

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Gould/Mountain School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 132 Gould Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City N Caldwell State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07006-4212

County Essex County

Telephone (973) 712-4400 Fax (973) 226-5234

Web site/URL http://www.ncboe.org E-mail cchecchetto@ncboe.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Linda Freda E-mail lfreda@ncboe.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name North Caldwell Tel. (973) 712-4400

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. Robert Projansky
(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 0 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. 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	44	58	102
5	46	40	86
6	57	45	102
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	147	143	290

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 3%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	290
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
40 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>3</u> Autism | <u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 12
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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
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 19:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

To encourage the growth and development of each student to his or her full potential within an inclusive and caring school environment that fosters an enthusiastic love of learning, a sense of responsibility, sensitivity and appreciation of differing cultures, and an appreciation of the arts.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Part III – School Summary

Gould School is located in North Caldwell, a small suburban town which encompasses 2.9 square miles and has a population of 6637. North Caldwell is considered the “green jewel” of Essex County. Other than modest commercial activity on the northern and southern ends of town, the Borough’s land is dominated by single family homes. Over the past decade, North Caldwell has been frequently cited by New Jersey Monthly as one of the “Best Towns in New Jersey” and by New Jersey Family Magazine as one of the “Best Towns in New Jersey to Raise a Family”. Additionally, North Caldwell has been named one of the “Best Suburbs in America” by Business Insider. North Caldwell is a close-knit town made up of dedicated community members and many multigenerational families. The residents of North Caldwell take pride in the educational excellence of the school system, which was given an A+ ranking by NICHE in 2019, and maintain an active and involved role in their children’s academic, social, and emotional wellbeing. The academic excellence of the schools is the number one reason given by families as to why they chose to purchase a home in North Caldwell. Parents are very active in the North Caldwell Partnership for Education (NCPE), generously donating time, resources and money to support our schools.

North Caldwell School District is composed of two schools. Grandview School serves students in Grades Pre-K through 3 and Gould School serves students in Grades 4 through 6. Gould School students are housed in two buildings on the same campus. Students in Grades 4 and 5 are housed in the Mountain building and students in Grade 6 are housed in the Gould building. The Gould building is built on the site of the original one room school house and is a beloved and historic landmark for our residents. Gould School is departmentalized in Grades 4 through 6. Departmentalization enables the content area teachers to more effectively differentiate lesson plans to address the range of learning styles and abilities within the classroom setting. Each content area subject has at least one class dedicated to inclusion of classified students. These classes are co-taught by a content area teacher and a special education teacher. The special education teachers are assigned to a specific grade level so they have a deep understanding of grade level curricula and standards, thereby enabling them to differentiate instruction to ensure that all students benefit academically. The special education teacher in the inclusion classroom is also assigned to the pull-out resource section at that grade level to ensure grade level skills and knowledge are woven into the resource center curricula. Common planning time is provided weekly for grade level articulation to ensure consistency in instruction, as well as to monitor individual student academic, social, and emotional progress. Time is also provided for cross-grade level content area teachers to articulate, thereby ensuring a clear scope and sequence of instruction across grade levels. Teachers, administrators, and support staff pride themselves on developing a relationship with each student and sharing their knowledge and experiences to identify each student’s individual pattern of strengths and challenges. One structure that ensures that each student’s needs are fully addressed is the Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS). Teachers refer students to the I&RS committee whenever they have a concern regarding the student’s academic progress or social/emotional adjustment to the school environment. Students referred to the I&RS committee are provided with an Individualized Learning Plan that includes a tiered level of supports. Each student is discussed by the I&RS team every eight weeks and pre and post benchmark assessments are evaluated to determine progress, or lack thereof. Students who are not responding to interventions are referred for a Child Study Team evaluation. A number of supports are available to supplement instruction for students who are judged to be at-risk for academic delays either through the results of standardize testing (NJSLA), curriculum-based assessment (Measurement of Academic Progress), and/or functional classroom assessments. Students are provided with skill targeted interventions in the Academic Tutorial Program. Students also have the ability to attend study hall during lunch/recess for extra help, and/or to attend before or after-School Title 1 tutoring by content area teachers in the student’s specific area of challenge. Other supports and services available to teachers, typically developing peers, and classified students include a BCBA certified behaviorist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist, all of whom will provide consultation to classroom teachers and/or direct services to classified students. The school psychologists and social worker are available to provide counselling to students evidencing emotional and/or social issues.

