

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Robert M. Grable Jr. Mount Sinai High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 110 North Country Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Mount Sinai State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11766-0398

County Suffolk County

Telephone (631) 870-2800 Fax (631) 928-3668

Web site/URL https://hs.mtsinai.k12.ny.us E-mail ppramataris@mtsinai.k12.ny.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* Mr. Gordon Brosdal E-mail gbrosdal@mtsinai.k12.ny.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mount Sinai Union Free School District Tel. (631) 870-2800

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Robert Sweeney
(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	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	91	75	166
10	97	92	189
11	124	101	225
12 or higher	94	88	182
Total Students	406	356	762

*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
 - 7.6 % Asian
 - 1.4 % Black or African American
 - 6.1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84.1 % White
 - 0.8 % 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:

N/A

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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	762
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.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

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

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

Total number students who qualify: 67

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

94 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>8</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>23</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>51</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

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.	50
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	17
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

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 13:1

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	97%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	99%	98%	99%	99%	99%

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	195
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	68%
Enrolled in a community college	27%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	3%

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.

Our mission is to provide all students with an excellent academic environment that will ensure all learners reach their highest potential. We will promote a climate that fosters tolerance, respect, integrity, and which leads students on a path to become lifelong learners and good citizens.

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.

Phase I: Hybrid Model - 2 Cohorts - (September 8, 2020)

5 days of instruction - Asynchronous and Synchronous

2 days remote, 2 days in-person

1 day full remote

Phase II: Hybrid Model - 2 Cohorts - (November 2, 2020)

5 days of instruction - Asynchronous and Synchronous

2 days remote, 2 days in-person

1 day full remote

4 Days of in-person instruction for IEP and 504 Students

Phase III: Hybrid Model - 2 Cohorts - (November 23, 2020)

5 Days of Instruction - Synchronous - livestream all classes

2 days remote, 2 days in-person

Alternating Wednesday (in-person/remote)

5 Days of in-person instruction for IEP and 504 Students

Phase IV: Hybrid Model (March 1, 2021)

5 Days of Instruction

1 day remote

4 days in-person

5 Days of in-person instruction for IEP and 504 Students

Phase V: Full In-person (April 12, 2021)

5 days of in-person instruction (all students)

A full remote option was available to those who requested that learning model during the entire school year.

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

N/A

PART III - SUMMARY

The history of the Mount Sinai community began as a small farming and fishing hamlet in the 1600s. Over the next 300 years, there were many changes in the economic structure of this community, but the one element that remained constant was the value of education. A one-room schoolhouse built in 1869 had a second room added to it in 1908. This school remained in operation until 1960 when it was torn down and the existing Mount Sinai students were then sent to Port Jefferson for their education. In 1965, a new elementary school was built in the community. A middle school was added in 1978, and in 1991 our K-12 district was completed with the addition of a high school. A well-conceived and updated sports complex has since been added to the campus, which encourages participation in a variety of athletic endeavors for many students. At Mount Sinai, the physical, social and emotional well-being of the approximately 2,200 student population is just as important as their academic success. These characteristics are the ideals behind the district motto: "The best in learning and living." In 2019, after the untimely death of then principal Mr. Robert Grable, the community felt compelled to honor his legacy as a teacher, coach, and administrator within the Mount Sinai district by renaming the high school the Robert M. Grable Jr. - Mount Sinai High School (RMG-MSHS). The values, ideals, and mission of our school and district is fully embodied in the memory of his name.

Our mission is to provide all students with an excellent academic environment that will ensure all learners reach their highest potential. Our learning community will provide an academic environment in which each student will develop curiosity, engage in problem solving strategies, and employ critical thinking skills. Our goal is to enable each learner to acquire 21st century skills and knowledge, develop strong work habits and a healthy lifestyle, become independent thinkers, gain an appreciation of the arts and a proficiency in technology. Our teachers shall collaborate with each other and professionally develop to meet the challenges of an academically evolving and challenging environment. We will promote a climate that fosters tolerance, respect, integrity and which leads students on a path to become lifelong learners and good citizens.

