

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 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. Rebecca Seery  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Wemrock Brook School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 118 Millhurst Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Manalapan State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07726-4004

County Monmouth County

Telephone (732) 786-2600 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://www.mersnj.us/Page/13 E-mail rseery@mersnj.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. Nicole Santora E-mail nicolesantora@mersnj.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Manalapan-Englishtown Regional School District Tel. (732) 786-2600

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Ms. Dotty Porcaro  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	36	47	83
2	51	48	99
3	74	74	148
4	64	53	117
5	64	57	121
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	289	279	568

\*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):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 18.8 % Asian
  - 2.1 % Black or African American
  - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 68.3 % White
  - 3.5 % 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: 2%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	568
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Albanian, Chinese, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish; Castilian, Tamil, Telugu, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %

Total number students who qualify: 28

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

67 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>2</u> Autism                  | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>20</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>26</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>17</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

	<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.	26
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	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.

<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.

At Wemrock Brook School, "We Believe in Success." We believe every learner deserves access to a rigorous and relevant learning environment that fosters academic growth.

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.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our operating model has evolved throughout the school year in order to best meet the academic needs while following state and CDC guidelines to ensure our students' and staff's safety. In September, based on state guidelines, we offered students the option of a 100% virtual learning environment or a hybrid A/B environment. 75% of our students opted for our hybrid model. These students were placed in two cohorts receiving in person instruction one day and virtual instruction the next day. During the virtual instruction, students live stream into the classroom through Google Meet where they participate in class, including collaborating with their classmates. Students in our virtual program received live instruction via Google Meet with a teacher assigned to the virtual program. These students were placed in a class with other fully virtual peers. Our teachers and students have become efficient at using Google Meet and Classroom to communicate and work collaboratively. Our teachers have continued to employ high effect size instructional strategies whether students are at home or in school.

In November, we began our transition to a five day in person schedule. We transformed our larger spaces into classrooms for our first and second grade students while maintaining social distancing. We also transitioned our special education and 504 students to a five day in person schedule. Our next transition will occur in April when our third through fifth grade students in the hybrid program return to five days a week in person instruction while maintaining 3 feet of social distancing as recommended by the CDC. Throughout each of these transitions, students from the virtual

academy had the opportunity to also return to in person instruction.

Students attend class in person from 8:10am until 12:10pm. Upon arriving home in the afternoon, students log onto Google Classroom for an additional 80 minutes of virtual learning. During these virtual hours, teachers implemented student's intervention plans, conducted reteach groups, and ran strategy groups. Based on our data, it is evident that our students have continued to grow despite our modified schedule.

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

We are a public school and use residency to determine which students attend Wemrock Brook. Each street in the town is assigned a home school.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Students arrive at Wemrock Brook eager and excited to learn. Our mantra, “We Believe in Success” helps all students understand the importance of putting in their best effort every day. At Wemrock Brook, we set rigorous and relevant learning goals for every student. Educators design lessons around these goals and engage students in 21st century learning.

Wemrock Brook School is a first through fifth grade school which houses approximately 569 students. It is located in suburban Manalapan, a middle class neighborhood. We are one of five elementary schools. We are housed in a beautiful state of the art two story building with a learning garden, an outdoor classroom, and three computer labs. We work collaboratively with parents through continuous communication and collaborate with our Parent-Teacher Association.

At Wemrock Brook, we embedded the Rigor and Relevance Framework into our ongoing, professional development practices. Teachers have adopted the Daily 5 or Units of Study Readers Workshop Model, Daily 3 math workshop model, and Teacher’s College writing workshop model into their daily routines. Furthermore, we have implemented a W.I.N. (What I Need) period daily in the schedule to address individual student needs. It is during this W.I.N. period, in which students receive tiered levels of support or enrichment based on their individual academic needs.