To increase math confidence, problem-solving perseverance, and critical thinking skills a new initiative,

“Math Mindset Camp”, was recently implemented in Gould School. Students in each grade level homeroom meet once a week to engage in lessons from the Week of Inspirational Math Lessons by Jo Boaler. Each lesson begins with a video that shows students ways to strengthen their brain, reinforcing the idea that there is no such thing as a “math person”. Students engage in tasks that enable them to connect with the material and explore the visual side of math so that they begin to view numbers in an entirely new way. Another initiative of which staff and students are especially proud is the Gould House program. The House program is based on the Gould PRIDE character education initiative. Students are assigned to one of five houses: Positivity, Respect, Integrity, Discipline and Excellence. The houses are composed of students from each of the three grade levels. Students participate in cross-grade activities focusing on character education themes. A commitment to community service is one of the core values instilled into each Gould Student. Student Council members organize and conduct drives to provide food, clothing, and Christmas gifts to the homeless shelter. In conjunction with the North Caldwell Partnership for Education (NCPE), the students also volunteer to participate in a day of community service. This past year they filled over 170 back packs with donated food for the local food pantry and created placemats and hot chocolate packets for senior citizens.

A strong bond among the administrators, faculty, support staff, and parents has provided the foundation to make Gould School a model of educational excellence. Parents, students, teachers, administrators, and support staff work closely together to maintain a positive school climate that supports the academic, social, and emotional growth of all of our students.

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

1a. Overall Approach:

One of our school’s core beliefs is that every student can learn. Staff works closely together to develop and implement programs that encourage and foster the growth and development of each student to his/her full potential. Curriculum is continuously reviewed and revised to ensure that a strong and rigorous educational program is provided that exceeds New Jersey Student Learning Standards through unique, genuine and authentic learning opportunities within the classroom setting. Content area instruction is departmentalized to enable teachers to focus on creating lesson plans that extend and enhance the curriculum, as well as differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Grade level teachers collaborate to ensure that cross content curricular standards are infused into the curriculum.

Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP), a curriculum based assessment which is aligned to New Jersey Student Learning Standards, is administered to all students in the fall of each school year to determine individualized profiles of academic strengths and challenges. MAP testing is administered again in the spring to determine student progress as measured by attainment of their targeted growth rate, as well as in comparison to grade level norms. Formative and summative assessments are used within the classroom to determine student mastery of lesson objectives and unit goals. Programs such as Study Island, Think Cerca, IXL, MobyMax, Sadlier and Membean are used to provide additional data on individual skill attainment which enables teachers to differentiate and individualize instruction.

To ensure this level of high quality instruction, North Caldwell recruits and employs highly qualified, highly skilled professionals who demonstrate the ability to work together as a team to promote high student achievement and growth in their students. Gould School staff maintains current pedagogical skills through ongoing professional development opportunities including long-term in-service training and short term outsourced workshops. To ensure that research-based best practices are infused into classroom instruction, ongoing professional development is offered through Conquer Math and i-STEM education to develop teachers’ foundational knowledge and repertoire of skills and strategies in the areas of math, science, and technology. Additionally, the District has partnered with Fairleigh Dickinson University to provide graduate level classes in multisensory reading instruction leading to IMSLEC certification as a Teacher of Dyslexia.

1b. Reading/English language arts

The core of our standards-based reading program is the development of accurate and fluid decoding and comprehension skills, thereby enabling students to become independent readers capable of handling more rigorous and challenging text. Standards are continuously taught and reinforced through mini-lessons, whole group instruction, read-alouds, guided reading, and independent reading. Comprehension skills are systematically taught and differentiated based on functional data derived from skill practice using a variety of short-story, poetry, and novel selections, as well as student response to skill practice activities using programs such as Study Island, Sadlier, and Membean Vocabulary. Anthologies are used to explore high-interest topics and units, as well as to review and reinforce key skills. Primary and secondary sources are used to ensure that students are able to critically examine information that is being presented in various forms. Guided, small group, and independent reading allow students to progress at their own pace. Achieve 3000 and ThinkCERCA offer on-line stories and articles with critical writing and vocabulary support that not only allow teachers to focus on key concepts and topics of interest, but are also able to be differentiated to the student’s Lexile level. An overarching philosophy at Gould School is that every teacher is a reading teacher regardless of the subject area he or she is teaching. Therefore, a focus on text structures, text features, and vocabulary is woven into a cross curricular approach to ensure that students are able to comprehend grade level narrative and expository text, thereby ensuring that they are developing their ability to critically analyze and comprehend information in all subject areas and are developing the skills needed to

be college and career ready. As the writing and reading programs are closely aligned in Gould School, opportunities are provided for students to critically read and analyze a selection in their reading class and then create a formal presentation based on this reading in Language Arts. In Grades 4-6, any student who is not reading on grade level due to difficulty accurately and fluently decoding text are provided with 1:1 multisensory reading instruction two times per week by an IMSLEC certified Teacher of Dyslexia.

