of the book through all core subjects. Later in the semester, we completed an all-day culminating project for the book read. Students participated in an assembly, followed by a six-mile walk to develop empathy for Malawian students who need to walk to school each day, and then concluded with a variety of reflection-focused tasks.

For Greek Day in the 6th grade, the students spent weeks researching one specific Greek god or goddess then composed a monologue from the god or goddess' point of view and transferred their research onto a "trading card." For the 7th grade Water Project, our students read *A Long Walk to Water* then analyzed the topics of violence, warfare, heartbreak, bravery, acceptance, and life as a refugee. The 8th-grade project, "Sing the Blues," integrated language arts, social studies, and music. Students created original lyrics to a blues song using The Great Depression vocabulary and then performed it for their peers. In addition, they researched the impact of The Harlem Renaissance on blues music and created a Great Depression children's book and diary entries.

In order to achieve academic excellence for all students, Piedmont utilizes Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). All teachers are a member of grade level/content area PLCs, department PLCs, and grade level PLCs. The grade level/content area PLCs meet at least once per week with administrative team support to plan lessons, create common assessments, and analyze student data. Grade level PLCs are used to further implement interdisciplinary instruction. Students are scheduled in four-person teams; each team works together to plan and implement interdisciplinary units and often works together to showcase their culminating products in gallery walks.

The master schedule allows for equal time in all content area classes and Encore classes. Most Encore classes meet on an alternating day schedule. In addition to core blocks of time, all students are enrolled in a "flex" block of time that is utilized for additional Encore classes, enrichment activities, and re-looping/re-teaching lessons. Students are continuously re-grouped during the flex class based on their academic and social/emotional needs.

Piedmont students are encouraged to participate in academic and athletic clubs and events. The Science Olympiad team has brought state and national recognition to the school. They are reigning state champions and have been consistently ranked as one of the top teams in the nation. Students also participate in Battle of

the Books, Mock Trial, Robotics Club, Odyssey of the Mind, Shakespeare Recitation, Math Counts, Honors Orchestra, Jazz Band, Chess Club, Spelling Bee, Geography Bee and more. Piedmont athletics has a rich history of producing highly successful student-athletes. In addition to winning multiple championships, our scholar-athletes are recognized yearly for their sportsmanship and academic performances.

We are very proud of all of our accomplishments and awards, including being named a Blue Ribbon School in 2011. Since then, we have been named one of the first Magnet Certified Demonstration Schools in the country, a Magnet Schools of America School of Excellence, and a North Carolina School to Watch. However, we know awards and honors just tell one part of our story. Piedmont continues to put children and learning first. No matter what changes occur and what the future holds, our school is committed to doing whatever it takes for students to succeed. For our community, success is not defined by test scores or awards, but rather by a desire to be a lifelong learner, who perseveres through challenges and contributes as a global citizen.

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

At Piedmont, we are trailblazers. We often try new programs, systems, and resources if we believe it is best for students. Our staff is chock full of risk-takers, one of the IB learner profiles, who are ready to take on challenges to support our students. Teachers adhere to the North Carolina Standards, while seamlessly blending the IB criteria into each subject. The IB criteria provide students with opportunities to show and apply what they know, find patterns, communicate their learning, and relate it to the real world. Many times this happens through independent or group projects and is shared with their peers via gallery walks, speeches, and/or presentations.

Teachers collaborate in Professional Learning Communities by content area. They also meet in grade-level interdisciplinary teams. In every content area, teachers give a common unit exam and common formatives at the end of each quarter. Together, teachers disaggregate data to compare results and use it to plan spiraling, re-looping, and enrichment. Piedmont's focus is to meet students where they are and help them reach their potential.

Our support team assures that we have a system in place to uncover the root causes of any child's inability to achieve at their expected levels. Teachers share exemplary work products with students and provide them with rubrics prior to beginning projects, as well as scheduled check-ins, to ensure that students clearly understand expectations for high-quality work. We set our students up for success.

Teachers and students are encouraged to be leaders at Piedmont. This takes on many forms. Sometimes, a student thinks we need a new club offered and other times a teacher wants to organize a school-wide program for all to see. At Piedmont, everyone has a place, and if there is not one yet, one will be created.

