

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Southern Delaware School of the Arts
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 27 Hosier Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Selbyville State DE Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19975-9300

County Sussex

Telephone (302) 436-1066 Fax (302) 436-1068

Web site/URL https://sdsa.irsd.net/ E-mail Travis.Bower@irsd.k12.de.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Jay Owens E-mail jack.owens@irsd.k12.de.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Indian River School District Tel. (302) 436-1000

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. Rodney Layfield
(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, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 15 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	18	24	42
1	12	28	40
2	20	23	43
3	22	23	45
4	21	33	54
5	23	34	57
6	19	40	59
7	21	33	54
8	18	38	56
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	174	276	450

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 79 % White
 - 3 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 1%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	466
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

Spanish, Tagalog

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %

Total number students who qualify: 62

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
43 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 3
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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	19
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	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 12:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	96%	95%	95%
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 2020.

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.

The mission of Southern Delaware School of the Arts is to facilitate student learning and achievement through the arts for all grade levels and courses.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Southern Delaware School of the Arts started the 2020-2021 school year as a phased-in hybrid model for our students. Starting with kindergarten and first grade students, in-person instruction began school on September 17th while the remainder of our student body utilized a remote approach to learning. From there, every two weeks additional grade levels were brought into the building until all grade levels through eighth were phased in. Utilizing an A/B cohort model, students who have chosen to attend school in person are in the building two days a week for synchronous learning and three days for asynchronous learning. This approach was used with our entire population for the first marking period. At the start of the second marking period, grades 6th through 8th switch to a model where synchronous learning was occurring on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Cohorts still attend in-person instruction for two out of the four days, but are expected to attend class synchronously through Zoom meetings. Moving forward through the remainder of the year, students that are showing regression or are in need of further support are provided additional small group and individualized support on Wednesdays as part of the scheduled teacher work day, or offered four days of in-person instruction.

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

As a kindergarten through eighth grade magnet school in the state of Delaware, students are chosen to attend utilizing the Delaware school choice application process. Starting in early November, the application

process opens, and students are required to complete the application with their intent to attend Southern Delaware School of the Arts. The application closes in early January, and a lottery is held shortly after. Any available seats are filled and approved of at the Indian River School District school board meeting in February, and students are notified about their status no later than March 1st. They have 10 days to accept the offer, and if not forfeit it to the next available student on the lottery. Utilizing the lottery process described above does not include any form of a portfolio or written application, which allows any student interested in pursuing an arts focused education equal chance of entry into the school.

PART III - SUMMARY

Southern Delaware School of the Arts (SDSA) was established with the idea of promoting student engagement through the arts in all aspects of the school. Starting with the original class of students in 1998, students were engaged through the design process of the school's mission, vision, mascot, and colors. They chose the slogan "Where Imagination Takes Flight" and chose the dragon mascot for its uniqueness and ability to take flight itself. The colors, green and purple, were chosen not just because they are complimentary, but because they closely mirrored the colors of the Indian River School District's two high schools, both of which the school feeds into upon completion of students' eighth-grade year. When the school first opened, the community, staff, and students all worked to remodel a traditional school building to be more arts-centered than typical at the time. Teachers often served in dual capacities, teaching part of the day as a classroom teacher and the other part serving as an arts teacher for the students. Their passion for the arts was what led to their students' success and, ultimately, the school. That passion persists both because of and as evidenced by the significantly few personnel changes throughout the school's existence as well as its pervasive emphasis on inclusion as a microcosm of all the cultures, socioeconomics, and ability levels of the local community, including all levels of students with disabilities and gifted and talented.

As a magnet school in the state of Delaware, any student with a passion for the arts may apply for entry. As a result, the community stretches beyond the district boundaries and includes students from surrounding districts as well. With students representing all of Sussex County, communities range from multi-million-dollar beach homes to Section 8 housing.

Community mindset is ingrained in all activities and provides students with opportunities to serve the community and showcase their talents throughout the year. Students participating in the school's Rock Band participate in local parades and festivals throughout the year. The National Junior Honor Society organizes various outreach events and is a driving force in the canned food drive hosted by local businesses, including Mountaire Farms.

