

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Mariemont Junior High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3847 Southern Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Cincinnati State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 45227-3541

County Hamilton County

Telephone (513) 272-7300 Fax _____

Web site/URL
https://www.mariemontschools.org/mariemontjuniorhighschool_home.aspx E-mail sestepp@mariemontschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Steve Estep E-mail sestepp@mariemontschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Mariemont City School District Tel. (513) 272-7500

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. Ken White
(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	61	62	123
8	55	54	109
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	116	116	232

*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
 - 1.4 % Asian
 - 3.8 % Black or African American
 - 3.8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 88.6 % White
 - 2.4 % 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: 9%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	240
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10 %

Total number students who qualify: 23

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

19 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 17:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	94%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
 Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Work Smart, Create Experience, and Embrace Growth for all learners.

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.

During the 2020-2021 school year, Mariemont Junior High School (MJHS) has been fortunate to be open as usual the entire school year for the majority of the academic year. MJHS utilized a hybrid instructional model for four weeks. The hybrid model was implemented during the first two weeks of the school year and the two weeks leading up to winter break. The MJHS hybrid instructional model provided for students to be grouped in Blue and Gold groups, with a group being present in-person, while the other group was present remotely. Technology, including Zoom and Schoology enhanced the learning experience, allowing in-person and remote learners to continue their studies whether open as usual or in a short-term hybrid environment. Both instances of use for the hybrid model were implemented out of an abundance of caution, and to allow students and staff to get acclimated to the changing environment of school and refined safety protocols.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Delivering a world-class education since 1879, Mariemont City Schools serves the eastern Cincinnati suburbs of Columbia Township, Fairfax, Mariemont, and Terrace Park. A small community feel combined with big opportunities for students K-12 creates the learning experience that is uniquely Mariemont City Schools. It is the dedicated partnership between students, staff, parents, and community members that makes Mariemont City Schools the special place it is. Each of the communities our schools serve play an integral role in the enriching environment in which our students learn and grow.

Beyond core and elective course offerings, MJHS continues to offer a robust catalog of unique life-learning experiences. The offerings continue to evolve to meet the interests and needs of the MJHS student body.

The award-winning Expeditions program, part of the Mariemont City School District's elementary through high school Warriors BEyond programming, offers experiential learning opportunities for students in order to find their passion beyond the walls of the traditional classroom. All expeditions are hands-on, experiential, ungraded experiences. Students choose their Expeditions based on their passions and the program is based on experiences and student choice. Students have the ability to choose from over 60 different sessions in our five pillars (The Creators, The Futurists, The Global Learners, The Young Professionals, & The Wellness Warriors). MJHS students learn & explore through hands-on experiential learning opportunities, all students are encouraged to build upon their strengths to pursue their passions in a low risk environment.

Climate Council is a student-leadership group that celebrates positive culture, character traits, and impact on the learning community through recognizing students and staff through weekly shoutout awards and monthly celebration of students of the month. Sources of Strength impacts students positively by providing strengths based learning activities to promote connections between peers and caring adults, while targeting suicide prevention. Signs of Suicide education is also provided to all students, in partnership with Mariemont City Schools counselors and Student Services Director to help students identify warning signs of suicide and depression in themselves and their peers. Child Focus partners with MJHS families and faculty to provide therapy services to students throughout the school day. Eighth grade students take part in a Courage Retreat led by youth counselors to enhance leadership skills and recognition of potential to impact peers. Positive behavior supports are encouraged and recognized through raffle tickets awarded for positivity, prize offerings, and quarterly rewards. The Eighth Grade Celebration is an end of year, culminating event held in the evening, to celebrate the accomplishments and growth of MJHS eighth grade students.

Social and Cultural learning is enhanced during a seventh grade interdisciplinary unit led by the World Language Department. During the 2020-2021 academic year, MJHS has developed a new, Cultural Intelligence-based course, that will be provided for all seventh grade students, beginning during 2021-2022 school year. Student Voices Social Justice Student Alliance is a group of students and faculty advisors who monitor the pulse of equity and inclusion within MJHS and local communities. Students use their voices to act as advocates to bring awareness to peers and the community to create equity in our spaces. The Day of Service is an annual spring-time event at MJHS, as all students and staff spend a day performing community service in the Greater Cincinnati Area.