Wemrock Brook has shown academic growth through its use of data to drive instruction. Teachers and administrators analyze formative and summative assessment data to meet the individual needs of students. Our school’s Problem Solving Team works collaboratively with parents to support students' needs. In addition, our Response to Intervention model allows us to identify students who need further support. Tiered interventions in reading, math, and speech/language occur during W.I.N. to allow students to receive targeted support without missing core content instruction. At Wemrock Brook, we also recognize the need to address students’ social emotional health. Students may receive a targeted socio-emotional intervention with our School Counselor, which include individual sessions, small group meetings, or a trip to our sensory hallway. Our tiered interventions and flexibly scheduled support services bolster the growth and learning of many students and help to further student growth.

Wemrock Brook has been recognized as a Future Ready School and a Sustainable New Jersey School. Teachers and faculty embed digital tools and content into all content areas and special subject disciplines. These tools foster collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving skills in our future ready learning. Students do not use these tools to attain knowledge, rather to apply their knowledge to real life 21st century problems and scenarios. At Wemrock Brook, students in grade 1 use iPADS while our second through fifth graders are immersed in a 1:1 learning environment with Chromebooks. Google Expedition virtual reality headsets and digital tools further enhance lessons. This strong foundation in technology helped ease the transition to virtual learning due to the Health Related School Closure. Our teachers and students utilized a multitude of programs to create engaging content and engage families. Our use of the Google platform helps us engage our learners beyond the school day. Technology is also used as a tool to aid our strong, parent communication. Twitter and Facebook are used to provide a glance into the school while teachers and staff use Class Dojo and Remind to provide up to date information to their families. Classes may also visit our outdoor classroom to apply their science skills to a real life scenario. In this outdoor classroom, students study our gardens and have an opportunity to plant. Additional seating provides a quiet place to read or write. Students also learn science in our mobile Star Lab.

Character Education is embedded throughout our day. The counselor and school psychologist work closely with school administration, teachers, students, and parents to reinforce the elements of good character and conflict resolution strategies. Students from each class are recognized monthly for demonstrating exemplary character. In addition, our students listen to daily messages on morning announcements that focus on socio-emotional learning, and/or life skills that will help them grow as people. After the announcements, teachers conduct a morning meeting to reinforce the daily message. Another wonderful addition to Wemrock Brook was the Sensory Hallway to allow students a safe place to help regulate their emotions. Most classrooms also feature a calming corner to help provide an avenue for students to self-regulate their emotions.



Through our strong partnership between staff, parents, and administration, we provide each child with a safe learning environment to learn and grow. We are determined to promote our mantra, “We Believe in Success” and foster a 21st century learning environment. We are confident that we are preparing our students to be global citizens with the skills needed for college and career readiness.

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

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

At Wemrock Brook School, we believe in the importance of maintaining consistency and equity among students. Our school follows a comprehensive curriculum developed collaboratively by district supervisors, coaches, and teachers across all curriculum areas with a focus on interdisciplinary learning.

Due to the health related closure in the spring of 2020, a revised scope and sequence was created to focus on specific standards and address potential learning gaps. Every teacher created a Google Classroom to communicate information. Teachers quickly became proficient in technology that allowed them to communicate in the virtual world, such as Screencastify and Jamboard. They also became proficient in tools to assist their students in achieving grade level standards. This included books, videos, activities, online games, or assessments, virtual brain breaks, and virtual calm down corners. Our teachers modified assessments to be completed on an online platform, such as Google Forms or Quizizz. They also learned how to use Break-out rooms to work with small groups or individual students. Our students are engaged and have the full sense of being “in school”.

Through data analysis, teachers work as teams with school leaders to modify daily instruction and pacing to meet the individual needs of students. We use targeted instruction based on continuous data analysis. Our goal is to identify strengths and weaknesses and to bridge gaps noted in student achievement. Teachers use authentic formative assessments throughout all curriculum areas based on New Jersey Learning Standards. Formative assessments have shifted more recently to online platforms, such as Kahoot or Quizizz. This data helps teachers plan targeted instruction through guided groups, as well as tiered intervention plans in both ELA and Math.

District-wide benchmark assessments and teacher collected data are also used to develop individual learning plans for every student. All student progress is reported to parents through a standards-based report card given three times a year, as well as through teacher communication throughout each trimester.