In Language Arts, Empowering Writers is used to develop the foundational skills necessary to become exceptional writers. Students also use mentor texts from authentic literature to study writing styles and to gather evidence to support their writing. Critical thinking and writing are taught through traditional think alouds, modeling, small and whole-group activities, and individual writing or presentations. Extensive and consistent unit studies provide writing instruction that will enable students to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understandings, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. Technology, such as Google Classroom and Docs, is used to help students plan, work in groups, confer, share, and edit stories and essays. Students use carefully designed checklists which are differentiated based on student ability and designed to provide step-by-step guidance during the early writing process. Additionally, the checklists enable the students to engage in successful writing experiences, thereby developing the ability to independently express their thoughts and opinions in written form. Instruction in grammar, mechanics, and spelling is embedded into the units of study which include the following writing experiences: argumentative, persuasive, informative/explanatory, narratives, literary analysis tasks, and research simulation tasks.

Students receive forty minutes of reading instruction and forty minutes of language arts instruction daily.

1c. Mathematics

Our math curriculum is aligned with New Jersey Student Learning Standards. The curriculum is rigorous and emphasizes depth of understanding of concepts and holds students accountable for their mathematical perseverance, problem solving skills, and ability to solve problems with multiple solutions. Everyday Math is used in Grades 4 and 5 and Connected Math is used in Grade 6 as the primary standards-based instructional tools. In addition, teachers supplement with IXL and MobyMax for additional on-line review and reinforcement of concepts and skills. Students are introduced to math through a positive mathematical “growth” mindset which encourages students to make mathematical mistakes, to struggle, and to attempt to solve real life mathematical problems multiple times and in multiple ways. Financial skills and consumer topics are integrated within the curriculum so that students are able to connect the concepts and skills being taught to everyday and future life experiences. Students are taught that a “good” math student is one who will try, think, analyze, and attempt different solutions and strategies. Students are given complex and engaging problems in class and work cooperatively and collaboratively to solve these problems either in whole group, small group, or partner settings. Multisensory instruction is woven into the curriculum through the use of songs, videos, and manipulatives. Hands-on activities and exploration are also used to enable students to create their own understanding of the concepts being presented. Students are provided with opportunities to create their own learning, as well as opportunities for movement in the classroom to maximize student engagement. Lesson activities are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. For example, more complex problems are given to students who are ready for a challenge, while small group instruction is provided to students who may require additional support. Assessments are administered throughout a unit of study in addition to weekly “problems of the week” which focus on the current unit of study. A cross curricular approach is used in math as art, science, technology, and literature are integrated into the math curriculum. Close reading strategies, as well as grammar and sentence structure taught in ELA are used and reinforced when students are analyzing and writing justification for word problems. Science, math, and technology are intertwined in the STEM program. For the past four years, teachers have been provided with ongoing professional development provided by Conquer Math to enhance and extend their knowledge base, as well as their repertoire of skills and strategies, thereby enabling them to more effectively develop, differentiate, and implement units of study in math. Students are provided with forty minutes of math instruction daily. In addition, homeroom periods are also used to review, reinforce, or extend a math lesson.

1d. Science

The Science curriculum is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Students engage in hands-on, inquiry based activities as they apply the 3-Dimensions of Science: engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts. Students are exposed to physical, life, and earth science studies with an emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) design and engineering practices. STEM activities/projects are woven into the curriculum to provide interactive, inquiry based, hands-on learning which require the students to apply knowledge from multiple subject areas to local and global problems. On a daily basis, students are engaged in a variety of activities and assignments that require scientific inquiry such as engineering design challenges and scientific questioning. Engineering design challenges allow students to use all the steps in the design process to find solutions to real life problems. Students are provided with the opportunity to discuss, debate, design/create, analyze, and redesign in small group settings. Students confirm or revise their work based on data collected during the testing/experimental phase. This process enables students to become more independent in their learning, which ultimately leads to greater understanding and comprehension. Pearson's Interactive Science Program and Pearson's Realize are used as the instructional tools within the classroom. Additionally, a number of on-line programs and videos are used to enhance and extend the curriculum including Prodigy, Legends of Learning, Study Island, Newsela, BrainPOP, and the National Geographic Explorer Magazine. Gould School has a 1:1 Chrome book initiative; therefore, students are able to use research simulation apps to study various topics. For example, students learn how gravity affects objects as they try to get a spaceship to its destination in the Gravity Launch app. A cross-curricular approach is infused into the Science curriculum with an emphasis placed on development of critical reading skills/strategies when engaging with expository text, the use of mathematics during science labs/activities, and the ability to effectively present information in written form. Students are evaluated through class participation, unit tests, and projects. Students receive forty minutes of Science instruction daily.