1b. Reading/English language arts

In addition to implementing the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, our English/Language Arts Department exposes our students to a variety of literature that reinforces the components of the IB Middle Years Program (IBMYP). By analyzing and exploring overarching themes through a global lens, we challenge our students with a mix of academic rigor and personal development, while also instilling a strong sense of global citizenship. We scaffold our instruction across grade levels to model consistency and to build upon mastery. We use novel study in a variety of ways, whether it be by analyzing excerpts to reinforce specific topics for drawing textual parallels, or by using them as the basis for project-based, authentic assessment. It is a tradition at our school to extend our units of study far beyond the confines of the classroom by displaying and presenting work in the hallways, media center, auditorium, and gym. Celebrating student work is the norm at Piedmont and parents and community members are often invited to participate in our gallery walks and showcases of student work.

Greek Day in the 6th grade is the culminating presentation of a unit filled with research and activities that combine both Language Arts and Social Studies. The students not only become the characters they read about, but they also have the opportunity to use their communication skills to teach their classmates. Seventh-grade projects such as the Culture Cluster and This I Believe allow students to look internally and analyze the attributes that make them who they are. Beyond the research that goes along with the assignments, the students also go through the steps of the creative writing process. In 8th grade, the students make speeches on social justice that align with their class novels.

Our English/Language Arts teachers make connections between the classroom and our surrounding community. For a yearly project called the Pigman Mock Trial, our 7th-grade classes read a novel and then turn the story into a real in-class trial. The students are assigned roles such as lawyers, witnesses, reporters, bailiffs, clerks, video technicians, and photographers. Eighth graders who read the book the previous year,

come back and play the role of jurors. Faculty members participate by making guest appearances throughout the trial as well. The classes that win the court case earn a field trip to tour the Mecklenburg County Courthouse where they speak to judges, attorneys, and other courthouse employees. They also have the opportunity to sit in on real court cases. This enriching experience reinforces to the students how classroom assignments and projects directly translate to real-life jobs and careers.

Our use of common assessments ensures equity and consistency amongst all grade-level classes. Through weekly data analysis, our teachers identify growth areas where re-teaching and re-looping are necessary. Our teachers track mastery as a way to ensure that all students are prepared for end of grade testing.

1c. Mathematics

As our mission statement states, "Piedmont exists to inspire in its students a passion for learning" and our math teams do this by making math fun, engaging, and accessible. Students learn by doing, exploring, and even making mistakes, and it is all done in a safe environment created by our teachers. They generate tiered lessons for students to start where they are and push them even further.

Prior to each school year, teachers communicate to students and families the expectations of basic skills needed upon entering the grade to be successful. Rising 6th graders practice their multiplication and division facts from 1-12, rising 7th graders practice operations with fractions, and rising 8th graders learn squares, cubes, and their roots. Our teachers know that when the students put in the time and effort with some of the foundational skills, they are able to dig deeper into other math concepts.

There are plenty of examples of real-world math happening at our school. In 6th grade, students construct an original museum floor plan to show applications of area and perimeter; they design a website to display a restaurant menu from their own culture to practice decimals, percents, tax, and tip; they develop intercultural awareness when they participate in the Culture Meal Project, where they share recipes, altered to feed the whole class, as they study fractions and proportions; they also work in collaborative teams to analyze bacteria in water samples found in Malawi, Africa, where their goal was to prepare a statement, using data, to convince local officials to prevent the use of the unsafe water sources and encourage the use of the new water wells. Our 7th graders analyze and work with actual store receipts to study tax, tip, and percents in a new way; they work in collaborative teams to find common solutions to complex problems and this year explored exponential growth as it related to the coronavirus. In 8th grade, students create a city map using slope and y-intercepts; they use investigative techniques for factoring; and, they even go "old school" at times (vs. online tech) using compasses, rulers, and protractors to do transformations.