At Wemrock Brook, we believe in a collaborative, individualized approach to learning. Students share work, discuss goals, and provide feedback to one another. Rubrics and other tools such as checklists are used to foster meaningful dialogue amongst students. To promote personalization and engagement, student choice is embedded throughout all subject areas through the use of choice boards, multiple technology tools, and workshop models.

Wemrock Brook implements a balanced literacy approach to language arts instruction. Phonics is taught through a multisensory approach with a program titled Project Read. The workshop model is used to provide differentiated instruction and support a gradual release approach. Teachers use mini-lessons to provide direct instruction. Students are given time to independently practice the skill or strategy. During independent work time, teachers meet with students in small groups or individually to build relationships and provide individualized instruction. During reading, students read self-selected books at their independent levels. For writing, students write within all genres while given opportunity for topic choice. At the conclusion of the unit, teachers and students celebrate and share their hard work.

The mathematics curriculum is developed with a focus on coherence, and rigor. Our school uses Pearson’s enVision Math 2.0 as the resource to balance the blend of conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and applications. Concepts are introduced and taught, then strategically revisited and reinforced to achieve mastery. Student mastery is monitored through multiple assessment measures, including student self-assessment. Lessons are designed to accommodate all learning styles through presenting concepts concretely, pictorially, and abstractly, fostering the development of mathematical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The Daily 3 framework is a student centered approach that allows learners to monitor, reflect, and revisit lessons to support their learning. This framework engages students in developing their mathematical thinking skills and develops student’s confidence in this content area. Through open-ended questions, mental math, hands-on explorations, writing activities, and the use of technology students focus on questions that are designed to create a mathematical discourse. Students are placed in flexible,

differentiated groups to ensure we meet each student's individual needs.

In our science classes, students examine claims, create hypotheses and use evidence to justify their reasoning. Our science program is grounded in the Next Generation Science Standards and does not utilize a textbook. It is composed of hands-on experiments, activities and simulations in which students explore real world phenomena and make connections. Students utilize online programs, such as Gizmos and Mystery Science to complete simulations. Students are often seen using the scientific method while conducting experiments to test their hypotheses. Students make connections between the simulations, experiments, and their own real-world experiences.

Our Social Studies curriculum is taught through both the reading and writing workshops. We do not utilize a textbook, instead teachers provide instruction through mini-lessons and center-based learning. Students in all grade levels are exposed to a variety of primary and secondary sources and through inquiry-based learning, are encouraged to explore, analyze, and communicate their analysis of the topics. Students participate in an analysis of photos, text, videos, and maps. Students analyze and critique primary source documents and make connections between multiple documents.

Teachers have worked hard to provide our students with a rigorous and relevant education, whether virtual or hybrid. They have used this year's challenges to inspire success as proven by our benchmark data.

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

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At Wemrock Brook, students in grades 1-5 participate in physical education, visual and performing arts, and library. These content areas teach students functional life skills and provide outlets for self-expression. Due to social distancing, classes operate on quinquesters and rely on technology to provide the best educational experience. Students have each special daily for a quinquester and visit Google Classroom to access materials on virtual days. The curriculum has been modified to focus on essential components. In addition to these broad changes, each content area has been faced with its own unique set of challenges.

Physical education offers a variety of individual and group activities that guide and encourage physical fitness, develop motor skills, increase knowledge and skill in sports, and encourage sportsmanship. Weather permitting students go outside. In alternate scenarios, students use a "little gym," an empty classroom where furniture was cleared and floor tape marks the social distancing parameters. Lessons are enhanced with digital resources infused with socio-emotional content and include games like "I Spy Fitness" and Fitness Bingo.

The music program fosters creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression. Our music program centers around 4 components: singing, music theory, instruments, and music appreciation. Due to COVID restrictions, vocal lessons are conducted in our virtual platform. We develop and model vocal techniques, as well as build on student vocal repertoire. Interactive software products allow us to create whiteboard graphics tailored to lessons involving rhythmic and melodic games, exercises, and introductory lessons that help students read, write, perform, and perfect their music reading skills. Students change household items into instruments to practice rhythmic skills. Additionally, students have the opportunity to participate in our Chorus program where they sing in groups, perform solos, and when appropriate, critique (listening/analyzing) performances.