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

Social Studies instruction has been designed with respect to the expectations and standards set forth in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Students receive forty minutes of Social Studies instruction daily. The Social Studies curriculum has been designed to prepare our students to become active, responsible citizens in a democratic society, as well as citizens of an increasingly interdependent global community. The curriculum offers courses of study and experiences that foster a sense of social responsibility and the geographic and historical perspective necessary for responsible citizenship. The curriculum seeks to help students develop an appreciation for the values and processes of our own democratic political system, as well as to develop an understanding and acceptance of the different perspectives that have created systems other than our own. The curriculum fosters the growth of students' knowledge, skills, and ability to think analytically. A cross-curricular approach is infused into instruction. Strategies for reading expository texts are woven into the curriculum. Students are taught to identify text structure to assist them to more accurately organize and comprehend the information being presented, as well as the importance of text features. Students use primary sources and document-based questions to analyze multiple accounts of the same topic and to integrate information from several texts on the same topic. Students research topics on the internet to supplement material presented in class. Field trips to places such as the "Tenement Museum", "Ellis Island" and "Washington Crossing State Park" complement and expand the curriculum. Guest speakers are also used to enhance and extend the curriculum. Student knowledge is assessed through class participation, lesson activities, unit tests, and research projects. For example, one popular project involves students researching a specific Native American culture and then building a model of a Native American village to demonstrate their understanding of their tribe's way of life.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Gould School provides a comprehensive program of special area classes including art, music, physical education, technology, world language, and library. Curricula is aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) and student outcomes are assessed using standards-based indicators. All curriculum is evaluated on a five year cycle to ensure compliance with NJSLS, as well as to review all instructional approaches, unit goals, essential questions, and instructional materials and resources.

Art classes are designed to expose and involve students in a wide variety of media and techniques to foster a greater understanding of what art is and how diverse it can be. The curriculum utilizes a system of art history, criticism, production, and reflection. Students are encouraged to develop their aesthetic and creative abilities through various artistic learning opportunities. Art is infused into the content areas as the art teacher works closely with the content area teachers to develop art activities that will deepen and support the student's understanding of challenging academic concepts. Examples include fraction robots, symmetrical monsters, and paper plate fractions in math. In reading, students created special masks to enhance their understanding of the book "Wonder" and in Social Studies students created sculptures of historical figures. In technology, students created an animated Claymation movie. Every spring, students participate in a school-wide art show in which they are able to display their artistic creations. All students attend art class for forty minutes per week. In addition, they also have the option to attend "open art" which is supervised by the art teacher during their recess period.

Visual and Performing Arts are promoted and encouraged in Gould School, as participation in these programs has been linked to positive student outcomes, particularly motivation and perseverance in the classroom and improved performance in reading and math. The music curriculum focuses on music appreciation, music history, and musical literacy. Students attend music class for forty minutes per week. In addition, students are provided with the opportunity to participate in chorus which meets twice a week before school. Currently, thirty percent of our students participate in chorus. The success of the vocal music program is reflected in the fact that, over the past few years, many of our students have been selected to perform in the New Jersey All State Elementary Honor Choir. Members of the chorus perform for the community, parents, and students during the winter and spring concerts. Additionally, recognizing the importance of performing, students also perform at community events such as the senior citizen luncheon and at town hall ceremonies such as Veteran's Day and 9-11.

Instrumental music is available to all students. Students are provided with the opportunity to play a string instrument in Grade 3. Students in Grades 4 – 6 may remain with a string instrument or choose a band instrument. Instrumental music students attend a small group lesson once a week for forty minutes. Students can elect to participate in band or orchestra and these ensembles meet once a week before school to rehearse together. Students perform for students and parents at the fall and spring concerts. The students also perform in a collaborative performance with members of the band and orchestra from surrounding schools during Buddy Day at the regional high school. Students in Instrumental Music learn about song structure, scales, and rhythms. All instrumental students have opportunities to perform on their instrument with the aid of Smart Music computer software on the SmartBoard. This software helps students to identify their areas of difficulty as they play along with professional recording of each of their ensemble songs. Students are evaluated through performance assessments.

