

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 [] Magnet [] Choice

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

Official School Name Mansfield Jr. High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 306 West Ohio Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mansfield State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 65074-9301

County Wright

Telephone (417) 924-8625 Fax (417) 924-8789

Web site/URL https://www.mansfieldschool.net/ E-mail ggreene@mansfieldschool.net

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. Richard Wylie E-mail rwylie@mansfieldschool.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mansfield School District R-IV Tel. (417) 924-3236

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	27	16	43
7	25	23	48
8	26	27	53
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	78	66	144

*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
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 96 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 12%

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	156
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 55 %

Total number students who qualify: 79

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
18 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>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>12</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>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: 14
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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	7
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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	96%	96%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

Mansfield Middle School believes all students will learn regardless of pace, ability, or socioeconomic status. Students can and will succeed in a safe environment.

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.

We started as a normal year but due to a high number of student quarantines, we switched to a cohort model in the fall and have been there since that time. At first we had the teachers moving around to the cohorts in order to keep kids from moving around the building however, we found that our students were getting behind, so we then moved to a model that allows the students to move to the teachers. So in essence we are in a normal scenario, but our students stay with the same group of students all day as to avoid losing many kids to quarantine should they be exposed.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Mansfield Middle School is a small school located in rural Mansfield, Missouri. Once known as the Gem City of the Ozarks, it was home to Laura Ingalls Wilder, and where she lived while writing her famous Little House books. Other than her historic home and museum, Mansfield is similar to most small towns scattered throughout southwest Missouri. It is demographically on par with the surrounding schools, but it has continuously set itself apart through the intentional focus on and pride in education.

Mansfield Middle School has a diverse population of students but not in race or ethnicity. Our diversity lies within the spectrum of human characteristics. We have students who are friendly, competitive, rational, irrational, naïve, immature, energetic, unmotivated, and so forth. However, because of this lack of cultural and racial diversity, we face the challenge of preparing our students for a world in which diversity is the norm. In addition, the majority of our students are financially limited and, therefore, often lack opportunities outside of the ones the school system offers. Many of our students rarely travel outside of a 40-mile radius of the town and do not have the privilege of being exposed to various businesses and occupations. Many never learn basic etiquette or are made aware of acceptable social constructs. Consequently, some students have learned behaviors that require interventions, both behaviorally as well as academically. Earlier in our nation's history, the teaching of social mores was addressed in the home. More recently, we have seen this responsibility transferred to the educational system. This means that teachers are now tasked with instructing students in such areas as behavior and universal morality in addition to academics.

The majority of strategies we have adopted are not those you would find in a teaching "how-to" book. (That is not to say that we do not follow various philosophies or use certain programs or follow research-based practices and guidelines, but those will be addressed later.) We have made it a point to employ common sense as much as possible. Programs and strategies that have catchy acronyms or abbreviations sound good, but often are lacking in substance. For example, we are not a Positive Behavior and Supports (PBS) school. We do not reward students for doing things that are expected of them but prefer natural and meaningful consequences of both desirable and undesirable behaviors. We define and model standards of behavior and respect, and we expect our students to abide by these standards. We teach them that this is the norm for all contributing members of society and not a way to achieve a reward. Academically, we teach students that pride in achievement and success is its own reward. Expecting the highest level of commitment from students in the classroom and not wavering from that causes our students to know that we will not accept less than their best.

Part of our success lies in the integration of behavior into academics as opposed to addressing them as separate entities. We use our curriculum to raise social awareness and to encourage self-respect and the respect of all people. Our English Language Arts program chooses literature (both fictional and informative) to provide critical thinking opportunities and to create a dialogue regarding the current issues we are facing today. We also added a current events class to our curriculum which is used to encourage our students to assess today's culture and world climate. We present students with problems that are ongoing in the world, and we ask them to define how they would address such issues using logic and reason while maintaining a sensitivity to beliefs different from their own.

We begin each school year with a three-week period of character education in our intervention time with the intent of providing students a foundation for expected behavior. These lessons are reinforced throughout the school year in our daily interactions with students. After that period, we place our students in academic intervention based on their progress and growth or lack thereof. Those students then work individually with their teachers to sustain growth. It is this daily intervention program that allows our teachers to monitor students on a more personal level and to then identify and address issues hindering success.