The visual arts department introduces students to the elements and principles of art and creativity. Students develop fine motor skills while their imaginations run free. Mistakes are turned into masterpieces through

perseverance. This year, demonstrations are recorded in advance and posted for students in Google Classroom. Students use these demonstrations to apply the principles of art to their drawings, paintings, and sculptures. Student masterpieces are displayed around the school on our bulletin boards and in our display cases.

The media studies program is a comprehensive program that provides students with skills that are essential in the ever changing world. Units focus on research skills and literacy. A Makerspace unit focuses on technology and critical thinking. Students in Grade 1 and 2 participate in read alouds and author studies. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 conduct genre studies. All students access the library's databases to conduct research. There is focus on teaching students to think critically and evaluate sources. This year, students use Google Classroom to access many digital resources including videos that showcase book reviews, book talks, and read alouds.

Our technology program offers a variety of state of the art equipment. Our tech tools encourage participation, excitement, and exploration. Wemrock creates a dynamic learning environment through the use of Promethean boards. We have subscriptions to wonderful tools like IXL, Nearpod, and Edpuzzle to help gamify learning. As our technology teacher worked with our classroom teachers they still provided instruction to our students in coding.

Lastly, our 3rd-5th graders participate in a world language program. Students in grade three and four learn Spanish through a virtual program developed by our middle school teachers and our 5th graders learn American Sign Language through a teacher via a virtual meeting platform.

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

The teachers and staff of Wemrock Brook work collaboratively to ensure that every student's needs are met whether students are performing on grade level, above grade level, or below grade level. Teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, case managers, and administrators work together to analyze data from various assessments in language arts and math. Targeted areas of instruction are identified based on this data. Teachers differentiate instruction by meeting with students in a series of strategy based groups and individual conferences to work on areas of growth. The "What I Need" (WIN) period in each student's schedule provides teachers with time to meet with students in small groups. During WIN, teachers pull small groups to enrich students or work on targeted intervention goals.

Students who are performing at or above grade level complete enrichment activities during the WIN period. Students use ST Math, Study Island, and iXL to access curriculum-based activities that extend the grade level curriculum. Students also participate in STEM and coding activities. Additionally, to promote interest-based learning, students have the opportunity to work on Passion Projects related to a topic of their choice. Students in grades 2-5 also participate in the Continental Math League contests which challenges students' analytical reasoning capabilities

Wemrock Brook uses the Response to Intervention (RTI) process to close the achievement gap. Students can qualify for tiered interventions through teacher referral or our data sweeps. Teacher referrals can occur at any time throughout the year. Teachers advocate for students by completing problem solving paperwork and the Problem Solving Team meets to discuss the student and analyze data to determine next steps. A data sweep using multiple data points is completed to identify students eligible to receive tiered support. These data sweeps occur regularly twice a year. An action plan is implemented and developed once a student is identified as needing support.

The level of support (i.e., Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3) is based on each student's needs. The teacher and interventionist work together to determine the academic goals. Modeling and coaching is provided to teachers to help support Tier 1 goals, which are completed in the classroom. Tier 2 and

Tier 3 instruction is provided by a reading or math interventionist for those students identified as needing the most support. Teachers continuously progress monitor the targeted goals, and instruction is tailored based on student growth.

A student who may not qualify for tiered interventions may still receive additional support through our Beyond the School Day program. These students receive small group targeted instruction in reading or math before or after school.

Students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) are placed in the least restrictive environment. Special education teachers progress monitor all IEP goals and work collaboratively with the case manager to ensure students receive the appropriate modifications and accommodations. These students learn how to apply these modifications and accommodations independently to foster student growth.

In addition, English Language Learners (ELL) are provided with additional support throughout the day from a certified English as a Second Language Teacher. These services occur daily in a pull out program. All classroom teachers with ELL students on their roster are trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. The classroom teacher and ELL teacher collaborate to ensure the students are successful in academic and language goals. The support provided for the students at Wemrock Brook ensures the individual needs of students are being met and students receive the level of support and tools that they need to succeed.