The Physical Education and Health curriculum is designed to promote healthy choices and an active lifestyle. The ability to make healthy choices related to exercise, nutrition, and wellness are the overarching goals of the Physical Education and Health program. The content of the curriculum focuses on team, individual, and cooperative activities, as well as fitness skills and movement education. The North Caldwell Partnership for Education holds a Health and Fitness day in the fall where students sample a variety of healthy foods and vegetables, as well as engage in a number of physical activities such as mindfulness activities, relaxation techniques, yoga, and karate. To promote community service, the Physical Education department holds an annual "Turkey Trot" in November in conjunction with the one mile fitness run. Parents and staff donate turkeys and canned goods for the local food pantry that are distributed to needy families on Thanksgiving.

The World Language program is aligned with NJSL and immerses students in the Spanish culture and language. The goal of the World Language program is for students to become independent users of Spanish who are able to communicate effectively. Class activities and authentic materials are used to help build competency in each of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, students gain an appreciation for other cultures through music, dancing, and art. Students are assessed through class projects, oral presentation, and quizzes. Formative online assessments are also used such as quizlet, google forms, and duolingo. Students attend one forty minute World Language class per week.

The overarching goal of the library/media center is to be a place where students and teachers can, with the guidance of the library/media specialist, access information and pursue ideas. Our library/media program is unique in the fact that we have a librarian and a technology teacher. In addition to two instructors, each program is housed in a separate space which allows the students time during library to develop a love for reading. The sequentially developed library/media curriculum is aligned with New Jersey Student Learning Standards and includes the following units of study: literature enrichment, library skills, multimedia technology and print information retrieval. Students are also taught all aspects of conducting and documenting research projects. Students, faculty, and staff have continual access to the library/media specialist and the library's resources. Students attend library once a week for forty minutes.

The technology curriculum is designed to foster critical thinking, communication, and collaboration while allowing students to express creativity and innovation using digital tools. Even though technology is integrated into all subject areas, students still have the opportunity to work in the technology lab once a week for forty minutes. In technology, students are exposed to the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards as well as digital citizenship skills. A goal of the technology curriculum is to foster cross-curricular learning through the use of Project-Based Learning (PBL) and the Social Learning Theory. For example, in conjunction with the STEM consultant, a design process was developed and woven into an authentic group coding project which required the students to design, build, and code a snow plow through the streets of an imaginary city. Gould School has a one-to-one laptop initiative; therefore, each student has access to their own computer throughout the school year. Each classroom is equipped with a Smartboard and document camera for instruction. Additionally, each classroom is equipped with a Redcat system to improve the signal to noise ratio within the classroom so that students with auditory processing and/or attentional deficits are able to focus on the information/concepts being presented in class.

Gould School enjoys a close relationship with our parents and the surrounding community. The North Caldwell Partnership for Education (NCPE) runs a robust afterschool enrichment program which provides students with access to programs such "CEO In Training" where students learn the basics of starting a business, "Art Studio" where students focus on skills and techniques to draw like a professional artist, "Speed and Agility" designed to teach students how to run faster and become more agile, flexible, and strong, and "Challenger" where students use creative thinking and problem solving to work through fun, yet challenging language arts and mathematics lessons. Students are also able to participate in the Gould Play culminating in a weekend performance for all members of the community. The NCPE also provides the funds to support programs that provide teachers with the skills and techniques to support and enhance each student's social and emotional growth. This year, the NCPE contracted with Rachel Simmons who presented information related to social media and bullying to students, staff, and parents.

Gould School has partnered with the North Caldwell Police Department to implement the Law Enforcement Against Drugs (LEAD) program in the school. LEAD is a proven and effective program designed to deter youth from drug use, drug related crimes, and bullying and violence. Lessons focus on promoting positive, pro-social attitudes and behaviors, while fostering healthy relationships, resistance to substance abuse, techniques for handling conflict, and resistance to negative peer pressure and influence. The following skills and traits are targeted: goal setting, decision making, effective communication, anger management, media literacy, conflict resolution, social and emotional competency, and pro-social bonding.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Gould School monitors the progress of each student throughout the year to ensure that he/she is evidencing mastery of grade level concepts and standards. Data from standardized state testing (NJSLA), Measurement of Academic Progress, and skill targeted on-line programs such as Study Island, Think Cerca, IXL, Moby Max, Sadlier and Membean Vocabulary are used to identify students who are at-risk for academic failure, as well as to provide a profile of each student's specific areas of strengths and challenges. Students who are demonstrating delays in skill acquisition are referred to the Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS) committee so that an individualized learning plan can be developed. Both standardized and functional data is used by the I&RS committee to develop individualized goals that address a student's area(s) of challenge, as well as accommodations and modifications within the classroom setting that will assist teachers to further differentiate instruction for this student. A range of programs and services are available to ensure that all students progress academically and demonstrate mastery of content area standards. Students determined to be at-risk for academic failure are provided with basic skills instruction in a small group or one-to-one setting in the Academic Tutorial Program (ATP). The intensity and duration of ATP is determined based on the student's response to previous interventions, as well as by the amount of delay that the student is evidencing in relationship to grade level standards. Students are also provided with before and/or after school Title I tutoring by a teacher certified in the area of the student's academic delays. Additionally, students are able to attend study hall during their recess period to access assistance with homework assignments and/or to have previously taught concepts/information retaught, reviewed, and reinforced by a faculty member. For students who have behavioral or emotional needs, specialists are available to consult with grade level teams and to provide direct services in the form of behavioral plans, accommodations/modifications to the learning environment, social skills training, and counseling.