We also offer summer school classes, such as Math in the Kitchen, to teach our students daily skills they can use the rest of their lives. In this particular class, we have them prepare a veteran's lunch at the end of summer school where they prepare and serve local veterans and their families a meal made from scratch. It is the highlight of our summer school program. Other classes give students the opportunity to take field trips or incorporate hobbies, such as sports, into their academic lives, or they are able to learn about various

cultures and countries around the world. It is through such classes we can help expose students to the diversity we lack in our school district.

To conclude, our success at Mansfield Middle School cannot be attributed to specific programs or a unique educational philosophy. Instead, it is in the hiring of high-quality educators and their dedication to their profession that ensure our students are prepared for the world outside of our small community. We stress using problem-solving and critical thinking skills to evaluate the world around us, supporting opinions with facts and evidence. We require all of our students to abide by the rule of “respect.” Even though we are lacking in certain areas of diversity, we expect all staff and students to be accepting and respectful of every human being regardless of religion, creed, race, or color. These are not ideals we preach one day without any further address. These are standards and expectations which are reinforced continuously throughout the year, in and out of the classroom. The respect we instill that causes students to push themselves to achieve their desired academic goals is the same respect that teaches students to demonstrate behaviors which unite us as citizens of the world rather than divide. That is the key to our high levels of achievement at Mansfield Middle School.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Like all public school, our curriculum is guided by the standards set forth by the Missouri department of education. These learning standards can be accessed on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s website. Our educators have a thorough knowledge of these standards, as well as the skill necessary to teach them using higher order thinking strategies. Being experts in the learning standards allows our teachers to research and seek out the most effective resources to use to address these standards and ensure student success. Educators have the autonomy to choose and requisition their resources. If the administration agrees with its effectiveness, it is purchased. This may include textbooks, online programs such as Study Island and Prodigy, workbooks, educational video streaming services, etc.

We have all teachers trained and certified in eMINTS, which is a technology-driven series of strategies designed to cause students to problem solve and think critically to master concepts. We were forced to go to online learning in the spring of last year, so we used Google Classroom to allow teachers to continue to post lessons and instruction (not busy work) so students were maintaining their high level of academic instruction. Teachers updated their websites and used Zoom to meet with students regularly throughout the spring. We now continue to use Google Classroom to keep students involved and updated even when quarantined or home sick.

Mansfield Middle School uses differentiated instruction and problem-based learning along with project-based learning to stretch students’ thinking beyond what they think they are capable of. Along with that is a concept the principal added to expand differentiated instruction to include what we call differentiated assessment. Not all students are assessed that same way. If a student struggles to read, it would make sense that his or her ability to put answers into written words may also be affected. We may have those students test orally until we are able to bridge that learning gap. Our desire is to have them show us what they know, not what they can do.

We have a “minimum F” policy of 50%. We bring every grade below 50% up to that level so that students do not get to a point where they feel as if they cannot recover. We take the approach that if students are failing, then we have failed them. We assign “incomplete” grades at the quarter to communicate to parents on the report card that we cannot give a grade presently because we do not have all the information to accurately assess the student's grade. Once we have that information, we change the grade. We also allow students to retake tests as often as they want, provided they show their teachers that they have a new level of understanding of the previously-assessed content. We do not grade homework (practice), and our grades are made up completely of summative assessments. Teachers employ many formative assessments to determine student progress throughout the school day. We use state assessment data to address where we have failed our students, to make changes in scope and sequence, and to make sure we do not have gaps in content and instruction from one grade level to the next. Item and content analysis are critical for us, as we determine which concepts are areas of weakness for us and which areas are notable strengths. We analyze how and why we performed better in those items to allow for improvement during the next school year.

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

College and career readiness at the middle school level is addressed mostly through building a solid educational foundation that will instill a love of learning and advancement. It is also addressed through informal conversations with students and integrated into the various academic subjects.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Due to our small size and limited budget capabilities, we do not have the option of adding classes for all areas of instruction. However, we have such a dedicated group of teachers that they often provide these opportunities outside of school hours. We started a robotics club thanks to a generous donation from the community. This club allows students to learn how to use concepts from the math and science realm that help them develop problem solving skills and creativity. We are living in an ever-more mechanized society, and robotics gives kids an insight into that world going forward. We believe students are filled with creative minds that just need to be unleashed. Robotics allows for that while also being highly enjoyable for many students. Children need to know that school can be fun at any age.

Our fine arts programs are second to none at Mansfield. We made our schedule so that each grade level has its own band hours, ensuring our teachers can work with each grade level to match their abilities. We currently have just under half of our students enrolled in fine art classes in the middle school. We made our budget priorities three years ago to include foreign language classes through Rosetta Stone software. As our budget allows we will be adding more licenses each year to offer our students.

