

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 3445 Long Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Avon State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44011-2233

County Lorain

Telephone (440) 934-3800 Fax (440) 934-3803

Web site/URL https://www.avonlocalschools.org E-mail koehlerc@avoneagles.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\* Mr. Michael Laub Jr. E-mail laubm@avoneagles.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Avon Local Schools Tel. (440) 937-4680

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. John Weigman  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	165	170	335
7	180	178	358
8	194	205	399
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	539	553	1092

\*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
  - 4.5 % Asian
  - 3.2 % Black or African American
  - 7.8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 79.3 % White
  - 5.1 % 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: 5%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	21
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	32
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	53
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	1092
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

JPN, ARA, Mandarin

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

8 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %

Total number students who qualify: 101

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

92 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>18</u> Autism                 | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>20</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>41</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>5</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 22

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	60
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	97%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

The mission of the Avon Middle School is to educate the whole student in an inclusive environment that inspires personal excellence.

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**

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Avon Middle School is a three-year public middle school (grades six through eight) located in Avon, Ohio. With a fluctuating enrollment just under 1,100 students for the 2019-20 school year, Avon Middle is the only middle school that serves this suburban community of 25,000 in the Greater Cleveland Metropolitan west-side area. Approximately 10.9% of Avon Middle's students qualify for free and reduced meals. 1% of Avon Middle's student population is being served by the school's English Learner (EL), which provides students with additional services and interventions to assist them in progressing toward grade-level curricular objectives. The EL program is structured for full inclusion, so only students speaking little or no English receive pull-out instruction.

8.37% Students with Disabilities (SWD) + 11.1% (504) of Avon Middle's student population are part of our special education program, which services qualifying students in the least restrictive environment, including those with only speech-related needs and goals. Resource rooms for self-contained special education classrooms exist for our students who qualify for moderate to intense environments. However, most of our students who qualify for special education are served in our full-inclusion model. With 43.6% of our student population, our gifted and talented students are provided enrichment materials and differentiated instruction to meet their specific educational needs. Moreover, to meet the needs of the gifted and talented students, course offerings are available through honors core courses and multiple elective courses.

Avon Middle supports and maintains a dynamic, student-centered learning environment in which our students are actively engaged learners, working collaboratively in the pursuit of new skills and capabilities. The school strives to empower students to achieve their educational goals, to direct their lives toward personal growth, and to contribute to the community and beyond. Because of the high standards set forth, Avon Middle has received the Momentum Award from 2016 to 2020 and has earned "Excellent" or "Excellent with Distinction" designation on the Ohio Department of Education's annual reporting system since 2005.

The school has an average class size of about 23 students. Over 85% of the 72 full-time, certified members have earned at least a master's degree. Evidence of their commitment is the initiative many staff members take to discover and participate in a variety of college courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences to further develop and expand their pedagogy, which is over and above the professional development opportunities provided by the school district.

In addition to being highly motivated, the Avon Middle staff members are always collaborative, with core subject teachers having daily common planning periods and the staff having three Professional Learning Community meetings per month. In addition, teachers and administrators meet regularly to implement and review Response to Intervention (RtI) processes through child study sessions per grade level in an effort to effectively identify students with learning and behavioral needs. This involves cycles of screening, progress monitoring, and extensions to accommodate those in need of assistance and interventions. The staff supplements the district's curricula with differentiated objectives and tasks designed to make instruction accessible to all.

When Avon Middle became a separate entity from Avon High School in 1998, the school had, as now, the same grade levels (sixth through eighth) with an enrollment of around 330 students. Its small size fostered a close-knit, familial atmosphere, which has continued over the past 22 years as the school has nearly quadrupled its student body. The Avon Middle community is warm and welcoming to new families and staff members. Though school traditions have evolved over time, our commitment to support our families and to foster student success—academically, socially, and emotionally—has not wavered.

Professional development initiatives and programs such as MAX Teaching, Universal Design for Learning, Autism Spectrum, Wilson Reading, Number Worlds, and Leveled Literacy Intervention have equipped and enriched the staff's understanding, skills, and capacities to reach students at all levels of learning. Innovative programs such as Science Detective Lab, Grossology, Poetry Slam, Olympic Day, Outdoor Education field trips, Science Days, and Atmosphere Adventures, along with other activities have brought learning to life

and have encouraged critical thinking skills. Our MDA Shamrock Campaign, Prayers from Maria, Project Caring Tree, Souper Bowl of Caring, Hoops for Hearts, and other Student Council, SADD Club, and Builders Club-led community service projects have encourage students to engage actively and positively with the community and surrounding cities, both during and beyond the school day.