SDSA utilizes an arts integration approach to promote and enhance learning. In core classes, students participate in lessons that are infused with the National and Delaware Core Arts Standards that engage, enrich, incentivize, and inspire students as they dive deep into the content being taught. For example, when learning about proportions and fractions in fifth-grade mathematics, students are exposed to the proportional works of painter Piet Mondrian. Through the lesson, they create their own version of a Mondrian piece, utilizing equivalent fractions, composition, and color to illustrate their understanding.

While all elementary students are exposed to theatre, vocal, dance, visual, and instrumental arts, students enter their fifth-grade year by beginning to establish a focus for the remainder of their time in the school. By the middle of their sixth-grade year, they identify a major and minor that will be their focus for the upcoming year. In addition, middle school students may audition for an arts Flex class, where the elite students in their craft focus additional time. The Flex time built into the schedule also allows students to focus their efforts on some of the fringe aspects of art, including set and costume design, as well as providing time for students to have additional academic support in their core classes as needed.

In the 2018-2019 school year, the faculty organized a Multi-Tier System of Support team to create opportunities to engage and support our students who are struggling with academics, behavior, and/or social-emotional wellness. The intent of the committee was to create resources for teachers to aid in the growth of our students before they begin to struggle academically or behaviorally. Since its conception, the committee has grown to focus on helping with the development of our students' growth through the pandemic by creating outreach opportunities with local organizations and businesses.

Whenever possible, students at SDSA are exposed to outside organizations that support the arts through education. The Freeman Arts Pavilion has a well-established partnership with the school and staff, providing opportunities to bring outside performances and experiences to the students. Yearly, elementary students participate in a series of performances at the Freeman Arts Pavillion, and the organization has also worked to create artist-in-residence opportunities that unite local artists with the school community to create a

centralized message for the school year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the staff's involvement and dedication to all aspects of school function affecting our students. The Instructional Leadership Team tailored the COVID Guidelines to streamline procedures, minimize disruptions and transitions, and maximize instructional time and opportunities for in-person attendance within the parameters outlined by the Delaware Department of Health and our school district. The incidences of small-group and individual check-ins and interventions have risen significantly to flatten the academic and social-emotional curve created by the pandemic. The arts team in particular, with the collaboration and support of academic teachers, support staff, and families, have pushed creativity to the limits to provide inclusive opportunities for all students to participate in performances and presentations. The challenges of fully remote and then remote/hybrid instruction due to COVID-19 have only served to establish and reinforce our school's dedication to building relationships and learning through the arts.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Southern Delaware School of the Arts utilizes a variety of curriculum and resources to maximize the growth and development of our students. Structured around the state standards which cross multiple content areas, teachers prepare students for further academic endeavors through multiple avenues such as high school, college readiness, and/or workplace programs after high school.

The framework for all instructional areas emphasizes content standards, writing standards, and art standards in each unit. From planning the standards-based Unit Essential Question, instruction builds on three to four Lesson Essential Questions, all building to a culminating lesson that brings the unit to a close by addressing the Unit Essential Question and allows students to reflect on the unit and make meaningful connections to their own lives. Throughout the unit, students apply key concepts, vocabulary, and art techniques to express and extend their understanding of the content.

Teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade utilize the Benchmark Advanced® English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum as well as the Bridges® curriculum for mathematics. This year, the district has adopted the Amplify Science® curriculum which is a student-centered technology-enriched program that has a variety of digital resources embedded in the exploration of science through observations and discussions.

Social studies is embedded in the elementary ELA curriculum. As the district works to adopt a standards-aligned curriculum at the secondary level, the middle school teachers work collaboratively with colleagues in the building and district to create high-quality lessons and materials to support students' mastery of the Delaware Social Studies Standards.

When the pandemic closed the building in March of 2020, staff quickly recast their curriculum to become digitally available. Instruction resumed in mid-April for all students and utilized the Zoom® platform for instruction, office hours, and learning opportunities. Resources were posted on learning management systems such as Schoology®, Clever®, and Seesaw® for students to access each week, and paper copies were made available for students who did not have internet access. Age-appropriate schedules were created for all students to ensure that they had time built in for ELA, mathematics, social skills, reading, arts, and social-emotional health.