This statement conveys the principles that have granted RMG-MSHS successes and accomplishments in many areas. Our New York State evaluative test results have shown academic excellence in all areas, thus being named a New York State Reward School from 2014 to 2018 and a New York State Recognition School in 2019 and 2020. In addition to evaluative awards, our staff maintains a high focus on supporting the whole child, especially in regards to their social and emotional development and to the caveats within the New York State Dignity for All Students Act. Participation in programs such as Challenge Day, peer-support groups, and Best Buddies builds to what is perhaps our most significant accomplishment at the RMG-MSHS; the feeling of belonging no matter who you are or what you believe in. Students are involved, they set goals, they work, and yes, they sometimes struggle, but all-in-all they are able to arrive at a place where they feel they are truly understood, recognized, accepted, and given the tools necessary for college and career readiness.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

At RMG-MSHS, teachers and building administrators work collaboratively to analyze student data results continuously in order to determine common deficits in student performance. Teachers use this data to make instructional decisions on how to apply best-practice strategies to better meet student deficiencies. RMG-MSHS staff has become quite proficient in using assessment data to inform classroom instruction. RMG-MSHS routinely hosts teams of peers who wish to observe and gain more information on a variety of our programs. Our curriculum, based on NYS Next Generation Learning Standards and Performance Indicators, is designed to ensure instructional equity and rigor for all students.

RMG-MSHS offers a rich Humanities program that seeks to enhance the educational experience of our students. The English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum strengthens literacy skills through strategic reading instruction and the analysis of a variety of genres targeting authors' writing styles and literary elements. Book talks, literature circles, and author studies allow for differentiation of learning. A writing strand supports the development of writing and communication skills focusing on literary, expository, and persuasive essays. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills are the key components of the program. Our scope and sequence allow for a logical organization of skill delivery providing a template for sustained student achievement.

The ELA curriculum is literature-based, and grammar, vocabulary, and writing instruction are spiraled throughout the year and intertwined with the literature. Writing assignments include personal narratives, poetry, literary responses, journal writing, persuasive and expository essays, presentations, and a research project, which employs the use of technology and students' digital literacy skills. To better challenge and develop students' writing skills, particularly for longer writing assignments, emphasis is placed on editing, paragraph development, and revising through the use of a writing portfolio, in which students must also self-assess their work and progress throughout the year.

English classes are divided into grade-level and above grade-level courses. Some grade-level classes are inclusion-based and are co-taught with special education teachers, enabling modified instruction that better addresses students' diverse learning needs. At all levels, instruction is differentiated, rigorous, challenging, and a result of collaborative efforts by the English faculty. Lessons developed by the English teachers are centered around a shared inquiry approach that is aimed at promoting the ability to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, write, and communicate effectively.

Within our English department, we offer a variety of engaging electives that allow students to further enhance their English studies. One of our elective offerings in English entitled Writing with Purpose encourages students to enhance their writing skills with a particular audience in mind. Many of the projects created during the class benefit our school community in a variety of ways. For example, The Mustang Gazette provides the students an opportunity to share important happenings around the school, hone their journalism writing skills, and celebrate the work of their peers. The English department offers a wide array of electives as well as the Advanced Placement courses: AP English Literature and AP Language and Composition.

The Social Studies department at RMG-MSHS encourages students to learn from the past as well as prepare for the future. We offer several Advanced Placement courses including AP World History I, AP World History II, AP United States History, and AP US Government and Politics. Several electives are also offered to enhance the overall program. We currently offer a Humanities elective as well as Psychology, which will be added as an Advanced Placement offering in the coming year.