To encourage and develop student leadership, three new initiatives have been implemented this year. The first is Leadership Exploration, a semester elective that students can choose to enhance their leadership abilities and opportunities. The second is Builders Club that works in cooperation with the local Kiwanis Club to edify and equip students in servant leadership. The third is a school-wide initiative that entails implementing Restorative Practices, a social science program that focuses on improving and repairing relationships.

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

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

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

The mission of the school and district is to educate the whole student in an inclusive environment that inspires personal excellence. The faculty and support staff regard and recognize Avon Middle as an institution in which students may achieve mastery of basic skills and acquire basic knowledge necessary to develop a positive self-image and to foster academic, social and personal growth. The school's staff members have dedicated ourselves to identify and meet the diverse needs of all the students so that they may more fully understand their potential and shape their lives both now and in the days to come.

On our last Ohio Department of Education School Report Card, the school earned an A rating. Most importantly, we received an A in all the value-added areas measured. We also increased our Performance Index over the last four years from 103.7 in 2016 to 106.6 in 2019. There has been a steady increase over the past five years in the percentage of students who are scoring with the Advanced and Accelerated levels of achievement. This indicates that teachers are differentiating instruction for all students, including high achievers, to enable them to make progress at an advanced level. Moreover, our subgroups have continuously demonstrated positive trends and increased within the Proficient levels.

Through our curriculum-based measurements and data analysis of previous test results, we can identify students who need intervention and enrichment, in order to provide for them the support they need to reach that goal. The avenue we use to continue to get better at data analysis and curriculum planning is through our Professional Learning Communities (PLC). PLCs meet weekly to analyze data (state and local assessments), map curriculum (including horizontal and vertical alignment), write common assessments, or design tiered lessons in order to meet all learners. Our PLC work has allowed us to be able to push each student to continuously make progress from year to year.

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

The Reading and English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum is rigorous, focusing equally on helping students achieve their highest potential in both reading and writing. Teachers in all three grade levels regularly meet to analyze vertical alignment to district and state standards. Serving every student's individual learning needs is our goal, and our programs range from intervention to enrichment, including ELA elective courses such as Creative Writing, Introduction to Debate, and WonderMedia Storymaker. To enhance reading and writing skills, all ELA classrooms are equipped with Chromebook carts with enough Chromebooks for each student to use.

Our reading curriculum incorporates engaging novel studies as well as relevant non-fiction texts, supplemented and enriched with the use of technology. Our writing curriculum spans from the building blocks of writing and sentence structure to multi-paragraph essay composition as well as creative, narrative writing. In both reading and writing, our curriculum focuses on the acquisition and use of grade-level vocabulary and beyond. Instruction utilizes best practices, and we analyze high-quality data to inform and drive our daily lessons. The use of commonly aligned assessments among the ELA department teachers ensures continuity throughout each student's progression through the middle school.

The curriculum creates a blended learning experience for students. Using an on-line curriculum titled StudySync, students read short stories

are organized into thematic units. In these units, students analyze how the various stories and skills in a unit develop a shared theme. Teachers are then able to use these themes and short stories to shape their novel studies. The program offers various activities for students including (1) "blasts" that connect the stories' topics to current events, (2) video models of peer discussion, (3) "focus" questions to aid in close reading, (4) "think" questions to expand critical thinking, and (5) engaging writing prompts for students to expand

upon their own conclusions.

While the curriculum provides extensive options, teachers individualize the lessons to their student populations. Teachers differentiate content through story selections, question choices, and class activities in order to meet student needs and interests. To provide remediation for students, teachers use skills-based lessons that focus on annotation and close reading, in order to ensure students are comprehending what they read. To provide enrichment, teachers focus lessons on critical thinking, inferencing, and writing responses. The StudySync program is used as a tool in the language arts curriculum to engage students with real-world activities, such as debates, mock trials, and research opportunities.