3b. Students performing above grade level

The mission of Gould School's gifted and talented program is to challenge each student to reach his/her potential, to prepare each student to succeed in society, and to provide educational excellence through instruction that establishes high expectations for all students while recognizing the unique needs of each learner. To meet the needs of all students, the Renzulli Schoolwide Enrichment Model has been adopted. This model provides opportunities to promote challenging learning for all students through the infusion of high-end learning into the total school program. Enrichment opportunities that focus upon critical and creative problem solving are available to all students. Students engage in collaborative, problem-based learning across the curriculum. When developing lesson plans, teachers consider the content, process, product, and learning environment to ensure that each lesson is differentiated to meet the unique needs of all students including those students who are performing above grade level. Tiered activities and student-centered learning within the classrooms enable students who are performing above grade level to be challenged academically. Programs such as Math Mindset Camp, project-based STEM activities, 3-D coding, and Mock Trial enhance and extend the curriculum for students who are performing above grade level. Additionally, participation in the following programs/activities also addresses the needs of gifted and talented students: Spanish, Instrumental Music, Vocal Music, Art Renaissance, Chorus, Honor Choir, and Technology Instruction that infuses engineering, science, and math.

3c. Special education

Students who evidence delays in academic progress within the classroom setting and/or who are not responding to interventions provided within the general education program are referred to the Child Study Team for evaluation. A team approach is used to analyze the results of evaluation to determine each student's individual profile of strengths and challenges. Data obtained from the evaluation process is used to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that identifies goals and objectives, modifications, accommodations, and supports that will enable the student to benefit from grade level instruction. To address the needs of classified students, a wide range of programs and services are provided. Inclusion classes taught by highly qualified content area teachers and special education teachers are provided at each grade level in all subject areas. Additionally, the special education grade level inclusion teacher also teaches that subject area in the resource center as this ensures that the curriculum in the resource center is closely aligned with grade level standards. Students who are evidencing delays accurately and fluently decoding grade level text are provided with multisensory reading interventions by an IMSLEC certified Teacher of Dyslexia in a 1:1 setting. Students who require academic instruction in addition to the instruction that is

provided within In-Class Resource and/or the Resource Center are provided with supplemental 1:1 instruction that further targets that student's specific skill deficits. Related services are provided to students evidencing fine or gross motor delays, behavioral issues, or speech/language delays through the intervention of the occupational therapist, the physical therapist, behaviorist, and/or the speech/language therapist. Emotional counseling is provided by the school psychologist.

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

1. Engaging Students:

Every member of the Gould School community is aware of the impact that a positive school environment has on student learning and achievement, as well as on a student’s social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. Consequently, all faculty and staff work closely together to create an environment where every student feels welcome, safe, and supported. To accomplish this goal, Gould School begins each day with a positive message from the Principal along with a sixth-grade student reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and the Gould School pledge, “Not In My House”. The pledge, written by students as an outgrowth of the Gould Pride program, reinforces our school’s core values and beliefs. The pledge states, “Never will I bully other students, call them hurtful names, or allow other students to be bullied. I will show respect for myself, my school, and for other people. Make every effort to seek the help of an adult when I learn of a friend who needs help. Honor each person I meet, never judge, show support, be honest, and lead by example.”

Gould School is proud of the Gould House program. The House program is based on the Gould PRIDE character education initiative. The five character education houses are: Positivity, Respect, Integrity, Discipline, and Excellence. Each House is comprised of three homerooms, one from each grade level, and each House meets twice a month to participate in activities that focus on character education themes. Throughout the year there are House competition days where Houses compete against each other to earn “bricks” for their Houses. Competitions are community service based, such as raising funds for the Lymphoma and Leukemia Society and to support Pancreatic research, as well as in-school competitions (relay races, tug of wars, escape room activities) to build school spirit and camaraderie among students. Throughout the year, weekly celebrations such as “Sunsational Sixth Graders”, “Fabulous Fifth Graders”, and “Fantastic Fourth Graders” are held to acknowledge, recognize, and celebrate students who evidence traits that are valued within our school community such as readiness to learn, respect for themselves and others, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Additionally, the Board of Education celebrates students for their accomplishments in academics, sports, or the arts at a Board meeting.