The Mariemont City School District adjusted to a remote learning instructional model at the conclusion of the third academic quarter, in March 2020. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff implemented a remote learning plan in order to continue to provide instruction while all schools within the State of Ohio were required to be physically closed. The district quickly adopted the Zoom platform as a tool to provide communication and instruction in the remote learning environment. MJHS faculty demonstrated tremendous flexibility in adapting to meet the challenge of providing remote learning instruction for students, while unusable to be present in their classrooms. Faculty members took the initiative to reevaluate teaching practices to best suit the needs of learners as this unique crisis unfolded nationwide. Additionally, faculty members led Zoom Challenges pitting homeroom vs. homeroom in some friendly online competitions to encourage connection and engagement in Warriors BEyond remote

experiential learning opportunities.

Along with remote learning during the spring of 2020, Mariemont Junior High School made several adaptations to serve students during the Covid -19 pandemic. As large public gatherings were not permitted, the annual Eighth Grade Celebration was shifted to a virtual event, featuring professional video production, and a timed reveal of the video link to maintain as much of the celebration-feel as possible. Zoom and Schoology were implemented as video and learning management system tools to deliver instruction, assess student learning, increase engagement, provide feedback, and communicate with students and families. MJHS teachers engaged in professional development to utilize technology to aid in delivering remote instruction, and shared best practices through professional learning communities throughout the district's four learning communities.

In-person safety protocols were implemented during the fall of 2020, as the vast students and staff returned to in-person learning. Procedures including: one-way hallways, morning temperature checks, hand-sanitizing stations, disinfection of student desks and lunch tables, minimal use of lockers, reduction of classroom furniture to allow for increased spacing between students, and increasing the number lunch and recess periods to allow for six feet of spacing between students were adaptations related to Covid-19.

Approximately ten percent of MJHS students elected to begin the year in the Online Warriors, fully-remote learning environment. Online Warriors students are instructed by faculty providing course sections dedicated to online learning and maintain curriculum and learning activities consistent with those provided to in-person learners.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Mariemont Junior High School utilizes the Ohio content standards to guide instruction in ELA, mathematics, science and social studies. The content standards are provided by the state and are mapped out by quarter. Teachers prioritize the standards/skills that are not just content specific but can be applied to future learning. This was especially valuable, and even more crucial, during the extended closure during the spring of 2020. Teachers also prioritized standards/skills for the 2020-2021 school year due to the nature of COVID safety protocols that interfered with typical teaching and learning strategies.

In all four main academic content areas, various instructional strategies are used. In any classroom, one will find examples of differentiated instruction, explicit instruction, problem-based learning, student-centered learning, collaborative learning, and individualized learning. Learning takes many forms at Mariemont Junior High School. Teachers are continually varying instructional techniques to engage students and to meet the needs of all learners. This has been exceptionally true during the 2020-2021 school year as teachers have had to teach both students who are fully remote and students who are in-person, as well as a hybrid to accommodate students in quarantine or isolation. The pandemic has only strengthened the repertoire of Mariemont Junior High School teachers' library of instructional techniques. The district utilizes, and has utilized, instructional coaches for ELA, mathematics, differentiation, and technology in order to support teachers and staff in the implementation of various instructional techniques and strategies. Coaches provide individualized and group support for teachers. For junior high aged students, variety is key. Many junior high students are discovering and/or reinforcing how they learn best and are really beginning to take more responsibility for their own learning. Because of this, the junior high staff employs teaching and learning philosophies, strategies and techniques that foster and nurture the whole junior high student.

Mariemont Junior High School has been at the forefront of utilizing formative assessment to gauge student learning and inform instruction. The differentiation between and use of formative vs. summative assessments has been prevalent at MJHS for over ten years (before many other districts and schools made changes to assessments). Teachers use a variety of in-class formative assessment techniques to inform instruction and measure student learning. Teachers focus on student learning of skills and concepts, not just regurgitation of information. The academic culture of MJHS is supported by the use of formative and summative assessments as it fosters dialogue of student learning and progress between teacher and student. Students feel comfortable sharing any confusion or lack of understanding with their teachers because of the use of formative assessments. Teachers also allow for students to show their learning in various ways, not always a paper assessment. Students are encouraged to show their learning through projects, papers, performances, etc., not just using traditional measures. Teachers encourage students to show mastery of content at any point throughout a unit. The only standardized assessments given are the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test for progress monitoring in math and reading and the state mandated Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAA) in the spring. The data from those assessments is used as a piece of the whole data picture for each child.