The Math department offers a variety of math options for both the accelerated students, including Advanced Placement classes in calculus AB, BC and statistics, and for the regular students with classes in advanced algebra and financial math. Financial Math is one of the most popular classes at the high school and teaches students about real life math applications including investing in the stock market, buying a car, and which mortgages you should select when purchasing a house. The math department also has students compete in

several math competitions throughout the year such as the Suffolk County Math Contest, the American Math Contest (AMC 10/12), Moody's Challenge, and is also involved in math leagues with neighboring districts. The math staff at the high school has a great amount of pride in what they do, and they work tirelessly in helping the students learn math and achieve their goals.

The Science department offers Advanced Placement courses in Biology, Environmental science, Chemistry and Physics 1 and 2. In conjunction with the AP classes, students have the ability to receive college credit through Syracuse University's Project Advance (SUPA) program in biology and chemistry, and also in the high school's Honors forensic class. Besides offering classes in the core science areas (earth science, biology, chemistry and physics), students can also choose from a variety of elective classes including forensics and marine science. The Science department staff also advises a variety of after school science clubs that students can participate in including Ocean Bowl club and STEAM club.

By graphing students' results and performing data calculations, all faculty and staff are able to identify students in need of academic intervention services (AIS) and support. The "Indicator Map" helps us to identify the specific NYS Performance Indicator and Standard for each of the mid-range questions, for which we then research strategies to address the specific sub skill or content strand in each core subject. These strategies are then integrated within the corresponding curricula. AIS teachers also develop an individualized student report reflecting the individual student's deficits and the teacher's strategies for addressing these performance indicators.

As part of our commitment to continually supporting literacy, in addition to providing instruction in how to teach reading strategies across the curriculum, teachers have been trained in utilizing close reads in all content areas. This has enabled teachers to provide and analyze a student's literacy capabilities while still focusing on important subject content.

The methodologies used within the Math and English AIS classrooms vary depending upon data results from a variety of assessments including but not limited to quarterly, mid-year and final assessments as well as the Advanced Placement and NYS Regents examinations.

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

In addition to the aforementioned course offerings, The Virtual Enterprise International (VEI) program is an exciting part of our Business Department. This national and global entrepreneurship program replicates all of the functions and demands of a real business in both structure and practice. Mount Sinai's VEI students have received local and national recognition in competitions focusing on product development, production and distribution, marketing, sales, human resources as well as finance and accounting. RMG-MSHS also offers students the opportunity to enroll in vocational and career courses through the Eastern Suffolk County Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The Career and Technical Education courses offered at Eastern Long Island Academy of Applied Technology create opportunities for students by providing them with the technical and academic skills needed to prepare for future employment and a successful path to college or other post-secondary programs. In addition to preparing our students for the workforce, a major emphasis is placed on preparing students for college. All students upon graduation from High School will have the academic ability to persist and succeed in post-secondary education including corporate training, the military, apprenticeships, certificate programs and degree bearing programs. Whether a RMG-MSHS student aspires to work right out of high school or enter college, the Academy will provide them with the tools for both college and career readiness.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At RMG-MSHS, students begin their study of world languages in seventh grade. Over 85% of 7th graders are offered French or Spanish. In seventh and eighth grade, students work toward mastering a foreign

language for communication and cultural understanding. Lessons are planned using Total Physical Response techniques appealing to all learning styles. Listening, speaking, writing, and reading are the core elements of this program. In the past, students who successfully completed the two-year sequence would take the NYS Proficiency Examination for world language and gain one high school credit. NYS recently eliminated this assessment and credit will now be granted using a locally generated examination aligned with NYS standards. The World Languages department encourages an immersive experience into language and culture. Our current offerings include French III, French III Honors, French IV Honors, and AP French as well as all levels of Spanish including AP Spanish. The World Languages department also participates in the Accelerated College Education Program (ACE) through Stony Brook University that provides students with the academic challenges of a college-level curriculum within the high school setting. Enrollment in ACE courses seeks to provide future opportunities to students, such as the ability to enroll in higher-level college courses or to complete a four-year degree in a shorter amount of time.