Gould School has a very active student council. Two representatives are elected from each homeroom and work closely with cross-grade level peers to plan and run school and community service projects. Student Council holds fundraising events such as “Wrapped in Red” which collects food donations for a local food pantry, “Pennies for Patients” to support Lymphoma/Leukemia Research, and “Stuck for a Buck” which raises money to support Pancreatic Research. Additionally, the student council works closely with the Gould House Program and has assumed leadership roles during “House Days” creating projects such as the Wall of Fame, the PRIDE Banner, and the Gould School pledge.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

“Nurturing cooperative partnerships among home, school, and community that ensure participation in the education of our children” is one of the goals articulated in our District’s mission statement. Based on our belief that engaging our families and community is critical to our success, we actively encourage and support a strong home-school relationship.

Parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer within their child’s classroom as they add a wealth of experience from varied careers, talents, and interests. Parents are invited into the classrooms to share a favorite holiday custom or to volunteer to assist at class parties and at “Gould Fun Day”. Teachers and administrators communicate regularly with families via the parent portal, email, phone, and in person to advise parents of their child’s academic progress and/or his/her social and emotional adjustment to the school environment. Teachers call parents not only to discuss areas of concern, but also to celebrate students who demonstrate a commitment to learning and/or a character trait that is highly valued such as responsibility, fairness, caring, or citizenship.

The North Caldwell Partnership for Education (NCPE) is a very active organization that works closely with our faculty and administration to enhance and extend our educational program. The NCPE serves as the

connective link between teachers, parents, students, and administrators consistently working to foster a sense of community between home and school. Throughout the year, the NCPE holds a number of fundraising events to raise money to support and enrich our schools. Last year, funds were used to purchase computers to support our 1:1 computer initiative in the third grade, to buy iPads for kindergarten and first grade, and to place safety/security film on school windows. Equally as important as fundraising is the concept of “friendraising”. The NCPE holds events throughout the year whose primary purpose is not to generate funds, but instead to create a feeling of camaraderie and community among the parents. The NCPE also provides opportunities for parents to provide practical and relevant ways to teach their children the importance of helping others. Through the NCPE Cares for Community Program, students participate in “Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service” in which they fill backpacks with donated food for a local food pantry and “Jersey Cares Winter Coat Drive” which provides coats to a homeless shelter. The NCPE supports our faculty and staff providing grants to support classroom initiatives, as well as providing a welcome back breakfast at the beginning of the school year and daily gifts and a luncheon during teacher appreciation week.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The faculty and staff of Gould School believes that teaching quality and school leadership are the most important factors in raising student achievement. For teachers and school leaders to be as effective as possible, they need to continually increase their knowledge and skills so that they can implement research-based best practices. Consequently, to ensure that all teachers continue to improve their professional knowledge, competence, repertoire of skills/strategies, and effectiveness they are encouraged and financially supported as they actively pursue professional development opportunities. Gould School believes that professional development is vital to build teacher capacity to ensure that all students are able to derive benefit from the academic program. Over the course of the school year, on-going, infused professional development in STEM and Math is provided, as well as funding for out-of-district workshops, trainings, and conferences. Faculty turn keys information from these workshops or trainings to their colleagues at faculty and grade level team meetings, thereby providing an opportunity for other teachers to glean new ideas and information. Online professional development is provided to teachers that focuses on equipping educators to recognize and address student mental health in the classroom. Teachers are able to complete this professional development online and at their own pace and are able to go back and review each module throughout the school year.

Continuing education opportunities are encouraged and supported financially for teachers to remain current in their given subject area. Funds are available for teachers to enroll in graduate level classes and to earn advanced degrees and teachers who earn advanced degrees are honored at a Board of Education meeting. The District has partnered with Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) to provide graduate level multisensory reading classes culminating in certification as a Teacher of Dyslexia. Funds have been made available to support enrollment in the FDU classes through the IDEA grant.