Reading Workshop is the framework for instruction and the foundation of the English Language Arts core curriculum. English Language Arts course offerings include: seventh grade college preparatory (CP) language arts, seventh grade advanced college preparatory (ACP) language arts, eighth grade college preparatory language arts, and eighth grade advanced college preparatory language arts. Seventh grade CP and ACP language arts courses emphasize development of skills in reading comprehension and analysis, vocabulary in context, and integrating effective vocabulary and sentence structure into a formal style of writing and revision. Student readings include a variety of literary and nonfiction texts. Eighth grade CP and ACP language arts continues the reading foundation of literary and nonfiction texts. Students learn independently and collaboratively during Reading Workshop and Thematic Units. Students are guided through all aspects of the writing process, and they strengthen their writing skills with vocabulary and grammar skill building activities. The Reading Workshop framework builds independence, choice, and differentiation into every child's literacy day. This curricular approach to teaching reading nurtures self-discipline and engagement within a classroom environment that is organized with flexible, collaborative spaces. It also allows teachers to optimize their time and space to differentiate instruction. The teacher

consistently meets with students individually and in small skill groups to meet the needs in comprehension, vocabulary knowledge, and critical writing skills. As school moved to distance learning and between tiers, teachers committed to maintaining high expectations and best practices. For example, teachers moved Socratic seminars and discussions to online platforms and learning stations to digital formats.

Mariemont Junior High School's math curriculum utilizes a multitude of resources to enhance the learning experience for each individual student. Math course offerings include: seventh grade math, eighth grade math, college preparatory algebra I, honors algebra I, honors geometry, and honors algebra II. Digital resources are used to facilitate remote and hybrid learning on a regular basis. Resources include, but are not limited to: Desmos, GeoGebra Classroom lessons for monitoring student progress in real time, JamBoard and Whiteboard.fi, IXL, Khan Academy, DeltaMath, and Edulastic for supported independent practice of skills. The workshop model is widely used throughout all math courses. MAP assessments provide specific progress monitoring information for faculty, enable the formation of strategic groupings, provide opportunities to differentiate to extend or remediate math needs personalized for each student, as well as opportunities for students to set relevant learning goals. Playlists are a significant component of the math workshop model to enhance student choice and engagement in learning.

The feel and experience of science classes has evolved in both subject matter, delivery, and instructional strategies, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Science course offerings include: seventh grade science and eighth grade science. Seventh grade science covers a range of content, with a focus on cycles. The overarching strands are earth and space science, life sciences and physical sciences. Focuses includes cycles and patterns of the Earth and moon and cycles of matter and energy flow. Eighth grade science is aligned to Ohio content standards for 8th grade. The primary area of focus centered on earth sciences. Students also dive deeper into physical science concepts introduced in the elementary years. Life science, specifically cell cycle, genetics and inheritance are included in the eighth grade science curriculum. The eighth grade curriculum and sequence of learning is designed to prepare students for ninth grade biology.

Technology has been utilized as a delivery system to supplement content specific standards and serve as a complement to what is normally a very hands-on learning environment. Many obstacles had to be overcome, as student-centered hands-on activities were modified to teacher-led demonstrations in order to present an equitable experience for our virtual and in-person learners. All notebooks are digitally created and curated within district licensed Google Drives and folders. Additionally, students are able to access a multitude of simulations via Explore Learning Gizmos and PHeT simulations to enhance content knowledge.

Social studies courses utilize formative assessment to drive instruction and have increased the use of online assessments to monitor and track student progress through the Covid-19 pandemic. Social studies course offerings include: seventh grade social studies and eighth grade social studies. Seventh grade social studies provides a world history focus, with areas of emphasis including Europe, Asia, and Africa, through the lens of: historical, geographic, social, cultural, economic, and political factors. Students develop an understanding of how the events from the past have shaped the world today. Eighth grade social studies provides a chronologic view, beginning with the study of European exploration through the Civil War in the United States. Students examine how historic events are shaped by geographic, social, cultural, economic and political factors. Emphasis on understanding history from multiple points of view and connecting historical events to the modern-day lives of students are themes common to social studies courses. Students are guided through specific learning targets that are communicated in student-friendly language. In adapting to Covid-19 safety and distancing protocols, students have increased use of technology platforms, including Schoology, Padlet, and Mentimeter to enhance collaboration.

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

Mariemont Junior High School offers high school credit for courses offered at MJHS, including math, world language, and art offerings. Core course offerings are college preparatory in nature, and advanced college preparatory courses are offered for language arts. Career Technical courses including: Design and Modeling, Flight and Space, Medical Detectives, Robotics and Automation, Digital Arts I and II, Yearbook, and Art + Tech are offered in partnership with the Great Oaks Career and Technical Education Center.

MJHS students engage in career interest inventories and exploration of career pathways, as well as a visit to explore the Great Oaks Career Campus.