Students at Avon Middle are actively engaged in novel studies that require deep analysis and provide real-life connections. Students acquire a depth of understanding of the novels, which allows them to engage in meaningful project-based learning and in depth student-led discussions. Through the use of higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, students are stretched to unpack the text as they analyze and evaluate the deeper meanings and complexities in the novel. Using a variety of writing techniques, students hone writing skills as they reflect and connect to the text. As students make these meaningful connections, teachers are able to facilitate interdisciplinary discussions and activities. These rigorous and relevant novel studies empower students to be more civic-minded and career ready.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Avon Middle's mathematics department has multiple tracks of instruction per grade to meet the various needs of all students. Students are placed in various levels of math instruction based on an annual review of data including district assessments, state testing data, and classroom performance and academic accuity. Mathematics course levels include basic, regular, advanced, and accelerated. Students who choose to remain in the advanced or accelerated track at Avon Middle have the ability and opportunity to enroll in Calculus AB and BC in high school.

On a daily basis, students in mathematics use problem solving strategies, questioning, investigating, critical analysis, gathering and constructing evidence, and communicating rigorous arguments to justify their thinking. To support this approach, we have adopted the Core Connections College Preparatory program. Our belief and practice in (1) the Standards for Mathematical Practice, (2) the desire for mathematical maturity, and (3) expertise in every student's mathematical education formulates and guides our shared mathematics pedagogy. To accomplish these goals, teachers and support staff challenge students to engage in daily problem solving and investigation that lead to a deeper conceptual understanding of the underlying mathematics in a very deliberate and purposeful structure.

Students are immersed in a rich learning environment that utilizes both small-group and whole-group instruction. Differentiation is a norm associated with our daily problem-solving sessions developed by our dedicated teachers. Small groups enhance the ability to break-out students with activities that consist of informal observations to gauge and facilitate learning in a stress free environment for our students. Understanding that each classroom carries a depth and breadth of student aptitude and achievement, instructors strive to challenge each student and tailor lessons to each individual student, while exceeding the overarching Common Core Standards of Mathematics. Through subject acceleration, we have been able to serve a larger community of gifted learners who have shown unusually high growth values. For students who require multiple levels of remediation, small group instruction and second service instruction has shown to be positive for their value-added growth.

The mathematics program is strengthened by the use of the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing data throughout the year. In every classroom, teachers constantly progress-monitor students through informal observations during daily small groups. In addition, formal observations are enhanced by NWEA MAP data to make informed decisions about lesson pacing, curricular adjustments, and student placement. MAP and other collected data is continually analyzed by teachers and administrators through Professional Learning Community meetings to drive future instructional decisions.

We provide students with multiple opportunities to utilize technology through the use of classroom Chromebooks and related technologies. Staff and students utilize both web-based Desmos graphing software and traditional graphing calculators on a daily basis to analyze data in their lessons and assignments. Teachers utilize both Promethean and SMART software in their classrooms during all lessons and class activities. The use of these advancing technologies better prepares our students for the next generation skills required to be successful.

#### **1d. Science**

Avon Middle's science department is vertically aligned to cover Ohio's Learning Standards in Science for grade six science through high school physical science. The two levels of science instruction consist of regular (standard) science content per grade level and honors (enriched-advanced or accelerated) science content per grade level. There are six sections of eighth grade Physical Science Honors in which students learn all eighth grade integrated science standards as well as high school physical science standards in a blended learning and accelerated course. Eighth grade students who enroll in Physical Science Honors will have the opportunity to take more advanced and accelerated science classes in high school. Seventh grade honors science provides opportunities for students to explore their standards at a deeper level with more rigor, as well as begin learning content related to eighth grade content.

All courses are integrated science curricula and explore various topics in physical science, earth science, and life science with an emphasis on scientific inquiry and techniques embedded throughout each course. Guided inquiry and exploratory opportunities are integral for every unit in grades six through eight. Moreover, guided, structured and experiential science laboratories are embedded throughout the scope and sequencing of each grade-level course to help students expand their understanding and appreciation of the science curricula.

The ingenuity of the teachers at each grade level creates a classroom environment for students to achieve success and excellence. This is evident based on the achievement of all students, including students with disabilities and those who score in the lowest twentieth percent on the eighth grade state assessment year after year. In addition to core offerings, students have the opportunity to select innovative science electives to advance their knowledge in earth, physical, and life sciences. To enhance science inquiry learning and skills, all science classrooms are being provided with Chromebook carts with enough devices for each student to use.