To prepare for instruction through the 2020-2021 school year, teachers and staff members took leadership roles in the district's summer planning activities by working with district coaches to identify power-standards for each grade level and content area to be utilized throughout the school. Teachers then worked at the district and school level to identify supporting standards and plan ways to address them all throughout the year, as well as through synchronous and asynchronous learning.

The school and district employed a cohort model of instruction this school year to ensure the safety of all students utilizing social distancing and cleaning protocols. Elementary students attend either an A cohort or B cohort of synchronous instruction, whether it is in person or online, for two days of the week. The other three days, students participate in asynchronous learning activities that strengthen their understanding of content areas as well as reading and math skills. These activities include the reading program i-Ready®, as well as activities from Bridges® and Dreambox® to build their mathematics skills. Amplify Science® activities have also been made available for asynchronous days.

Middle School students originally started with a similar model but have transitioned to a fully synchronized instructional model in which students may attend in-person instruction two of the four instructional days, and remain remote for the other two days of instruction. As a result, staff members have adapted their curriculum to be entirely virtual to provide to students throughout the school, regardless of their learning location.

Teachers utilize elements of the Learning Focused® lesson plan to convey their content areas. Research-based instructional strategies are implemented to differentiate their lessons and assignments for their

students through small group instruction and tiered interventions. Elementary students are progress monitored utilizing the DIBELS® screener periodically throughout the year and are provided with a tier of intervention based on their needs. Students in kindergarten through second grade are exposed to the Bookworms® reading intervention program to work on blends, phonics, and fluency. In mathematics, students are progress monitored utilizing the Bridges® Number Corner Assessment and are provided interventions through their Math Learning Center activities.

The Instructional Leadership Team reviews updated progress reports for students after each intervention cycle to identify areas of needs that are to be focused on for the upcoming cycle and instructional areas. This information is then shared with the grade level teams and is integrated into their upcoming plans. To further aid in the process, teachers are responsible for planning with their grade level weekly and hold monthly meetings with their appropriate grade-level and content areas' Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to establish vertical alignment between grade levels while also identifying teaching and learning strategies that will ensure that missed learning targets are readdressed in future lessons. PLCs are required to share their action plans and meeting minutes with administration for review after each meeting.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

Currently, eighth-grade students at SDSA utilize the college and career exploration application, Major Clarity®, to explore their post-secondary options as they begin planning their short- and long-term goals for high school and beyond. Major Clarity is part of the “Student Success Plan”, or SSP, required by the State of Delaware, which officially starts in a student’s eighth-grade year. Major Clarity allows for students to take learning style and personality assessments that use algorithms to connect career clusters to the results of these assessments. Students can also explore colleges, universities, and certification programs connected to the career clusters that are most closely related to their interests.

Secondary students are monitored based on their academic performance in their classes as well as the Math Inventory® and Achieve3000® reading program and are provided with an intervention time built into their instructional day. As part of the arts focus time, Flex, students who are struggling to achieve academic success are provided with additional support with classroom teachers, while others may be exploring and enriching their understanding of the arts.

Students in grades six through eight utilize the Springboard® curriculum for ELA and mathematics. The curriculum provides students with content and resources that establish strong foundations in these content areas that prepare students for future coursework in high school and beyond. Middle school teachers also employ the Amplify Science® curriculum and infuse teacher-created curriculum that aligns with our content areas and programs to supplement and extend the learning opportunities for all students. All core academic areas also include extending and refining content planning to promote college and career readiness for all learners, and all students take ownership of our community partnerships and outreach through active participation, many taking on leadership roles.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All elementary students are instructed in five different arts courses (dance, instrumental music, theatre, visual arts, and vocal music) once weekly. In addition to this rotation, students in grades 5 and 6 select two exploratory arts areas to pursue further. Students may also begin concert band in grade 5. Grade 7 and 8 students further their knowledge in select arts Majors and Minors classes by auditioning for their top three choices; every effort is made to place students in their top two choices. Arts Flex groups are also offered (show choir, jazz band, theater, dance, and set design/production) as audition-only groups that typically perform in the community as well as adding specialized aspects to school productions. Basic skills are taught in each of the arts in the elementary grades. These skills become more sophisticated and focused as students move through middle school, preparing them for advanced study in high school and beyond.