4. School Leadership:

Gould School is one of two schools in North Caldwell. Our administrative team includes the Superintendent who also functions as the Director of Special Services, the Business Administrator/Board Secretary, and two building-based Principals. The administrative team meets frequently throughout the school year and each member brings a unique set of experiences and skills to the district which allows for focused decision-making. The Administrative team works collaboratively to set short and long term district and school goals based on detailed analysis of data from standardized and criterion based assessments. The administrative team also uses data from standardized testing to identify areas of curricular strengths and challenges. Each member of the administrative team is committed to accomplishing the district’s goal of remaining competitive in our continued quest for academic excellence. One factor that has enabled our district to excel is the consistency and continuity provided by all members of the administrative team. Each member of the team has been with the district for at least six years with the majority employed by the district for over ten years. The retention of our administrative staff has proven to be beneficial to the district as evidenced by the increase in academic performance, level of support provided to all faculty and staff, and the creation of fiscally responsible budgets that provide funds for new programs and initiatives while maintaining the 2%

cap. The consistency in administration has also led to an increase in the level of trust and respect our parents have for our administrators, faculty, and staff.

The building-based principal is viewed as the educational leader of the building and is empowered to make educational decisions based on research-based best practices, data analysis, and input from building-based committees. On a daily basis, the principal does building walkthroughs and drop-ins to informally watch instruction. The trust that the teachers have in the administration to support and assist them is demonstrated by the fact that teachers frequently invite the superintendent and principal to view lessons or to stop in to collaborate on lesson plan development. The building principal encourages teachers to pursue their passions through lifelong learning opportunities that will enhance their professional skills and talents to meet the education, emotional, and social needs of all of our students. The principal empowers teachers to take the lead in researching new programs and/or instructional tools that will provide added benefit and enhance our curriculum. The building principal and teachers also work collaboratively on committees that focus on school crisis management, safety and security, character education, and curriculum improvement. The building principal coordinates the I&RS and the 504 committee which is comprised of the school nurse, school psychologist, and grade level teachers. Together these committees develop individualized learning plans with specific goals and objectives for students at-risk for academic failure to ensure that every student has the support and accommodations necessary to derive benefit from the academic program.

To achieve academic excellence, North Caldwell hires and retains teachers who have proven to be outstanding educators and who are able to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all of our students. To provide support and guidance, faculty in each building are observed by the building-based principal and the superintendent. Additionally, any teacher who is not tenured is observed by both building principals and the superintendent to provide behavior specific feedback designed to help the novice teacher develop and grow in their craft. The low turnover rate and low absentee rate speaks to the climate and culture that the principal has established within the school environment.

The principal, teachers, and staff of Gould School share a common vision of leadership where everyone assumes an integral role in the actualization of our district's mission: That together we create an environment which encourages the growth and development of each student to his or her full potential within a developmentally appropriate environment and that we continually strive for academic excellence.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Students need effective teaching if they are to develop the higher order thinking skills they will need to be career and college ready in the 21st century. Research has shown that effective, research-based professional development can translate into improved student achievement and overall school effectiveness.

“Sophisticated forms of teaching are needed to develop student competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem-solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction. In turn, effective professional development (PD) is needed to help teachers learn and refine the pedagogies required to teach these skills.” (Linda Darling-Hammond) Upon reflection, we believe that our commitment to ongoing, infused professional development that is job-embedded and based on best practices is the foundation for our success. Our school has made a commitment to providing professional development that is directed at improving teachers’ knowledge of the subject matter they are teaching and enhances their understanding of student thinking and learning in that subject matter. Additionally, all professional development is aligned with the curriculum and the teachers’ actual work experiences.

Research has indicated that effective professional development needs to be data driven both to guide improvement and to measure the impact of the professional development on student learning and achievement. Teachers and administrators jointly analyze the data from standardized testing (NJSLA) and curriculum-based measures to determine curriculum strengths and challenges, as well as specific New Jersey Student Learning Standards that are problematic for our students. Once the data is analyzed, a plan of action is created collaboratively by the principal and teachers that aligns professional development with school and teachers’ professional goals. For the past two years, the focus of our professional development has been directed at improving teachers’ knowledge and skills in the areas of math and STEM. Experts in these subject areas were hired to provide professional development that is sustained, rigorous, and embedded within the context of the school. Our school has developed a long term relationship with consultants from Conquer Math and i-STEM Education. Over the course of the school year, teachers attend in-school and out-of-school in-service trainings/workshops to develop and enhance their foundational knowledge and repertoire of strategies, techniques, and skills so that they are able to more effectively differentiate instruction to maximize learning for all students. The consultants provide classroom-based coaching that provides the on-the-job support needed to integrate new ideas, techniques, and strategies into daily practice. The coaches work with teachers to develop lessons and will observe teachers as they implement lessons so that they can reflect on lesson effectiveness.

Teachers are provided with dedicated time to meet as grade level and cross-grade level teams. This provides the structure to allow teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning. By working collaboratively, teachers can create communities that positively change the culture and instructional practices used within a particular subject area. Our school is committed to job-embedded professional development that is provided on a continual basis because we are aware that any significant and sustainable change in practice is an ongoing process.