Our Math Department is skilled at making math relevant, relatable, and rigorous. As an IBMYP school, math is more than just numbers; it is the meaning behind the numbers. Piedmont students partake in challenging tasks that help them understand and apply what they are learning through many facets. A strength of ours is having students reflect on their answers throughout the learning process, not just at the end. Frequently, students are asked to explain how they know, why they did what they did, or how one answer might impact another part of the problem. Not only are students continuously reflecting on daily work, tests, and projects, but they analyze their own growth multiple times a year on the MAP tests (our universal screener) and set SMART goals to help them improve.

1d. Science

Our science teachers at Piedmont follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study with an emphasis on IB aims and objectives. One thing that is unique to Piedmont regarding science and social studies is the amount of time dedicated to the subject on a daily basis. Many schools in the district and state utilize an alternating day, or even alternating semester, to provide science and social studies instruction. We, however, have a strong group of teachers and highly value the application skills that science provides, so we offer science on a daily basis for the same amount of time as math and language arts.

Regularly, our science teachers utilize labs and projects to teach science concepts to students. For example, in 6th grade, for their unit on the solar system, students participate in a balloon lab. This activity allows

students the opportunity to construct a scale model of the Earth-Moon system, both in terms of planetary sizes and distances. In addition, students make a scale model of Mars and discover how far one might have to travel to visit the most Earth-like planet in our solar system. In 7th grade, while studying weather, students write a speech as if they are a senator of the U.S. in order to share with other senators the reasons certain chemicals are harmful to the ozone layer and to describe how eliminating their use would be beneficial to the environmental health of the world.

In North Carolina, 8th-grade students take an end of grade (EOG) exam which is included in the School Report Card Grade. Our team of 8th-grade teachers is regularly at the top level of performance in our district often with the highest proficiency levels and growth scores for students on the science EOG.

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

The social studies courses at Piedmont aim to incorporate a global perspective for all students. Our goal is to ensure students gain empathy, critical thinking skills, content literacy, and an appreciation for our global society. In 6th grade, teachers prepare the students for more in-depth studies by developing lessons that reinforce concepts and an understanding of history, geography, culture, governments, and economics across the globe. These lessons are designed to incorporate project-based learning, collaborative discovery, and independent learning.

In 7th grade, students work in small groups to inquire, research, and write their own newspapers based on the Arab Spring in the Middle East. Students study the causes, course, and consequences of Nazism, anti-Semitism, and racism in Europe during the 1930s/1940s. This year students tackled a problem-solution activity when they purified dirty water using cotton balls and sand. This activity connected their studies on Sub Saharan Africa to their ELA novel, *A Long Walk to Water*, using this interdisciplinary approach.

The 8th-grade social studies teachers use a variety of digital tools such as Edpuzzle, Flipgrid, Blendspace, Nearpod, Canvas, and Google Classroom, to deliver the material as well as assess it. For example, during the Great Depression unit, students created songs and formed jazz/blues bands, while using digital music or playing authentic instruments, to demonstrate mastery. The Civil Rights Museum Project is showcase-worthy. Students are given a Civil Rights era topic, and in groups, they create a museum display. Students also explore social justice issues throughout US history and create various products to show comprehension.

The curriculum for social studies is scaffolded. Teachers meet frequently in their PLCs to discuss common methods for analyzing political cartoons and strategies for examining and responding to authentic primary and secondary documents, which are commonly used in all three years of study.

1f. For secondary schools:

The curriculum we utilize is grounded in college and career readiness. North Carolina core content standards ensure students are prepared for critical thinking in college and beyond, and the IB learner profile teaches students to be open-minded, caring, balanced, and principled. One key component of the IB curriculum and requirements is a focus on service as action. Each of our students completes service as action hours throughout their 6th grade and 7th grade years with the goal of completing a service project in 8th grade. These projects are created and designed by students around an area they are passionate about or interested in. Some past examples include conducting a community coat drive, developing a website to raise funds for clean environments, and building a community little library.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Piedmont offers the following Encore (elective) classes: band, orchestra, art, drama, career and technical education (CTE), Spanish, Spanish for Native Speakers, French, NCVPS so students can access other languages, health, and physical education. Encore classes are a pivotal part of the IB curriculum. The teachers in our school collaborate to help students have a balanced understanding of their learning. For

example, our World Language teachers help students integrate Spanish or French into their Culture Cluster projects. In Art, students create a village requiring them to investigate the needs of society, thus incorporating Social Studies. They created everything to scale using technical math skills. Additionally, they reflected on their village, which required written and verbal skills that connect to ELA class. Our Encore teachers complement the core curriculum, enriching the students' overall academic experience.