The fine, performing, and applied arts are integral components of educational programs offered at RMG-MSHS. Students in our music department participate in regional and national performing festivals sponsored by the National Association for Music Education, New York State School Music Association, Suffolk County Music Educators Association, Long Island String Festival Association. The roster of our Tri-M Music Honor Society chapter features musicians who have received All-State and All-County distinctions. Our visual artists have been recognized for their achievement and featured in exhibitions hosted by organizations such as the Art League of Long Island, the Heckscher Museum, and the Parish Art Museum.

The Technology department is on the cutting edge and helping to prepare students for the future with purchases of new 3D printers, an industrial planer, a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine and several new VEX kits. We recently developed a new robotics club and look forward to competing in next year's FIRST robotics competition.

The Family & Consumer Sciences Department offers students opportunities to gain hands-on training while earning college credits in courses such as Culinary Arts and Baking & Pastry Arts and offers opportunities for further growth in the area via Eastern Suffolk County BOCES programs.

The Physical Education and Health curriculum utilizes NYS standards and focuses on individual physical awareness, increases physical fitness levels, and introduces lifetime activities. The Health curriculum follows the guidelines set forth in the Commissioner of Education's Part 100 Regulations as it pertains to units of study. RMG-MSHS offers a robust elective offering in this area which includes, Introduction to Sports Medicine, Weight Training, Fitness, and a Project Adventure course that is designed to promote the development of four basic skills: communication, trust, decision making, and creative problem solving. Students may also earn college credits with successful completion of this course.

Despite health and safety guidelines associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, no courses in the other curriculum areas were dropped. Extreme care and review of each course was taken to ensure that all electives would be offered, including hands on classes that required additional personal protective equipment. Staff coordinated with school leadership to ensure all activities were offered within CDC and NYS Department of Health guidelines. Supplies were streamlined Physical fitness videos were created by staff and uploaded for students to access.

3. Academic Supports:

In an age where students of all abilities are placed within a single classroom, now more than ever it is important for our teachers to know how to meet the diverse needs of their students. Differentiation strategies vary depending on the curriculum being taught and the needs of students. Within each program, varying teacher-developed assessment strategies are used to determine student learning, guide instructional decisions, and focus on enhancing student achievement.

RMG-MSHS has a long-standing commitment to excellence in education for all students and supports the provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities under

the auspices of the Committee on Special Education. RMG-MSHS provides a full continuum of services, as specified by law, to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The continuum represents programs which are available within the district, by contract with neighboring districts, by BOCES or private educational agencies, and by State-supported or State-operated schools.

The following special education programs are offered within RMG-MSHS: Consultant Teacher Direct (CTD), Resource Room, and self-contained classes. The following related services are available to students with disabilities: counseling, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, parent counseling and parent training, behavioral consultant services, school health services, individual and shared aides, sign language interpreters, visually impaired and hearing-impaired services. Students with disabilities shall be considered for 12-month special and/or programs in accordance with their special need to prevent substantial regression

RMG-MSHS delivers a wide range of instruction based on diagnostic testing such as the Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment (DORA), the Woodcock-Johnson, Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), benchmarks, pre-testing, formal and informal assessments, and teacher recommendations. Accelerated math and science courses are offered to challenge the advanced student. AIS is also provided for students who have not reached proficiency levels on state assessments.

During all phases of the COVID-19 reopening plan, school staff continually looked for opportunities to support diverse learners by placing a priority on ensuring the resources they required were delivered during remote and hybrid learning models. Fortunately, due to relatively low infections rates in our community, this portion of our student body was able to return to full in-person instruction on a daily basis for the majority of the school year. Special attention was given to providing synchronous instruction to these students when it was necessary. A comprehensive technology survey was conducted to determine the needs of each student and appropriate technology was provided.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

To foster student motivation and increase student achievement, student recognition is also differentiated as it rewards the different levels of accomplishments within our school. The Student of the Month and Citizen of the Month breakfast recognizes students from each instructional area. Teacher nominations are rotated each month in order to ensure the acknowledgements of all levels of learners and subject areas are recognized.