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

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

As Wemrock Brook, we have built on our efforts to help students thrive socio-emotionally. Each morning, teachers greet students at the door and host morning meetings. Within these meetings, teachers address social emotional topics that allow students to develop relationships with their classmates and teachers. The staff at Wemrock Brook uses multiple resources during these meetings. For example, in collaboration with ClassDojo, they use MOJO, a character that teaches students about empathy and Growth Mindset. We foster a “can do attitude,” and a belief that they can accomplish their goals when they persevere! By taking time at the beginning of each day to create community, the classroom becomes a safe place where students are willing to take academic risks.

Wemrock Brook also prioritizes building relationships with each student. The teachers recognize the individual needs or interests of each student. This is essential to creating an environment that supports the “whole” child. Through tiered interventions that address specific student behavioral needs and small groups with our school counselor, we are progressive in ensuring students’ emotional needs are met. Students also use our sensory hallway as a safe space, providing students with the “brain break” needed to maintain focus and address their feelings.

Building wide events help foster a sense of community. Spirit Days are one way we build community. Throughout the year, spirit days encourage students to show they are part of the “wildcat” family. For example, “Wildcat Wednesday” in which students wear school colors help promote a feeling of unity and togetherness. High Five Fridays add excitement to the end of each week as students are greeted with foam paws.

Wemrock teachers put their heart and soul into making sure the environment the students walk or sign into virtually is bright, cheerful, and most of all caring. Again, if we invest our time in the students, they will be more willing to maintain focus, grow academically, and develop both socially and emotionally!

Despite the Covid-19 Pandemic, we have continued to foster a culture of community. All of the aforementioned activities have been modified but continue to occur. Spirit days and special events have been conducted over two days to ensure all students can participate. Virtual meet and greets have been conducted to welcome new students to our school and help foster relationships amongst peers. Students and staff have continued to build a caring community both in person and virtually.

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

Wemrock Brook fosters relationships between teachers, staff, administration, and families within our community. An annual Parent University offers parents different strategies on supporting their children academically, socially, and emotionally. In addition, during school closures due to the pandemic, there was constant communication with families and students. School-wide videos were created featuring the students and staff singing and dancing to maintain a school community. These videos were played daily on our school news broadcast. Each morning, our students receive a character education message in addition to the school news during WBTV, our morning announcements. Students and staff showcase work, special events, and student birthdays. Celebrations are shared through Facebook and Twitter. Wemrock Brook makes sure to consistently communicate with families through school emails, Back-to-School night, email blasts, and conferences. Many teachers use apps to maintain constant communication with families.

Community outreach is achieved a multitude of ways. We have partnered with our local police department. Classroom contracts are created and are supported by the officers through weekly visits to the school, including a lunch with the officers program. Wemrock Brook is also a proud sponsor of Generation Connection, where local seniors teach our students how to play chess during lunch. Our school Learning Garden was built collaboratively by staff and community members using donations received from local businesses. As a result, we were awarded Sustainable Schools status by the state of New Jersey. We have

partnered with local businesses to create a sense of community amongst our staff. District vision shirts were donated and are worn monthly by all district staff to promote unity around a common goal. Shirts have featured sayings such as, “Stronger Together”, “100% of the students, 100% of the time”, and “Be the Difference”.

Community support is achieved through the Student Council. Student Council members run donation drives to help support local organizations, such as food banks and domestic violence shelters. These drives allow our students to give back to the community. Students raise funds for cancer awareness during our “Coins for Cancer Drive”. Local banks within our community assist by counting our coins free of charge.

The Parent -Teacher Organization hosts various events during and after school to engage parents and families. These events include a Halloween Spooktacular, monthly birthday bashes, school-wide walkathons, 5th grade moving up ceremony, and many more.

A thriving, successful, school environment cannot exist without shared partnerships between our community and families.