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

Through social studies and history, we discover the story of who we are and how we reached where we are today. Our goal is to prepare students to continue building on their study skills and knowledge for high school, while building a base to prepare them as citizens in the twenty-first century. Our team of nine teachers utilize teaching and life experiences to help guide students through the past, present, and future. Avon Middle provides opportunities and encourages our students to think critically. Through the use of technology, students can experience the world through multimedia and deepen their understanding of material and concepts. Virtual reality technology goggles offers students a "field trip" to anywhere in the world.

To enhance research skills, all social studies classrooms are equipped with Chromebook carts with enough devices for each student to use. Computers allow instant research to occur during class discussion and to deepen students' understanding of material and concepts. That same technology allows the educators to support and enhance learning. We can analyze assessment data and adjust instruction to meet the individual needs of all our students as well as demonstrate to students how to reflect on their own learning by analyzing their own data.

Through project-based learning, students make personal connections with history, building their knowledge base through real-world application. We are able to connect and reach the community and beyond through correspondence, such as letter writing to our veterans and troops for holidays. Further, students compete in the Veterans of Foreign Wars-sponsored, regional Patriot Pen Essay Contest and conduct various drives for NBRS 2020

food, supplies, gifts, and winter clothing items for the needy in our community as well as for those serving in the United States Armed Forces. We believe that community involvement is a key component in promoting and supporting participation and contribution in our American society.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

The development of globally-aware, well-rounded citizens is a goal of Avon Middle educators. The school offers a wide range of core courses for all students. Special needs students, who require modifications and/or accommodations to curricula and opportunities, are educated in a manner to meet their specific area of need(s). Students who require enrichment and advanced opportunities are afforded classes with either differentiated curricula or honors-track curricula. Honors-level courses are available in all four core courses as well.

Visual art class is required for all sixth graders. All seventh and eighth graders can elect to take any of our four award-winning studio arts electives that provides students opportunities to stretch their art talents and abilities with many advancing to various competitions in the county and winning-top recognition for their presentations. The school also is proud of our award-winning bands and orchestras (graders six through eight) which attend OMEA competitions, Music in the Park (Sandusky), and the Lorain County Solo and Ensemble Contests. In addition to bands, choirs, and orchestras, the music department offers after-school programs such as jazz band, percussion ensemble, handbells choir, strings ensembles, and pops choir. To celebrate both visual and musical performing arts, each year the art and music departments present the Avon Arts and Music Fair Week, which includes school staff and students, along with community leaders and members. The school has offered drama club opportunities for all interested students with professional drama instructors teaching all aspects of live theater.

Physical Education is an important component for a complete education. State standards address the value of participating in regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy level of fitness. All sixth graders participate in physical education, while eighth graders have an opportunity to enroll in physical education and speed/strength readiness (both for high school credit). Health classes are required for students in grades six and seven. Content focuses on nutrition, decision making, goal setting, and maintaining healthy relationships. Vaping, tobacco, drugs, and alcohol prevention are addressed. Eighth graders are exposed to research-based programs: Risky Business (focusing on reducing at-risk behaviors) and Coping with Stress (underscoring anxiety and depression management). Many outside professionals are invited to the health and physical education classes to address topics of their respective area of expertise.

The first year of foreign languages is offered to eighth graders for one full high school credit. These courses include Mandarin Chinese 1, French 1, and Spanish 1. Students are exposed to experiential activities to help them more fully understand the various cultures and factors of countries using these languages.

Sixth graders have In reference to technology, all sixth graders are enrolled in nine weeks of Computer Applications-6 that highlights digital citizenship, general technology skills, and internet safety. All seventh graders experience a semester of Computer Applications-7 that concentrates on email etiquette, data analysis, social media safety, and basic computer programming. Technology course electives offered to all seventh and eighth graders include Tech Robotics Design, Tech Digital Media Art, Tech Animation, Pre-Engineering, Computer Programming. All students have access to our Media Center for books, access to computers for research, and classes on how to research via the internet.

Additional to core course offerings, students who seek opportunities relating to language arts can enroll in the following electives: Introduction to Debate, Creative Writing, and Storymaker. Science electives include Innoventions and Zoology Discovery. Social studies electives offerings are Current Events, Modern Conflicts, Our World: Then and Now, World Geography, and Leadership Exploration. Several courses are offered for earned high school credit and include Physical Science Honors, Honors Geometry, Honors

Algebra 1, Algebra 1, Physical Education A/B, French 1, Spanish 1, and Mandarin Chinese 1.