Many times, RMG-MSHS student accomplishments can be read about in the local newspapers or seen on television. School highlights and successes are published in our district newspaper, the Mount Sinai Mirror. RMG-MSHS is proud of comprehensive extra-curricular offerings that enable students to connect with the school community in a variety of ways. Particularly, the Multi Media Club created and moderated a Weebly website and YouTube Channel “Mustangs Live” to showcase and livestream school activities and events before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a further response to the COVID-19 pandemic, another strategy used to engage and support Mount Sinai students and families was accomplished through Mount Sinai Mindful Connections. The purpose was to share strategies with families that they can use with their children, along with activities and challenges that they can complete together. These activities were meant to compliment continued distance learning and to break up some of the monotony families are experiencing. Many parents and families are continuing to evolve their routine during this difficult time. In an effort to address the increased burden on parents and students, when experiencing hybrid and remote learning models district and school support staff introduced this program which included skill building activities that supported mindfulness, offering best practices to mental wellness for parents/guardians and children can use to help relieve stress and remain present together, and various activities and challenges for families to complete together. Mindful Connections also utilized the Remind application for support staff to send motivational and updates to the school community.

RMG-MSHS held virtual and drive through community events to celebrate college acceptance, scholarship award winners and to deliver caps and gowns to our seniors. The drive through parade included local first responders so as to acknowledge their efforts during the pandemic.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

When the African proverb, “It takes a whole village to raise one child,” was brought to the awareness of many people after being vocalized by Hilary Clinton, many communities looked within their structure to see what they could do to make this a practicing truism. Mount Sinai was no different. The aforementioned quote is a reminder as to what the partnership of community, family, and school has accomplished to award the many successes of our students.

The families in Mount Sinai are welcomed into the school community through their membership in the Mount Sinai Parent Teacher Organization, Friends of the Arts, and The Athletic Booster Club, the Special Education Parent Teacher Organization and the school’s Shared Decision Making Team. Each organization works as a cohesive unit to stimulate student involvement throughout the year with the various programs offered. This involvement gives the parents a sense of being valued as important members in the community.

There is open communication among administration, staff, and family members with regards to the academic and social successes of students in the High School. Teachers use the technological advantage of posting weekly assignments, tests, and long-term projects on the school website, which makes it easier for many parents to stay aware of what their children are responsible for while in school. This also is a means of supporting learning and collaboration among the partnerships.

Through our community service programs, students, teachers, and family members are given opportunities to expand their learning participation both in school and within the community. Caroling at nursing homes during the holiday season, cleaning up Cedar Beach and the school grounds for Earth Day, participation in

the annual food drive, clothing drive, Toys for Tots and Christmas Magic events, and supporting the Random Acts of Kindness Week are activities that require the students to become connected with the community outside the school. It is an important component to their involvement with civic participation.

The High School's Peer Support program is well-recognized and received. Students who want to make a difference in promoting an accepting and safe climate in the High School are invited to become members. These students are then given opportunities to work together in small groups where knowledge is imparted in "training sessions." These experiences will aid students in providing awareness, as well as emotional, social, and practical help when counseling their peers.

The partnership among the RMG-MSHS staff, the community, and families is a strong one. All stakeholders are focused on establishing pride and success for its students.