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

Wemrock Brook School is not only a place of employment for its teachers; it’s a school where support, and continued learning take place daily. The goal of Wemrock Brook has been to provide the same, if not a better caliber of instruction during these difficult times. Our school has provided many opportunities for the teachers to voice their opinions, ask questions, and discuss best practices.

Wemrock Brook administrators supported its faculty and staff with the transition to hybrid learning by allowing teachers to use a Vygotsky approach to synchronous instruction. They wanted teachers to feel comfortable teaching students in-person and at home simultaneously. Therefore, it was encouraged to begin instruction with one synchronous lesson daily, and gradually increase. This allowed teachers to acclimate to this new teaching environment that 100% of the students would benefit from 100% of the time.

The school has provided many professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their instruction. One way is for teachers to use “pineapple charts” where they can visit one another’s classrooms to learn different approaches to instruction. It’s like having a welcome mat outside your classroom. This provides professional development where teachers learn from one another in a non-threatening environment.

In addition, the technology department provides virtual training for the teachers. We not only use our professional development days, but Wemrock Brook uses its faculty meetings as virtual “make and take” sessions. This allows teachers to learn new programs and to create new lessons at the same time. By doing so, it motivates the teachers to enhance their instruction with these new approaches.

Further, the teachers engage in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on a monthly basis. During these sessions, grade level colleagues confer on different domains including but not limited to curricula, student data, and best practices. Often, administrators are present at these informal meetings to provide support and feedback to their teachers and to clarify questions. This is also a time where teachers discuss current events in education through book clubs. Most recently, the teachers’ book club was about Social Emotional Learning (SEL). These book clubs encouraged teachers to incorporate aspects of SEL into their daily instruction as building relationships with students is of utmost importance.

Wemrock Brook School has celebrated success year after year because of its administration, teachers, and staff. It is a place where we continue to progress as professionals in order to provide a rigorous education to all students.

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

At Wemrock Brook, we execute clearly defined goals to inspire positive changes. These goals focus on one common theme, student growth. As such, our school embraces a problem-solving mindset. Our two

administrators have an open door providing regular insight and guidance to teachers. Our building principal focuses on creating a school culture that fosters student growth. Our principal develops the school's Professional Development Plan, plans corresponding professional development, and creates the school structure that supports these goals, such as instituting grade level preps. Our assistant principal handles student discipline and helps execute our daily routines. Both school administrators, teachers, and parents participate in meetings to discuss students progress and interventions. One recent focus has been on increasing attendance. The principal held parent meetings focused on determining the cause of excessive absences, instilling the importance of being present, and working collaboratively with parents to find a solution. As a result, we have seen great success in reducing absenteeism.

Our school improvement panel, composed of teacher leaders, regularly meet with administrators. We analyze data as a group and teachers serve as liaisons to their colleagues. During these meetings, we reflect on our performance, our school culture, and plan future professional development. Faculty meetings are designed for teachers to share their expertise with their colleagues or participate in a "What I Need" (WIN) session, where teachers set individualized goals. Professional learning communities meet monthly to address specific topics. Common grade level prep periods allow for regular, ongoing collaboration amongst grade levels. School wide book clubs are used to reinforce our building goals and provide additional strategies and resources for achieving such goals. We celebrate these achievements by using "Outstanding Pawformance" certificates and raffle prizes to recognize staff, who are showcased on our district Facebook page.

2020 brought new challenges. With our problem-solving mindset and grit, we have been able to meet these challenges. Open and frequent communication have been the norm. Based on this communication, teachers are given the support they need from personalized professional development based on technology and instruction to morale building activities. Teachers and administrators collaboratively identified student learning gaps from the previous year's standards through a fall assessment, and targeted plans were created and implemented in October. In conjunction with various stakeholders, we were able to address teachers' concerns regarding technology and COVID protocols. Each concern was tackled with careful planning and ongoing dialogue between all stakeholders. For 2020-2021, our district slogan was "Stronger Together." By working as a team of professionals, the Wemrock Brook staff and administrators embody this mantra each and every day.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Wemrock Brook has a diverse student population. Our families speak over 16 different languages in their homes! Throughout the year, we participate in events to honor our diversity.