Our Encore teachers also reach out to the community to celebrate their fields. We have Cultural Night every year where students are able to celebrate cultures from around the world through dance, games, presentations, food, and families. Students receive a "passport" and "visit" different countries. They write a reflection, which gives them credit in their World Language class. We have PRISM where our drama students present vignettes and monologues, our band and orchestra perform, and our art students display their work in a gallery. Our Encore teachers work hard to make clear the real-world implications of their coursework.

Health/wellness is also a major goal for all of our students. Each student participates in thirty minutes of healthy exercise on a daily basis during "Healthy Kids" time. Teachers monitor the activities and use this time to build relationships with their students. All students participate in health/PE classes and are taught strategies to monitor their own fitness levels.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Students who are performing below grade level are supported by our staff in many ways. Throughout the summer before school starts, Piedmont staff review any and all data points about each of the incoming students to determine what needs there may be. Students are then placed into core courses and academic enrichment blocks that best suit their needs based on the data that is available through prior testing, information from last year's classroom teachers, and any information provided by families.

Once the school year and instruction begins, struggling students are identified by their teachers through data obtained from not only classroom assessments, but also from district and state-wide common assessments such as MAP (Measures of Academic Progress). These students' names are brought to the attention of grade-level administrators and counselors during weekly team meetings. Teachers begin by scheduling tutoring sessions before, during, or after school. We offer extended day opportunities for the students who have transportation, as well as Study Lab, Media Center time, and 6th block remediation for students who can only get extra help during school hours. When further intervention is necessary, our counselors and facilitators begin weekly check-ins with the students in an attempt to provide them with one-on-one support outside of the classroom. We also schedule roundtable meetings and parent conferences to collaborate on ways to identify the core reasons why the students are not meeting expectations. Finally, students may be referred to MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) for further interventions.

3b. Students performing above grade level

At Piedmont, we strive to create true learning opportunities for all of our students. Oftentimes the most gifted students are overlooked and expected to carry the weight of the students who struggle academically. Our TD (Talent Development) Committee works to ensure that our high flyers are challenged above and beyond their normal daily assignments. We send out quarterly newsletters to all of the families of TD students updating them on ways our teachers enhance their lessons with rigor. Students exercise their "choice and voice" when selecting academic activities that complement their individual learning styles. By demonstrating mastery on pre-tests, students are able to compact out of units. When students compact out, they have the ability to go to our Innovation Lab, where they are supported by a staff member as they work independently or collaboratively with other students to expand their learning. We offer a variety of clubs and groups for students who perform above grade level.

In 8th grade, we have a Leadership Club. The students are selected based on recommendations made by the 7th-grade teachers, counselors, and administrators. The students must have high GPA's, excellent behavior

and have demonstrated the potential to be future leaders. Once in the Leadership Club, the students listen to guest speakers, complete research projects, go on college tours and participate in activities that guide them to be agents of change. Some of our high achieving students are selected to travel off-campus every week to tutor students at a neighborhood elementary school. In addition, we have students who take Math I/II. These students earn two high school credits with the successful completion of each semester-long course. At Piedmont, we have found many ways to challenge our high performing students and maximize their talents and interests.

3c. Special education

In order to support our special education students, we have one full-time EC (exceptional children's) teacher and one full-time EC assistant. The ultimate goal is to provide equal opportunity for full participation in the curriculum. Together, the EC team supports students and their individual needs through inclusion math and reading classes. These students are supported with a small group learning lab each day, which targets individual student needs.