Avon Middle has hosted events to support our many curricular areas. The district's choral program highlights their various performing groups at an annual event titled Sing Chili! The school has hosted the Northern Ohio Power of the Pen District Competition in which over 26 schools have competed in creative writing. We have hosted the First Lego League Robotics Regional Competition, in which over 24 schools competed; our students earned several first place awards. Further, our school has hosted the annual Education Service Center's Regional 7/8 Spelling Bees, where our students won first place in 2010, 2014, 2015 and 2019 as well as received top ratings during the past fifteen years.

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

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

The school identifies students with gaps in their foundational reading, writing, basic math, and executive functioning skills and supports them daily with a full period of an intervention class that we title WIN (What I Need). WIN is a daily tier two Response to Intervention program.

Student gaps are initially identified in the areas of reading, writing and math through the use of MAP assessments, which is a diagnostic test used to Measure Academic Progress by comparing each student within their grade band to a national sample of students. Our teachers, counselors and administrators gather to discuss the students who assess below the 35th percentile in order to identify which of those students are lacking foundational skills that are negatively impacting their academic performance on grade level material. We also discuss students who experience difficulties accessing the curriculum due to executive functioning needs. When students are identified as having needs, they are included in the WIN intervention course where they receive foundation support in math, reading, writing and/or executive functioning by a combination of general education teachers and intervention specialists.

Students are provided assistance with current content in their areas of difficulty for the second half of each WIN class. In order to measure growth, teachers create measurable goals that are assessed every two weeks to identify growth. Students test out of the intervention when they have reached the identified, measurable benchmarks. WIN's positive impact is carrying over into the various academic settings. This program has proven to increase core academic foundation gaps, to foster student success in the classroom, to improve state and district wide assessment scores, and to improve student confidence in the academic setting.

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

Students who demonstrate academic performance above grade level in the classroom or on nationally normed assessments are placed in honors courses at Avon Middle School. These identified students have a written acceleration plan (WAP) created for teachers to identify goals and to be able to report on those goals throughout the school year. Additionally, parents are included in the writing process of the WAP's. The identification process begins each spring. Students will naturally qualify based on assessment data and classroom performance. Students may also be referred by their classroom teacher.

Instruction will be accelerated above the "normal" curricular expectations for the content at each grade. The teachers need to differentiate and fill curriculum gaps due to possible missed instruction due to the acceleration. In some cases, these courses might have a curriculum that is advanced a full year. Due to MAP assessments, we have been able to monitor these honors and accelerated courses are appropriate for our advanced learners.

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

Avon Middle is composed of students with varying backgrounds and academic ability levels. In order to tailor to the educational performance levels of our nearly 1,100 students, we offer a range of programs and interventions that are data driven and based on state and local assessments. We utilize NWEA MAP scores three times per school year, state AIR scores, and classroom assessments to assist in providing all students

an education that caters to their specific needs.

Students who are identified as requiring specially designed instruction through an Individual Education Plan are provided a case manager who writes their IEP goals, implements interventions during a designated class period each day, assesses and reports data, and works with each student's general education teachers to adapt instruction.

We also identify students who are not on an IEP who struggle in the areas of language arts and/or mathematics through assessment data. Students identified as ten or more percentile points below the median are provided one period of daily intervention in which a general education teacher works with students to improve upon gaps that have been identified within their learning. These gaps are identified through the use of NWEA MAP testing subject breakdown reports and via teacher input. Teachers measure student progress through weekly assessments and report their growth to administrators. After each quarter, the intervention team reviews student achievement to make necessary adjustments. When gaps have been closed (as is seen in consecutive assessments over a five-week period of time), students are moved on from the intervention.

The Intervention Specialists assists teachers in accommodating and modifying materials and assessments to meet the educational needs of all students, not only those who qualify for an IEP. The materials address the state standards and objectives, but do so in varying means based on each student's academic abilities and preferred learning styles. Intervention Specialists also assist in modifying assignments and assessments for students who qualify for modifications to their curriculum.