We offer a top-notch physical education program providing students non-traditional content, such as archery and dance along with various team and individual sports that give them lifelong fitness opportunities. We have a teen living class that provides students with life skills needed for the teen years as well as health and nutritional concepts and skills. Finally, about four years ago, we started a journalism class which is highly competitive at the state level. We have won several awards for our newspaper staff. Our students have to meet criteria to be on the newspaper staff which has encouraged them to provide more effort in areas such as reading and writing so that they may be eligible for the school pub class.

3. Academic Supports:

The best strategy for having effective academic supports is hiring great teachers, specifically those in the special education areas. Finding teachers who are willing to mold to our concepts of assessment and instruction is also critical. We have a model that we believe works, and so we try to hire staff who agree with or are willing to go all in with what we think is best for curriculum and instruction.

A few years back, we built a daily intervention schedule into our day. We have changed it almost yearly because we always find better ways to use this 24-minute period. This time is used to reward our students with “free” time who are staying caught up, while our students who need the extra time with teachers have that opportunity.

We have made efforts within our budget to hire more special education teachers so that special education students have multiple one-on-one times with teachers in the identified areas of service. As mentioned earlier, the assessment arena is where we have made the most changes and, the principal believes, the most progress. We implemented a minimum F score of 50% in all classes. Our students who perform poorly on assessments many times do not have the opportunity to come back from very low percentage score because we only use assessments to determine grades. Students lose hope when they are constantly staring up to the passing percentage from down in the very low percentage range. A minimum 50% F encourages those students who have become hopeless. We adopted a differentiated assessment model to fit what students do best as it relates to showing teachers what they know. We can continue to improve reading and writing skills while still allowing students to demonstrate what they know even if they struggle to read and write. Lastly, grades should be about what students know and not what they can or cannot do. By using this model, the principal believes we know where our students are in content mastery, which allows the school to closely align our grades with our state assessment achievement scores. This model eliminates sub-group diversity because we assess and instruct based on individual differences, not years-old antiquated school norms.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Learning should be exciting, so the principal always encourages teachers to use any and all means to make learning enjoyable. This is where eMINTS training has been so valuable to our staff. Using project-based learning and technology-driven lessons makes school more relatable to students in this digital age but also allows for appropriate pacing of students. Advanced students are encouraged to proceed as they can with concepts, so they do not get bored waiting on the others to reach their level. Likewise, less advanced students do not feel the pressure to keep up; therefore, they work at their pace, and teachers with eMINTS training know how to manage these types of classrooms. The other most important factor is energetic and enthusiastic teachers. We do everything we can at the administrative level to keep teacher morale high. Excited teachers make for exciting classrooms, and we have cultivated that culture at Mansfield.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

While there are many negative aspects of social media, family and community involvement in education has been made easier because of it. We have used various platforms to provide information to students and families. In today's world, this seems to be the best way at times to communicate with our students' families. We also make it a point to keep our metaphorical and physical doors open, to meet with parents who have questions or concerns, even when the timing is not best for our teachers. The principal encourages the staff to know that they are teachers all the time, not just from 8:00 to 3:30. If we can meet parents' needs and requests without compromising our own family time, then the principal encourages that. Being accessible is part of our professional responsibilities. Most of the teachers give out their personal cell phone numbers. This is not required, but that is the type of people they are. Most teachers also use various forms of communication, such as Zoom and "remind" apps, from their phones to communicate with parents

3. Creating Professional Culture:

In short, we make sure our teachers are part of the decision-making process. Teachers need to have some ownership in the things we do and not be robots just doing what they are told. The principal's belief is that if teachers are part of the process on decision-making, then they will attack any problem or situation with a different outlook because they are heavily invested in the whole. The principal's office is an open door for teachers, and they know the principal will support them in difficult situations. The principal trusts his staff and knows they will not put administration in a position where he cannot defend them. We have communicated this very clearly through our staff meetings. This allows for teachers to be free in the instructional climate. Teachers know that they will be supported in their efforts to educate and encourage students with high expectations for performance and behavior. When we had to go virtual learning, we encouraged teachers to be creative and not be locked into a particular mindset about online instruction. The principal told teachers that this was an opportunity to be innovative with our lessons. The school did that and yet maintained very high expectations. Our students knew that learning was still an expectation and that we were taking this task seriously, and so should they.