Depending on the needs of our EC students, the EC teacher and assistant collaborate with the general education teachers to utilize the following strategies: creating mixed ability grouping within the inclusion classes, using guided study groups for unit tests, incorporating behavioral management skills, social skills, and conflict resolution.

The EC staff, school counselors, administrators, general education teachers, and additional service providers work jointly to execute and support the special education plan. In addition, to best support our students, our team has developed strong relationships with families through consistent communication. The team routinely assesses students' strengths to foster confidence and encourage growth, while specialized instruction is designed to identify each student's unique challenges.

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

This school year we have 15 ELL students (11 in 6th grade, two in 7th grade, and two in 8th grade) which represents 1.4% of our overall student population of 1,098. Four of our ELL students are currently on the A/B honor roll. To support our ELL learners, we have a 0.1 teaching position which is often in transition. To ensure students' success, our classroom teachers modify lessons and offer additional support. We utilize specific services that include but are not limited to: support and enrichment classes, collaboration with content teachers, small groups, peer tutoring, and flexible grouping. We have a daily 6th block reading remediation class, offer extended day support in reading before school once a week, and incorporate targeted instructional amplifications/accommodations.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Piedmont believes wholeheartedly in developing students both socially and academically. One main method of achieving this goal is our use of a homebase teacher for our students to start and end their days within an effort to maintain consistency and help build relationships. In addition, we utilize an advisory program that is led by the school counselors and in which all teachers, and support staff, participate. The advisory group is facilitated by the homebase teacher. Counselors create lessons based on essential standards for counseling and student needs (as determined by needs assessment inventories and teacher/student/parent input). Recently, lessons have been included on bullying prevention, goal setting, college planning, and stress management. Advisory groups meet monthly on an altered bell schedule.

Student instruction is not confined to the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to expose students to experiences outside of the traditional setting. Field trips, including trips to the Schiele Museum, the Outer Banks, Washington, D.C., Asheville, and local Charlotte businesses and landmarks, are common at all grade levels. Teachers utilize Piedmont's entire campus to expand their instruction and keep students engaged. The courtyard is an outdoor, open area, maintained by students, which is often used for authentic instruction including poetry slams, gardening, celebrations, chalk drawings in art class, silent reading, and club day activities. The front of the school is used similarly due to the green space it provides. Our track is not just used for athletics, but also for math activities, science labs, and more. Piedmont's community garden space has picnic tables and shaded areas perfect for outdoor learning.

To help maintain student engagement, we ensure students are appropriately scheduled and all classes at Piedmont are taught at a high level of academic rigor, and students are held to high standards. Our students are grouped into their homebases based on testing data, teacher input, anecdotal data on classroom relationships, and classroom grades. Teachers plan together in their PLCs in order to ensure that appropriate and challenging instruction is provided to all students. Although students are scheduled into a certain homebase, schedules are flexible, and students are frequently moved based on input from students, teachers, parents, counselors, and administration to be sure students are placed in a classroom where they will be successful. Students can, and do, receive individualized schedules as needed. For example, some students may be in enrichment reading during 6th block or pulled out of math class during their regular block for extension activities. Exceptional Children (EC) students, Academically Gifted (AG) students, and English Language Learners (ELLs) are heterogeneously grouped to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities at Piedmont. All teachers teach a variety of levels and work together in PLCs to create common lessons and assessments to guarantee that no matter which teacher a student has - they receive quality, equal instruction across the board.

For each student, their team consists of each of their core teachers, encore teachers, a school counselor, an administrator, and their family members. Parent conferences involve all team members in order to provide multiple perspectives and support for each student. In order to provide support for each student, we provide many times during the day and throughout the year where homebase teachers are accessible to their students. Students are allowed to report to homebase thirty minutes before the school day starts and teachers use that homebase time to get to know their students on an individual level. They also end each day with those students as another way to keep in contact, learn about them, and assist them as needed. Advisory classes are run through homebase as well, providing yet another opportunity for the teacher and student connections to happen. All of this allows the homebase teacher to be the number one advocate for their group of students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family and community partnerships are highly valued as they offer opportunities for further development of our students. Some partnerships include Trio, who works with students intending to head to college but in need of extra support, Clean Air Carolina (CAC) who works with our science department and IB Coordinator to provide education on local laws and policies regarding air quality, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, who sends multiple student teachers to our school and offers field trips and

other opportunities for our students.