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

According to the 2019 state report card for Avon Middle School, our population of English Learners (EL) does not qualify as a subgroup. Our Gap Closing Measure for ELA and Math indicates there is no significant difference between the performance of all students in comparison to EL students. Our district EL population has grown steadily over the past three school years, nearly doubling in number, and our goal is to prevent an achievement gap from developing when it does become a subgroup at AMS. We believe in providing EL students with equitable access to the highest quality education that is expected for all of our students.

Our English Learners program is designed in accordance with three governing principles: (1) helping ELs overcome linguistic, cultural and academic difficulties, (2) assuring that all EL students receive equal access to educational opportunities, and (3) continuing to develop ongoing opportunities for collaborative practices between teachers, parents, and administrators to support the unique needs of EL students. This process commences with analysis of various pieces of student academic data. This information guides building leadership teams in making informed decisions about the type of EL services to provide, interventions to be used, accommodations that are necessary for classwork and assessments, and individual class schedules. EL students are placed into specific pathways depending on their academic or social-emotional needs.

Some students, who show data indicative of progress and higher achievement levels, are mainstreamed with differentiated instruction provided in classroom settings as needed. Other EL students require a more specific support structure, such as the assignment of an EL support period in their daily schedule where they are instructed by a TESOL-trained teacher. This support period can be used to provide students with an evidence-based intervention like Achieve 3000 or Leveled Literacy Intervention to meet a student's language deficits in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

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

Avon Middle services all students, including subgroups that have migrant or homeless students. Although we have not had migrant students, we have had homeless students from year to year. Our school abides by the regulations and policies set forth through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. The school has a Homeless Liaison that is trained and experienced in situations that involve students who are known to be or are suspected to be homeless, based upon the criteria that the student is living in housing that is below the minimum standard or lacks secure tenure, and is unable to acquire and maintain regular, safe, secure and adequate housing due to an unsteady or lack of income.

Each year the school and district liaisons attend the regional/state workshop regarding homelessness so that we can better service our students in that particular category. Materials are then shared out to the other building administrators, so that they are current with policies and procedures. Further, posters are placed in each building for those who are seeking help and assistance due to homelessness.

Comprised of our counselors, psychologist, and social worker, our student services team is trained to identify students who may or are homeless and direct them and their families to needed services. In addition, the students are provided materials, meals, and other items necessary for them to access the curricula successfully while obtaining needed assistance through agencies outside the school system. Student well-being is monitored on a weekly bases by the school counselors, and the teachers are apprised of student needs, which are kept confidential for the sake of the student and family. Moreover, homeless students are also encouraged to join and participate in events and activities - whether extracurricular clubs or interscholastic athletics. To engage these disadvantaged students is a priority with Avon Middle.

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

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

High staff and student expectations are articulated and practiced at Avon Middle. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) programming is stressed and supported through our SOAR initiative that entails these primary goals: Strive to Reach Your Potential, Own Your Actions, Achieve Your Goals (Academic & Personal), and Respect Yourself and Others. A rewards ticket system provides recognition for observed random acts of kindness and scholastic improvement.

The school counseling program conducts monthly classroom presentations to all sixth graders, covering various topics such as bullying, managing emotions, career exploration, on-line internet safety, and drug and alcohol use. Counselors meet with all students in grades sixth and seventh to schedule courses for the following school year. Presentations on career exploration (via Naviance) and good decision making are provided to all eighth graders. The school counselors provide peer mediation, academic assistance, parent and teacher support, and community resources to all students when/if needed. Further, school counselors arrange all district and state testing for the entire student body.

To engage the students after school hours, the school has developed numerous clubs and activities including the following: Academic Challenge, Animation Club, Art Clubs, Builders Club, Chess Club, Circuit Strings Ensemble, Culture Club, Drama Club, Jazz Bands, Pops Choir, Power of the Pen, Student Council, SADD Club, Winter Sports Club, Wired Strings Ensemble, Pottery Club, Robotics Club, Student Ambassadors, Technology Club, SAVE Recycle Club, Percussion Ensemble, You Belong, and Yoga Club. In addition, the school offers interscholastic sports and competition in volleyball, softball, track and field, wrestling, cheerleading, cross country, basketball, and football. Over the years several sports programs have won first place in our conference with athletes qualifying for States in cross country, wrestling, and track and field.