This partnership was supported during the COVID-19 pandemic by school leadership and their strong connections with the community. Many local businesses donated goods and services to recognize student achievements and celebrate the graduating class. Donations included senior posters that were displayed throughout the campus and printed bags that held the students cap and gown and yearbook. As per New York State guidelines, the graduation ceremony was held as a "drive-in" style event which allowed that class to celebrate together. The Board of Education meetings were live-streamed for the public to engage in, and a "frequently asked questions" website link was continually updated for community members to access. School leadership developed a virtual parent's guide to Google Classroom and also held live-streamed parent evenings to discuss District plans for reopening schools.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers at Mount Sinai continually share their talents with colleagues within our district by teaching a variety of district-sponsored professional development courses. There is a day set aside annually for this professional collaboration and, because the district's three schools are on one campus, further collaboration is frequent and ongoing. Every classroom in each of the three schools is equipped with SMART Board technology; therefore, much of this professional development focuses on integrating instructional technology into the curriculum. MSHS teachers also serve as cooperating teachers by working with students from local colleges and universities. Professionals from each content discipline routinely participate in district-level curriculum committees in collaboration with teachers and administrators from the other schools within the Mount Sinai School District.

Professional development at RMG-MSHS is targeted to support building-level instructional goals. This alignment has a positive impact on student achievement. This process supports our Board of Education's policy requiring relevant professional development opportunities for all staff.

At the beginning of each school year, building-level learning goals are identified based on the analysis of student achievement data. Teachers identify professional goals that will enhance their skill level and instructional delivery in these targeted areas. Collaboratively with the administration, an action plan including professional development is established. Progress toward successful completion of these goals is monitored midyear and reviewed again at the end of the year. This process results in a shared vision and school instructional focus.

Once the goal(s) has/have been identified, all professional development must directly support staff learning in these areas. Professional development is conducted at faculty conferences, grade level and department meetings, as well as conferences and workshops offered by other institutions and professional organizations. Teachers meet as interdisciplinary and departmental teams to define best practices and plan how their new learning can best be implemented to ensure maximum student growth.

This is further supported by the Harvard University Instructional Rounds approach. Initially, there is an identifiable problem of practice (POP) that focuses on the instructional core, is directly observable, is actionable, connects a broader strategy of improvement, and is high leverage, (if acted upon, it would make a significant difference in student learning and achievement). Once the POP is identified, the process of

Observation of Practice begins. This requires the observation teams to collect data that is: descriptive, not evaluative, specific about the instructional core or practice, and related to the problem of practice. This all leads to an observation Debrief, whereby the observation team discuss the data in the following steps: describe what you saw, analyze descriptive evidence (what patterns do you see?), and predict what students are learning. In the final step of Instructional Rounds, the team brainstorms the next level of work and discusses how the team can take what was observed and apply it to their own practice to improve student success. The process continues until a new problem of practice is identified.

Along with this methodical approach to professional development, our teachers also belong to professional organizations at the local, state, and national level. At the end of each school year, student achievement data is reviewed as part of our professional development evaluation and planning process.

In an effort to support teachers during the transition to remote and hybrid learning, teachers were provided with professional development courses in Google Classroom, Google Meet, and other remote instruction tools. Teachers were also supported via the Technology department in the use of classroom webcams and other minor troubleshooting in order to help students with their own technology needs.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at Mount Sinai High School consists of a principal and two part time assistant principals, that equate to one full time assistant principal. The principal and assistant principals work collaboratively with Central Office administration, Elementary and Middle School administration, and the K-12 Directors in the areas of Humanities and Math, Science, and Technology to identify instructional goals and develop action plans to ensure that these goals are successfully attained. In order to further guide this process, the principal meets monthly with such directors to reinforce the school's mission.