Wemrock Brook provides multiple supports for families through our English as a Second Language Program. A Parent Advisory Committee meets with ESL parents to provide important school and district information. ESL teachers translate information to parents in all languages enrolled in the district, and the district provides a translator to assist parents in meetings. Additional support is provided to our families through The Immigrant Status Project which includes a quarterly newsletter for families that they are able to translate into their native language. In addition, supplies and a welcome kit is given to each parent at the beginning of the year. We provide resources for the upcoming school year along with online resources that they are able to access from home daily to practice English. In addition, we host an ESL Family Night where students from all schools assemble to celebrate their diversity.

We celebrate cultures through our curriculum and a variety of school-based activities and events. Our first graders study holidays around the world, where they "travel" to each country, even getting their passport stamped. During Black History Month and Women's History Month, we highlighted influential figures and their impact on the world during our televised morning announcements. Outside cultural organizations often come to our school to share their customs and traditions with our students. For example, a local Chinese School performed traditional dances



and explained each performance.

Hands Across WB is a schoolwide event where we all hold hands as students recite, “I Have a Dream.” This year's modification had student council members read part of Rev. King's speech on WBTV. The impact of his words are discussed within each classroom. We hold a schoolwide Peace Week where activities focused on kindness are done across the building.

The Global Read Aloud program operates under the guideline “one book connects the world.” Over a six week period teachers across the world read a series of books and make global connections. These books teach tolerance through diverse characters. Teachers across all grade levels meet with other classes around the world via Skype and Flipgrid to discuss the book.

The Diversity Den was created to teach tolerance and acceptance while learning about diverse cultures. Students in grades one through five borrow books from our library to share with their families. Our Annual One School One Book Read allows parents, students, and staff to share in a reading journey. Book titles are chosen based on modern messages, such as inclusion and friendship, and the ability for students in all grades to relate to the book. The school becomes immersed in literature as parents read with their children. Daily excerpts are read aloud by staff members, questions are posed for prizes, and teachers hold class discussions.

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

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One strategy that has made Wemrock Brook so successful is our focus on each individual student. The implementation of Response to Intervention, RTI, with our Problem Solving Model ensures all members of the staff understand each individual child's strengths and needs, both academically and socio-emotionally.

Wemrock Brook strives to address each individual students' needs. Our Problem Solving approach, in conjunction with our RTI model, helps us identify students and provide support. Our Problem Solving Team is comprised of school administrators, the Math interventionist, the Reading interventionist, the RTI teacher, our School Counselor, our School Psychologist, a Speech/Language Pathologist and a Special Education teacher. We meet regularly to review each students' progress and develop student goals. Each goal is individualized, specific, and measurable. Progress monitoring data is regularly reviewed by the team to measure each student's rate of improvement and determine whether they need additional support or can be exited from the RTI program. Our staff truly knows our students; they can speak to each students' needs both academic and socio-emotional.

Wemrock Brook identifies students in one of two ways: through a data sweep or by teacher referral. Upon identifying students, they are provided with a tiered level of support. Students receive an individualized tiered intervention plan. A Tier 1 is a small group session completed by their homeroom teacher, Tier 2 is small group instruction completed by our reading or math interventionist and Tier 3 is 1:1 support provided by our RTI teacher.

Students are not only identified for academic support as they can also be identified for social-emotional assistance. Students may receive support in executive functioning, motivation, work completion, or developing a growth mindset. Students can be identified for small group counseling conducted by our School Counselor. These students are regularly discussed at our Problem Solving Meetings to ensure socio-emotional growth.

Despite the health related school closure, the RTI process continued virtually. While the process maintained the same, we implemented various changes. Problem Solving meetings were held virtually via Google Meet. Our feedback for teachers was emailed after the meeting and interventions were converted to digital format using Google Slides and various software. Additional interventions were implemented to address students who were struggling with the virtual environment. Virtual learning checklists were created and our School Counselor completed virtual check-ins. Our computer teacher helped ensure all students and staff had the access and knowledge they needed to convert our RTI program to the virtual environment. We are so proud of the growth made by our students and staff!