As far as professional development, we strongly encourage the eMINTS model and require all new staff to immediately begin training towards certification. This keeps us consistent with instruction as we are all trained with the same strategies which encourage cross curricular instruction using project-based learning skills. We also make every effort to send teachers to any and all professional development that they seek out. Finally, we use our own staff as models for our new teachers, in that we send our new teachers to observe others in our district who we know have been highly successful in the classroom, and we encourage professional collaboration between buildings.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy is modeled after the servant leader model. In short, the principal will not ask teachers to do anything he would not do himself. The principal is an educational leader first and foremost

but also a coach. The coaching model allows for growth among teachers because we are always looking at the “game plan” and making adjustments based on the “playing field.” We believe in adapting to our students, not making our students adapt to us. We are the ones with the responsibility for teaching, and we must do it well. We constantly assess our abilities to reach students and make necessary adjustments as we see the need. No program is sacred, and we make a point to survey our students to determine if our teaching is having the intended consequences needed to be effective.

Our grading policy is one of the major things we have done to focus on student achievement. The principal does not want grades to mean anything other than what our students know about the content being taught. He does not want it to be about what students can do or how much extra credit they can achieve. He wants it to be about what do students know and at what level do they know it. We have invested in having one of our teachers trained as an eMINTS instructor, so our teachers all have access to high quality professional development (PD) that we know impact student achievement. We know this because we have the data to prove it. Having that training here is important because it allows teachers to train on site so they have more time with families and less time spent on the road or in a hotel so they can receive high quality PD.

The high school, elementary, and middle school principals, along with the superintendent and special programs director meet weekly to discuss district strategies and plans. Putting our students in cohorts due to COVID this year was new for our school. We were having very large numbers of students quarantined and missing multiple days of school. We adopted the cohort model, and our quarantines were no more. At one time, we had 50% of our students out in quarantine. But we have not had any quarantines since putting students in cohorts, which means students are in front of teachers. Our roles as administrators have not changed that much because we have always been leaders with many hats. Our district is small and requires that type of commitment from everyone. This is one of the reasons our district is consistently successful year in and year out.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Diverse student backgrounds are present in every school in America, with some schools having a much greater amount of diversity than ours in the areas of race, religion, and so forth. As mentioned earlier, Mansfield’s student population is predominately white. That said, we do have a small number of students of color and students who worship differently than the majority of Christian students and teachers. We know our demographic statistics are not representative of the rest of the nation and certainly not the world. We acknowledge this and communicate that with our students. No matter what level of diversity a school has, we believe it is our duty to stress the importance of treating all people as equals, all deserving of love, respect, compassion, dignity, as well as a quality education. All students **MUST** follow the student code of conduct. 1) All students are expected to learn; and 2) All students are expected to treat people with respect. As alluded to earlier, we do not have special programs for these things. These are the expectations for all students and staff regardless of gender, race, or religion. Our teachers model respect and hard work; therefore, we demand the same from our students. However, a lack of specific programs does not mean we are ignoring the issues our world faces regarding the treatment of our fellow human beings. These topics and issues are addressed in our teaching, in our conversations with students, and in the way we model our interactions with others, whether they share our same background or not. We like to focus on our similarities as a way to build bridges and unite humanity. We believe once students understand that we are all individuals deserving of the same inalienable rights, it opens their eyes to the beauty of our differences and makes them more self-aware regarding biases they may have been exposed to outside of the school or among their peers. We do not have dedicated times during the day to address these issues, but we believe it is more meaningful and practical to imbed it in everything we do by following and enforcing the code of conduct: respect.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Everything that has been written so far has answered the question of how we achieve academic success. This section will be used to address the unique circumstances of the past year as we learned to teach during a pandemic. One word can describe our recipe for success: flexibility; flexibility with schedules, flexibility with students, and flexibility with each other. We do our best to make sure that everything we do is based on one principle. It is the question, “What is best for students?” During the pandemic, we determined that keeping students in school in front of teachers was our highest priority. We placed our students into cohorts and kept them with the same group of students all day. We were able to social distance them as to avoid quarantine and high infection rates. Our students have been in school all year at a consistently high rate of 90% or better. Is it a perfect situation? No. Is being in school better than remote learning? We, and various experts, say yes. We felt as though this was our number one goal for this year. Our teachers have adapted wonderfully, and our students are continuing to learn in spite of everything that is working against them this year. The principal could not be prouder of our students and staff. While other teachers across the country are choosing not to work or not being allowed, Mansfield teachers are showing up every day and demanding excellence from their students. Our school district believes this type of dedication and commitment deserves acknowledgment and respect.