Due to the limited administrative structure, all teachers at MSHS assume a leadership role in a variety of areas affecting student growth. Teachers collect and analyze student data, research and pilot new instructional materials to support student learning, recommend how to effectively schedule students to achieve maximum student growth, and enhance curriculum in all areas. Each administrator conducts monthly grade level and faculty meetings, which address state standards and NYS assessment guidelines. As a result of this collaboration, MSHS added benchmark assessments to provide teachers with the opportunity to review individual student data to ensure that the students are successfully meeting NYS standards midyear in each of the core subject areas. This information will allow teachers to further individualize instruction within the classroom. The administrative leadership team at MSHS encourages professional development through coaching, workshops, and making resources available to teachers. This approach contributes to enhancing the instructional performance of each teacher which, in turn, further supports student growth. Each month the MSHS Instructional Support Team (IST), consisting of administrators, school psychologist, guidance counselors, and social workers, meet to review students of concern. Subsequently, the IST develops strategies to effectively work with the student and family so that greater student achievement can occur.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the leadership team continually met virtually with students, in small groups, to maintain the connection that existed when in-person. Additionally, the leadership team identified various members to serve as COVID-19 committee liaisons in the areas of: virtual student affairs/event planning, health and safety protocols, communication, and community outreach. These administrative led committees were responsible for such items as: planning virtual graduation and awards ceremonies, improvements to the physical building to meet CDC and State/local safety guidelines, maintaining and presenting up to date and relevant information regarding reopening plans and hybrid/remote learning models and coordinating with community leaders for meal deliveries and pick up.

The consistency of leadership style and procedures within the school has resulted in a clear understanding by all stakeholders of the school's mission, professional expectations, and instructional philosophy. Improved student achievement is directly impacted by this stability, fostering trusting, collaborative relationships that have developed within the school and the Mount Sinai community.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The following quote was used as a tool to help focus our commitment to culturally responsive teaching and learning.

“It is an approach that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” Gloria Ladson-Billings

Mount Sinai’s cross curricular approach supports our commitment to the development of global citizens. Our students are offered the opportunity to gain an understanding of different cultures through interdisciplinary instruction. The core principle of our co-curricular program is the empowerment of our students to take an active role in the development of community-based initiatives. Organizations such as our newly formed anti-bias task force, Best Buddies, and Students Against Racism (STARS) clubs are actively engaged in the development of programs that meet the needs of our district and surrounding communities. Through collaboration with local agencies and resources, our students are gaining a deeper understanding of how they can play a greater role in promoting equality and embracing diversity not just within their school community but in the global community. Perhaps one of the most powerful events RMG-MSHS participates in is Challenge Day. It is done in a partnership with the Mount Sinai Middle School. Challenge Day focuses on creating a school culture and atmosphere where everyone feels safe, loved and celebrated. Students and staff participate equally to share and open up about personal experiences dealing with intolerance, homophobia, racism, sexism, mental trauma, and many other barriers to sustaining empathy and promoting equity among our staff and students. The program has had a profound impact on our student body and the partnership with the Middle School allows for reinforcement of these ideals throughout their High School academic career.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The COVID-19 pandemic presented numerous unprecedented challenges that required fast and creative thinking for schools to continue reaching and connecting with their students. Each school faced their own unique set of issues that could not be solved easily. The safety and well-being of our students and staff was at the forefront of every decision that was made.

In looking back on the response to the situation we found ourselves in, it is clear that the single most influential practice that was put into place was adopting a digital learning platform that provided a uniform on-line setting through which the school-culture could resume. Prior to the events of the pandemic, teachers in our district had the autonomy to utilize any technology and websites that worked best for them and their classes. This autonomy is something that we as a district continually find pride in, but in the spring of 2020, it became clear that consistency and uniformity in how we were going to continue educating our students was essential. Google Classroom and the Google Suite of Apps were tooling some staff had utilized prior to the pandemic. This was invaluable when the decision was made to uniformly use it as our digital and remote learning platform. Both experience and inexperienced Google Classroom users were offered professional development in its use and application. These tools provided a feeling of organization, consistency, and connection that was necessary for the students to find success in a time of uncertainty. As it became clear that digital and remote learning was going to continue for the foreseeable future, certain adaptations and refinements such as installing webcams in each classroom, making available more personal-use devices (e.g. tablets, laptops, and netbooks), purchasing screen casting and screen-recording technology, all helped to enhance remote learning with Google Classroom.