Due to COVID protocols, the arts teachers have made significant adjustments to their methods and approaches to arts education while maintaining the rigor and opportunities necessary for students to engage in and develop their particular art. Specialized interventions for social distance, masks and bell covers, and cleaning procedures for all equipment and spaces have been implemented within all arts classrooms. SDSA's arts teachers have led the way at the district and state level, developing and implementing a detailed plan to provide a safe platform for performance opportunities for our students. Recently, the Delaware Division of Public Health approved for the first live school performance in the state held by the Rock Band students.

As an arts-integrated school, students are able to demonstrate out-of-the-box thinking, explore larger world views and cultures, and make direct connections between their core curricula and everyday lives. As a result, students have higher test scores and increased problem-solving skills. These opportunities to excel academically and artistically encourage greater social-emotional wellness. At SDSA, personalities shine and uniqueness and creativity are celebrated. Students are encouraged to connect and collaborate with their community, where they develop self-advocacy skills.

The health and physical education department has adapted its curriculum to focus on the importance of exhibiting personal and social behavior that respects self and others. Students have taken ownership of keeping each other safe through mask-wearing during activity, utilizing personal space to obtain mask breaks, and proper sanitization methods when sharing equipment. In health, students built strategies to keep each other safe and have implemented many of those strategies through in-person physical education instruction. They have respectfully interacted while holding each other accountable for the safety measures they designed.

During the 2014-2015 school year, SDSA pioneered the district's robotics program for grades 3 and 4. Utilizing the VEX IQ robotics platform and curriculum, students learn STEM content and develop higher-order thinking skills by engineering and programming robots for competition. In March of 2015, SDSA and another district elementary school became the first two schools in Delaware to compete in the VEX IQ game "Highrise." Since, the program has expanded to include students through eighth grade, and participants have earned numerous awards that highlight their engineering, programming, sportsmanship, and leadership skills.

SDSA's podcasting program provides an opportunity for students to express themselves through creative writing and research skills. Each student creates a podcast on a topic important to them and to the school. Students learn to use microphones, recording equipment, and research and interview strategies/techniques while developing important social skills as they conduct interviews and interact with each other. Podcasting allows students to have a voice.

3. Academic Supports:

To meet the needs of students who face challenges throughout the year, several support programs and procedures have been developed. At the beginning of each year, students are screened as part of their benchmarking, which helps teachers and support staff gauge students' strengths and areas of concern. Utilizing the Tiered Interventions for Student Support (TISS) time built into the master schedule, grade-level groups are created for both ELA and Mathematics that allow students to focus on mastering specific skills as needed. These groups are reassessed periodically throughout a six-week cycle, at the end of which they are reevaluated to determine if they have mastered the skills or if further remediation is needed. This framework provides staff with data that enables them to provide student-specific support to increase student learning. Elementary students utilize intervention resources including 95%, Read Naturally, i-Ready, Barton Reading, Bookworms Reading, and interventions embedded in the Benchmark & Bridges curricula. Middle school students utilize the Math 180 program, Achieve3000, Khan Academy, CommonLit resources, and intervention activities built into both Springboard curricula.

For our English Language Learners, staff utilizes English Language Development Curriculum to provide appropriate support for reading and writing skills. In addition, the Bridges Math Curriculum and Benchmark Advanced curriculum both have resources to provide Spanish support for all units and home connections. The EL Coordinator provides one-on-one and small group support at all grade levels for our English learners to ensure they have the support and resources they need to acquire language skills as well as the content.

With COVID safety protocols necessitating a hybrid model for instruction, students who have shown significant regression have been invited to attend school for four days per week of in-person instruction. After a thorough review of their progress through the Special Education team, the 504 team, or the school's Multi-Tiered System of Support team, eligibility is determined based on the needs of each student, and a schedule is created that maximizes the interventions and support each student receives to increase and/or maintain their current level of progress.

Currently, 18% of Southern Delaware School of the Arts' students are utilizing remote instruction for the school year. Additionally, the utilization of the hybrid model of instruction sees students attending school synchronously two to five of the school days each week. To ensure all students' ability to fully access and participate in instruction, the school has issued Chromebooks to each student requiring a device and hotspots as necessary. Through the course of the pandemic, staff members have worked with local daycare providers to provide hotspots to them as well, to ensure steady internet access for all students in their care.