To broaden our students' understanding, appreciation, and vision of the world, service and community outreach projects are an integral part of their education. The student body participates in and partners with these programs: Muscular Dystrophy Association, Souper Bowl of Caring, Thanksgiving Food Drive, American Heart Association, Prayers from Maria, Kiwanis Club, VFW Post 7035, Volley for the Cure, Toys for Tots, Autism and Disability Awareness, Project Caring Tree, Boatsie's Boxes, Rotary Club, and Jeans for Troops. Further, the staff and students participate in the annual Special Olympics program and the Veterans Day Breakfast event. Food items are also collected for our local food banks, such as Community Resources Services, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Avon Junior Women's Club.

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

The Avon Middle staff has implemented several strategies to ensure student success by working effectively with our families and community. Teachers work diligently to build strong partnerships between home and school by providing avenues of communication and support necessary to guarantee that each student has the opportunity to reach his/her highest possible level of achievement. Teacher websites provide multiple forms of valuable information for families. Additionally, parents receive regular updates from teachers regarding upcoming assignments, performance and expectations, along with information relating to the progress of their children.

Strong and effective communication is a strength of the school. Teachers have learned to link their websites to the Pearson PowerSchool academic reporting module, which allows parents to do a "one-stop shopping" in terms of checking on each student's academic performance. Report cards are sent home electronically at the end of each marking period from all professional staff working with each child. Included with these reports are detailed updates on academic progress at the interim periods (progress reports).

Avon Middle Boosters members are a valuable, impactful component at our school as well. Not only does the organization publish pertinent and updated information on its website, but also emails information to parents and constituents to keep them knowledgeable of programs, fundraising opportunities, and general

information on supporting the school's needs. The AMS Boosters also provided multiple incentives for academic and scholastic improvement and achievement, and sponsors such programs as random acts of kindness (GOTCHA), Scholastic Book Fair, Students of the Month, honor rolls recognition, and school-wide events. In addition to the Boosters is a cadre of enthusiastic parent volunteers that assist in our concession stand, field days, school assemblies, cook-outs, and yearbook distribution. The AMS Boosters are a vital contributor to our school's overall success. Moreover, parent volunteers can be found supervising groups during our special science days, such as Grossology (Grade 6) and Science Detective Lab (Grade 7).

Each year the school produces and presents a free Parent Seminar Series for the school district. This outreach program entails six to seven parent workshops presented by professionals in their respective fields with the main focus centering on prevention. Topics include principles for effective parenting, helping children deal with stress and anxiety, alcohol and drug prevention, cyber bullying, dangers of vaping, internet safety and awareness, and teaching children and adolescents to develop and maintain healthy relationships. All seminars are made possible by generous grants from the Avon Kiwanis Club and the Avon Schools Educational Endowment Fund.

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

Avon Middle operates as a true Professional Learning Community, with our ultimate goal defined by our mission: to educate the whole student in an inclusive environment that inspires personal excellence. The staff regards and recognizes the school as an institution in which students may achieve mastery of basic skills and acquire basic knowledge necessary to develop a positive self-image and to foster academic, social and personal growth. The staff members dedicate themselves to identify and meet the diverse needs of all the students so that they may more fully understand their potential and help shape their lives both now and in the days to come. To achieve these goals, the staff engages in many in-service days and workshops throughout the school year and summer to increase their knowledge and understanding of many areas of education. Further, the school aligns itself with the Continuous Improvement Plan of the Avon Local School District.

Avon Middle staff engage in bi-monthly meetings conducted by the Professional Learning Community leaders within their grade-level subgroups, as overseen and coordinated by the schools administrators. Avon Middle educators also engaged in grade-level meetings with the district's curriculum director to understand the new standards and make necessary adjustments to improve performance on the school's state report card.

Response to Intervention's value rests in the call to use data-driven decision making to meaningfully identify learning and behavior concerns and issues in an effort to provide all students with the type of instruction that will afford them the best benefit and opportunity for success. Informational sessions regarding RtI have been conducted at both the district and building levels. Further, Avon Middle staff engage in monthly grade-level meetings to review the RtI process and evaluate the progress of student interventions through child study meetings. The sharing of strategies during these collaborative sessions with teachers, counselors, psychologists, support staff, and administrators have proven essential to help student growth.