Sixth and seventh graders are required to complete Service As Action hours and eighth-graders develop and present a Community Project. Our students work with organizations such as Trees Charlotte to improve our tree canopy and our Belmont Community Neighbors for local food drives and street cleanups. Students, parents, and teachers help to maintain a campus community garden. The harvests from the garden help to support the Meals on Wheels program in our city. The Open Streets Program in which our students participate, adds art to our neighborhoods. Other community agency partners include the Humane Society, local food banks, and many others.

We work closely with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and host several student teachers each year. Our Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) sends weekly newsletters, holds monthly meetings, and organizes socials for the staff and parents to collaborate on school-wide decisions. We utilize the REMIND app, and grade level emails to send announcements to students and families about upcoming community events and opportunities for parents and families to support the school. We employ a calling system (Blackboard Connect) for weekly communication between school and home, a data system (PowerSchool) for parents to have immediate access to the teacher's grade book for monitoring progress, and teacher webpages to provide direct communication regarding homework, projects, rubrics, study tips and links to on-line resources. Involving parents creates a strong learning link and pathway to success.

Our Hispanic population is steadily growing. We have staff members that speak fluent Spanish and are available for phone calls and parent meetings. We have worked hard to establish these relationships and are fortunate to have so many organizations willing to partner with us. The strong connection we have with our families and community is essential to our success.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Piedmont has always been known for its excellent professional culture of teaching and learning. Professional development is done formally through faculty meetings, in-service days, summer workshops, and district meetings. Informal professional development is accomplished through teacher use of an extensive PD library and the circulation of relevant and current research. We rely heavily on our PLCs and job-embedded professional development. Teachers, counselors, and administrators frequently participate in district-wide or national training opportunities and then return to share their knowledge with the staff.

We have developed a highly differentiated program of professional development. Teams, grade levels, and departments can request special training and teachers collaborate in small groups based on new research and current trends, or to work together on special topics based on their own individual needs. Teachers are expected to incorporate an integrated, relevant, current lesson design that meets the needs of all learners across all content areas, therefore, professional development continues to evolve and is a necessary component of our teaching and learning. In addition, to further create an environment where teachers feel valued and supported, we conduct monthly PD meetings based on teachers' own identified needs. Teachers and staff design their own courses and work in collaborative groups with others based on their own needs and interests. This past year has included work on National Board certification, supporting gifted learners, culturally responsive teaching practices, and deeper dives into understanding data.

The following practices are thoroughly embedded in our work: Learning Styles (Dunn), Applications of Brain-Based learning theory (Jensen & others), Multiple Intelligences (Gardner & others), Differentiating Instruction (Tomlinson + others), Authentic / Performance Assessment (Wiggins, Burke), Curriculum Mapping (Jacobs), Cooperative Learning (Kagan), Teaching Reading in the Content Areas, International Baccalaureate, Formative and Summative Assessment, Integration of Technology, Global Issues, Professional Learning Communities (Du Four), Framework for Poverty (Payne), and Middle School (Breaking Ranks) Teaching / Learning.

All staff members are continuously seeking ways to grow as professionals in order to best meet the needs of our students. Teachers are further encouraged to take on leadership roles, including serving as team leaders,

department chairs, and mentor teachers to build leadership capacity and foster a culture of distributive leadership.

4. School Leadership:

The principal, who has been at Piedmont for 13 years (six years as assistant principal and seven as principal), has set an expectation for excellence and leads the school in a cycle of continuous improvement. The principal's role is that of an instructional leader and vision keeper who fosters collaboration and empowerment of the staff. The principal leads the school and is supported by an administrative team consisting of two Academic Facilitators, one IB Coordinator, two Assistant Principals, and two Deans of Students. The Academic Facilitators support new teachers, core content areas, and implementation of the IB Program. Each member of the administrative team is assigned a core content area to monitor and support PLCs.