Since each student may not always have reliable internet access on asynchronous days, staff established a policy that students are given additional time on Zooms and in person when possible for extra support. In addition, flexibility with deadlines has also been granted to ensure a reasonable amount of time is provided for students to complete their assignments.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Southern Delaware School of the Arts' Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team develops monthly, quarterly, and yearly celebrations for students who are models of behavior and meet the requirements to join the celebrations. In recent years, these activities have included a lip-sync contest for students and staff, as well as various inflatables, grade-level bingo celebrating academic success, and a March Madness reading program based on the reading intervention program i-Ready. The PTO also provides staff with a yearly \$40 PBIS budget dedicated to supporting their individual classroom PBIS activities.

This year, due to the COVID policies, teachers have supported students to take further ownership and accountability in their classrooms by creating incentives unique to the needs of the specific children in their rooms. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons are provided monthly by the counselor, and students are referred to the counselor for additional social-emotional support/check-ins and connections to resources as needed. Students may also self-refer through an electronic form accessed through their Schoology School Counseling course and linked in many teachers' courses as well.

Academically, it was noted that students could not remain fully engaged throughout the entirety of online class sessions. As a result, teachers expanded their engagement repertoires, including the use of the PearDeck add-on for Google slides, to create a wider variety of meaningful interactive lessons promoting student participation. Early conversations among staff members indicated that student engagement rose significantly after implementation, and the faculty has continued to research and apply other resources to further engage students.

As a school, ClassDojo is utilized for communication to keep all families included in school-wide events and celebrations. Individual teachers utilize ClassDojo as well to announce information, events, and celebrations unique to their classrooms. On asynchronous days, students are engaged through Seesaw and Schoology platforms, where videos, interactive support, and arts-integrated lessons are utilized.

Throughout the year, administrators and school counselors have closely monitored the progress of struggling. Working with the Tiered Intervention System of Support Team (TISS), research-based strategies and interventions are identified and implemented for individual students to aid in closing any academic, behavioral, or social gaps in their learning. As a result, some students have been offered additional days of in-person instruction throughout the week with modifications made to their schedules to include small-group instruction and/or support sessions with counselors, paraeducators, and content teachers.

To promote literacy while engaging students and parents in a typical school year event, the reading specialist organized and hosted the first Virtual Literacy Night in the school's history, held in October 2020. Utilizing the Zoom platform, a series of events were held that included read-aloud activities, book character trivia, and guest read-alouds by local writers and special guests.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Southern Delaware School of the Arts prides itself on the outreach to families and community members. Messages are sent out through various social media outlets to ensure families are aware of events and activities. The social media presence includes Facebook, the school website, Blackboard Connect announcements, and a school-organized ClassDojo, where each staff member can share their events with the school community.

The SDSA PTO is an integral partner of the school community and mission to promote learning through the arts. Although it is much more than a fundraising arm, its fundraising efforts have provided the catalyst for heightened community interaction with the school and its students throughout a typical school year. Events include several Dine and Donates at local restaurants where student artwork is displayed, a Winter Festival

where students perform in a talent show, and an end-of-year Gala. The annual Gala showcases the school's accomplishments, as well as providing a fundraising opportunity through an auction of goods and services. This highly successful event has raised funds for numerous projects throughout the school, which include Chromebook carts for nearly every grade, as well as resources for performances and instruction throughout the building.

Southern Delaware School of the Arts has a strong ongoing relationship with the Freeman Foundation, a local nonprofit organization with a mission to advance arts access throughout our schools and communities. Over the years they have provided support and performances for students to engage in through a large variety of art forms. This includes artist-in-residence programs through which local artists create projects with the students as well as that also allow the community into the school to take an active role in each project's creation.

Through the School Nutrition Agri-Culture (SNAC) Garden initiative, students and community members are provided the opportunity to learn about appropriate nutrition and agricultural resources by utilizing the community garden behind the school. Throughout the course of the school's existence, SNAC Garden has been a staple of instruction for science content, as well as providing students and families with fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the spring and summer.