If a need arises for a specific professional development opportunity, every accommodation is made to ensure that support is provided where needed. The overarching goal of the school's professional development program is to assist our students in achieving academic excellence, so it is critical that all professional development opportunities be congruent with academic standards and/or fall under the range of our CIP. Avon Middle School professional development activities support student learning by providing educators with the necessary tools to support all learners. Just as our mission statement challenges the students to be lifelong learners, the staff is committed to the same endeavor.

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

Avon Middle is a positive, supportive school community where commitment to children, collaboration, and problem-solving are foundational and practiced. The principal and assistant principal believe that having high expectations and empowering students and staff will encourage them to achieve their goals and reach

their optimal potential. The principals collaborate and allow staff members to make decisions and support them with appropriate recognition. They are visible and involved in everyday learning, and provide teachers with materials and practical suggestions to support student achievement. They have an open-door policy that fosters effective and expedient communication. The core leadership team includes the principals, counselors, psychologist, school resource officer, and social worker. However, teachers and support staff are encouraged to be an active part of the building leadership team, which meets monthly for the purposes of prevention, resource analysis, and problem-solving.

The principals attend conferences and workshops to remain current on curriculum, instruction, legal issues, prevention trends, school safety and technology. Their continued professional development enables them to lead by example, and ensure that policies and programs implemented will be exercised correctly and efficiently to benefit all students academically, socially, and emotionally. Supporting this endeavor are the four core values of the school's PBIS model: strive to reach your potential; own your actions, achieve your goals, both academically and personally; and respect yourself and others. In addition, the school abides by and promotes the monthly themes Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets: Commitment to Learning, Decision Making, Constructive Use of Time, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Fairness, Trustworthiness, Positive Identity, Support, Citizenship, and Empowerment.

The administrative practices of grade-level collaboration meetings to review student achievement have facilitated teachers to focus on effective, data-driven instruction. Our school counselors, psychologist, reading specialist, TESOL teacher, and intervention specialists are all involved in our collaborative meetings. These sessions have led to a school-wide understanding of the importance of differentiated core instruction. Additionally, they have aided in identifying social and emotional issues that affect student learning and have enabled us to plan appropriate interventions to address these concerns.

Our principals lead with integrity. They take pride in Avon Middle School being a safe and welcoming learning community. The principals are accessible and equitable, and their strong and effective partnerships with parents, students, and staff are a result of their ability to be active listeners and problem-solvers. Relationships, policies, programs, and resources supported by the school's leadership undoubtedly enhance student growth and achievement.

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

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The school district's Continuous Improvement Plan entails many facets, with most areas focusing on increasing student learning and providing multiple opportunities in and outside the classroom. Although the school has a history of many successes, perhaps the hallmark most instrumental and impactful is the emphasis placed on curriculum and instruction to secure access to excellence in education for all students. This is accomplished through meaningful and professional collaboration of the grade-level core teachers.

For over two decades the school has aligned courses and curricula to state standards while creating master schedules and instructional paradigms to promote and support the best practices. To this end, teachers are assigned to teach courses according to their professional licensure and strengths. Core educators, trained to succeed in advance-level subjects, focus on strategies to meet those students goals and needs. Likewise, core educators, who are trained and have successful experiences in working with students needing co-teaching and interventions, are assigned to those types of sections to meet students needs and goals.

To support and maintain this service model, core subject teachers (per grade level) have common planning and common assessing time built into the master schedule. This structure allows them to meet each day to ensure that their instruction is horizontally aligned in terms of the pacing content and providing rigor in terms of the course's scope and sequence. Moreover, the principals periodically meet with the teachers to gain understanding and provide feedback to these planning sessions. From time to time these meetings implement interdisciplinary methods through collaborating with their colleagues in the other core subjects. For instance, language arts will incorporate elements of the current social studies materials, while social studies teachers work with language arts teachers to support and refine writing skills.

When professional development opportunities arise, our central office and building principals are very supportive in tailoring the workshops, seminars, conferences, and other opportunities with what is needed and required - whether by staff or by standards. In addition, each year the school has selected staff members to attend the Ohio Middle Level Association Conference. This is accomplished on a rotating schedule to allow teachers the experience of attending various workshops and presentations, while reporting back to our school staff what they have learned when they return. As a result of all these measures, our school has continued to be recognized as successful and has received the Ohio Board of Education's highest ratings as a model middle school in the State of Ohio.