Piedmont is organized by grade levels and content areas. Each grade level, 6th through 8th, consists of two team leaders and an assistant principal/dean, who meet weekly with the principal, to discuss school and grade level concerns. Each content area has a department chair who serves as a member of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The ILT meets monthly to plan and discuss district initiatives, curriculum ideas, assessments, and concerns. The ILT then works to share information with their individual departments in monthly department meetings to ensure district initiatives and professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of various content areas.

Teachers are empowered to be leaders and are encouraged to participate in professional development that is essential and differentiated to their content area, learning needs, and styles. Faculty meetings are used as professional development sessions on such topics as close-reading, cultural proficiency, technology integration, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) practices, personalized learning, and incorporating text-dependent questions and tasks across all content areas. Each year teachers also participate in furthering their work and understanding of International Baccalaureate.

To ensure that policies, programs, planning, and resources focus on improving student achievement within a cycle of continuous improvement, the school year begins with a professional development session, where we examine who we are (staffing), where we are going (student achievement data and goals), and how we will get there (school improvement plan). Throughout the year, the administrative team monitors instruction with daily walk-through observations, plus formal/informal observations. Common assessments, curriculum maps, and IB unit plans are collected. The principal meets with team leaders and counselors bi-weekly, with the administrative team every Monday and with the whole staff two Wednesdays a month for faculty meetings. She leads the staff in an Annual Review in June. At this Review, external and internal trends are noted, all initiatives are put "on the table" and examined. The staff decides, based on evidence, which initiatives to keep, change, or eliminate. Achievement, attendance, discipline, and other pertinent student data are disaggregated, shared, and analyzed. All stakeholders are surveyed and that data tallied, shared, and examined. After discussing every facet of performance, three critical issues are identified by consensus as the greatest needs, and goals are articulated for the next school year.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

"How do I know my students are learning?" That is the main question our teachers, support staff, and administrators ask themselves daily. At Piedmont, we focus on the whole child. Teachers monitor and track student progress, identify areas of need, and provide support, remediation, and enrichment. We are committed to providing the students with the tools they need to be successful. Our staff understands that flexibility is key. In order to provide many of the activities, projects, and experiences for our students, sometimes it means that the schedule needs to change, teachers need to alter their lesson plans, or staff members need to take on an additional task to help a colleague with a vision.

Piedmont's strategy for academic success is to meet the unique needs of each and every child. No matter the need, whether it be in a particular content area, in overall study skills, or in social/emotional/personal matters, there is a staff member, program, or resource that we will put in place to serve that student. In more formal terms, what we do is follow a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). With MTSS, our first goal is to focus on the core. With instruction (regarding both academic and behavioral issues), we attempt to meet the needs of the whole school. This is seen through our academic planning in PLCs and our use of advisory from our counselors. For students in need of more support, we transition to supplemental interventions (which support both students in need of remediation and those in need of enrichment). These interventions include the use of our flex block for instruction, small group counseling work, and behavioral plans implemented often by our grade level administrators and tailored to the needs of each student. Students in need of more targeted support beyond the supplemental level receive intensive interventions which include strategies such as developing additional academic and behavioral check-ins with our counselors and academic facilitators and ultimately support through 504 plans and IEPs.

Beyond the formal process of the MTSS plan we have in place, each day is an opportunity for teachers and staff to build relationships with students to keep a continuous monitoring plan in place. Relationships are built through a variety of classes, clubs, activities, and interactions and continuously evolve. Teachers, who are on the front lines of building these relationships, also work on a daily basis on their own relationships with other staff members, including administrators, secretaries, custodians, counselors, and facilitators, who also step in to support the teachers and offer additional supports and interventions for students on a daily basis. This is a continuous process that begins before a student steps foot on campus as we work to build relationships and learn about our students through the recruitment and registration process. This also doesn't ever end - whether it's summer vacation, 10 years post-graduation from Piedmont, or the middle of the night on a school night, teachers and staff are going to support our students in whatever is needed. We believe with these strong relationships, a lot of hard, dedicated work on the part of our staff, we will meet the needs of our students which will ultimately support their academic success.