Throughout the pandemic, the PTO, SNAC program, and Freeman Foundation have proven to be even more ingrained in our community. The Freeman Foundation provided each student with a basic art kit with basic instructions to utilize the resources to create a meaningful product to continue their passion for the arts outside of the building. As the school year comes to an end, students will be utilizing these kits to create a time capsule that will be opened in 20 years and allow future students to reflect on this unique time in our society.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The professional culture of the school has developed to be very collaborative in nature over the course of the school's existence and embraces the concept of teacher as leader. With a faculty of roughly sixty teachers and support personnel, each member of the team contribute ideas and support for various topics and initiatives through participation in one or more committees organized throughout the school. An example of this is the recently formed Social-Emotional Wellness Support (SEWS) committee which promotes mental and behavioral support for students and staff throughout the year by advocating a whole-child approach to learning and utilizing opportunities such as arts therapies and mental health strategies to meet the needs of the school community.

Southern Delaware School of the Arts has been creative and flexible when tackling academic challenges over the years, especially through the transition to a hybrid model of learning this school year. When the pandemic first closed the building in the 2019-2020 school year, weekly staff meetings were held to update everyone on the protocols and policies in place, as well as provide opportunities to explore available online resources. This included mini-lessons on utilizing Schoology, Clever, Google apps, and even Google Voice to provide office hours and contact information for staff members who were not able to access school resources at the time. While arts integration professional development has always been foundational at SDSA, the staff continues to embrace collaboration with the arts team to meet students' evolving instructional and social-emotional needs as well.

This school year, administrators have acknowledged the staff's hard work and boosted morale by hosting staff luncheons, giving words of encouragement, conducting staff of the month programs, and including "SGN" (Some Good News), in our morning announcements. Having a principal well-versed in technology has proven to be an additional resource to staff members as various professional development opportunities through the learning management systems employed by the district center around exploring online resources. To maximize students' instructional time while utilizing synchronous learning approaches, professional development was also provided on flipped classroom instruction as needed for teachers who were interested in implementing it in their classrooms.

As part of the Professional Learning Community agenda, the middle school team has an ongoing agenda item discussed weekly to share researched-based technology applications and ideas with their team to gauge their effectiveness and ways to implement them into their instructional practices. Once properly vetted, these instructional tools and strategies are then shared with the school at large to implement across all nine grade levels.

4. School Leadership:

The administrators of Southern Delaware School of the Arts, as well as the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), have worked to create a culture of collaborative learning throughout the building. The inclusion of teachers in the decision-making process through ILT is essential to this culture. Through ILT, teachers take an active, collaborative role in leadership responsibilities and are encouraged to share ideas and resources with the leadership team and administrators to maximize student growth. This collaboration has initiated changes to the master schedule, committees, and opportunities that better serve our students.

Student progress is monitored each week through the school's Targeted Intervention for Student Success (TISS) team for students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally. Once a referral is made to the team, a case manager is assigned to work with the classroom teacher to collect data and provide interventions addressing the area(s) of concern for the student. Every six weeks, the student's progress is monitored, and the intervention's success is evaluated. If no progress is made, a new intervention is implemented, and further routes are explored that may lead the team to request an evaluation for a 504 Plan, Individualized Education Program, or EL services.

The school leadership team has accrued additional responsibilities during the COVID time period which include social distancing and safety protocols. The administrative team has maintained its commitment to providing our school's students and staff as supportive and nurturing an environment as possible through stable and familiar programs as well as newly implemented supports to meet the increased needs during this time.

To start the year, the administrative team centered their professional development around a basic understanding of essential technology for remote and hybrid instruction. This was supplemented through the district's initiative to utilize resources such as Pear Deck, SeeSaw, and Schoology as online platforms and resources for engaging students. The school's leadership team continues to work on providing professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their ability to teach through technology as we continue to grow and refine this whole new approach to learning.

Administration has worked with teachers to follow the year's unique safety protocols while providing opportunities for students to benefit from the arts. For example, students have enjoyed in-person instrumental lessons and full band almost the entire school year, utilizing safety protocols and resources to keep everyone safe. Southern Delaware School of the Arts will also be having the first Rock Band performance of the season this year, which will be the first live performance in a school throughout the state of Delaware.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Cultural awareness is embedded into the curriculum and through the arts at Southern Delaware School of the Arts. As students navigate through their curriculum, teachers work to highlight and support students to make connections to various cultures and historical events. For example, fifth-grade students focused on African American History through their "Piecing Together African American History" Unit. They created a variety of quilt squares which included students' research of African Americans' contributions to our country. This was then shared with the school through social media and ClassDojo posts to ensure that all students had access to the arts-based display.

This year's school-wide theme, "Around the World," has given teachers opportunities to explore daily facts about all regions of the world. Through the exploration of novels, teachers discuss and

highlight various cultures while respectfully exposing students to diversity. Facts about various cultures, countries, and histories are shared with students each day through a variety of learning activities.

Performances both in school and from the community expose students to various cultural experiences. Each year, the arts team works to create performances that highlight various genres and provide students the opportunity to explore and appreciate the cultures, social issues, and historic events that inspired and generated them. A recent Rock Band performance was entitled 1969, focusing on songs that defined the era's cultural and social change. One dance performance elicited music from the staff, enabling students to explore a spectrum of music and movement inspired by cultural and social connections as well as personal experiences. Students prepared a vocal music concert around the concept of the Hero's Journey, prompting research and exploration across time and culture. Whenever possible, the faculty looks to invite outside groups into the school to perform to expand on the exposure to the arts. In recent years, this has included a Nanticoke Indian dance performance, hip hop dance performance, and arts-based performance of African American history by students and staff from the University of Delaware.

With regard to the wide-ranging socio-economic backgrounds of students, SDSA has maintained a simple uniform policy to promote a focus on students' creativity and achievement rather than external status symbols. The school and district have created a plan to ensure equality through technology outreach by providing families in need with hotspots and Chromebooks. Administration has worked with families to provide technical support, even utilizing home visits to set up and repair the resources as needed. In addition, if parents choose to do so, paper/pencil copies, books, and supplies are also provided as needed. Each elementary student has been provided with a math manipulative kit for use at home with the math curriculum.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The success of Southern Delaware School of the Arts has been, and continues to be, established in the core value of teaching through the arts. As an arts-integrated school, all unit plans incorporate content, writing, and arts standards and objectives; teachers are expected to authentically incorporate the arts as an avenue for learning, supporting students' mastery of content skills and concepts as part of their core instructional practices. As a result, the staff has built a culture of collaboration across and among all grade levels and the arts.

To further ensure this collaborative culture, in the 2019-2020 school year, time was built into the arts team's schedule to develop high-quality multi-curricular instruction for both the arts and content areas. Requests for support and collaboration are shared through a Google form that is overseen by the arts and administrative teams, and content teachers' collaboration with the arts department yields a plan that identifies an appropriate medium to best deliver the content. Collaboration then proceeds through an organic process that evolves and refines the lesson or unit to include higher-order thinking activities and promote engagement through the arts.

Eighth-grade students demonstrate mastery in a cross-curricular study of the Holocaust by creating visual or performance art that conveys their perception of the theme "finding light in the darkness" through the events during World War II. One student's project, an original piano composition, won the 2019-2020 Young Composer Traditional Composition award from the Delaware Music Educators Association. Throughout the school, students create triptych art to learn story structure, role play with animal research, learn math concepts through songs and dances with instruments, write skits to demonstrate food and water cycles, compose original raps to explain plant structure, take on literary and historical characters to deliver newscasts of events, and draw their understanding of vocabulary.

This year, arts inclusion has continued in all areas. Staff have worked together to ensure that students maintain their connection to the arts, creating alternative assignments that allow for social distancing while still creating and observing various art forms. For example, fourth-grade students were given the same page of a book and challenged to create an original poem by blacking out all but the words they wanted to use. These works were then shared both digitally and physically with the class to ensure all students could share and reflect on their work. Recently, a STEAM unit was created between the middle school and the visual art program that enables students to study engineering by creating artistic kites to be incorporated in an upcoming outdoor performance.

Arts challenge, inspire, and aid in the growth and social-emotional wellness of all students. Integrating them into research-based curriculum in a collaborative and supportive environment yields amazing progress in all students. Creating opportunities for teachers to challenge themselves and their students to reach new heights is what Southern Delaware School of the Arts stands for. It always has been, and always will be our mission to be the school where imagination takes flight.