Expeditions, part of our award-winning Warriors BEyond program, provide students with exciting, innovative learning opportunities throughout the school year. All Expeditions are hands-on, ungraded, and focus on lighting a spark of student interests. MJHS Expeditions programming provides pre-apprenticeship opportunities under the following five core principles: The Creators, The Global Learners, The Futurists, The Wellness Warriors, and The Young Professionals. The Creators Expedition sessions relate to music, the arts, expression, and performance. The Futurists sessions relate to technology, logic, and strategy. The Global Learners sessions relate to cultures, traditions, and world languages. The Wellness Warriors sessions relate to fitness, health, and sports. The Young Professionals sessions relate to career possibilities, college, and life skills.

Mariemont Junior High School students can participate in leadership and civic roles within MJHS and the nearby community. Builders Club, a community service leadership organization, is guided by Kiwanis International. The club focuses on planning and participating in community service events throughout the school year. Model United Nations (U.N.) club also fosters the development of civic responsibility. Club members collaborate with students within MJHS, as well as and students from the greater Cincinnati area. Students are randomly assigned the role of delegate, prior to discussing and solving historical and geopolitical issues. Sources of Strength is the peer-led suicide prevention program, sponsored by the non-profit organization, 1N5. Students are identified as connectors for their peer groups. The Student Voices Student Alliance supports participants in developing leadership skills, using their voices to advocate for equity and inclusion in our school and community. The Science-grounded Environmental Club is focused on increasing recycling efforts and making our lunchroom more conscious about waste.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Arts

MJHS provides all students with versatile elective offerings that meet on a daily basis for a nine week quarter. Studio art choices include traditional classes like drawing and painting, and more three-dimensional options like sculpture, fiber arts and metalworks. Studio classes provide the opportunity for hands-on, tactile work in the manipulation of materials that are new to students, like wool roving, plaster craft and wire. On the art tech side, students can take digital art I & II, animation, and take a class dedicated to yearbook design, giving them ownership of this school wide project. Students can build on their computer skills, learn industry standard apps, and have the opportunity to study various career tech fields. All of these visual, vibrant art classes meet daily for a nine-week quarter and provide a chance for our students to explore their creativity and self-expression. A new development for 2021 is the identification of students gifted in Visual Arts. Teachers work together to select students for this process, which involves a portfolio review and written responses. MJHS art students have participated in a cultural exchange with students from Cincinnati's Ukrainian sister city of Kharkiv. MJHS artwork is currently on display in Ukraine, and our students are now working on pieces with the "Four Seasons" theme for the 2021 show, which will be on exhibit in September before it travels overseas. All MJHS students are required to engage in a quarter-long art course during their junior high school career.

Students are exposed to the dramatic arts in several ways as well. Besides expedition offerings in musical theatre, cinema criticism and dance, the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company comes to MJHS to perform a work every year.

In the performing arts, students continue to build on their skills as instrumental and/or vocal students. Students may participate in year-long band, orchestra, or chorus offerings. All seventh grade students engage in a performance music course, while eighth grade students have the option of engaging in music

performance offerings. Each performing ensemble rehearses daily, during the school day, with quarterly concerts. These students learn the ensemble and technical skills to play higher level music, building upon skills learned at the elementary level, and preparing them for the skills necessary to continue at the high school level.

The school year culminates with the annual Night of the Arts celebration, during which all branches of our musical arts, Band, Orchestra and Chorus perform for families gathered on the school's front lawn. During this celebratory evening, all of the visual art created by students is displayed inside for the MJHS art show. This show is judged, with prizes awarded.

In adapting to Covid-19 operating procedures, the MJHS studio art department led virtual Expedition sessions via Zoom to provide experiential learning opportunities during the spring of 2020, as students and faculty were engaged in remote learning. Art supplies were also packaged and delivered to students, to create opportunities for studio arts courses to continue through spring of 2020.

Physical Education/Health

Seventh grade students participate in a daily, quarter-long Wellness class. Wellness combines health and fitness topics and activities oriented toward helping the students understand how their bodies work, the changes that are taking place, how to make good choices/decisions in their lives and activities that will foster healthy choices in the future. During spring 2020 remote learning, students demonstrated their learning and engagement by producing and sharing brief videos of their wellness related activities.

Eighth grade students participate in a daily, quarter-long Lifetime Fitness class. This class establishes a positive learning environment, emphasizing inclusivity and sportsmanship. Physical education instruction consists of cooperative activities and game play. During Tier 2 instruction, students were asked to maintain the emphasis on fitness by sharing a video related to a component of a cooperative fitness activity.

World Language

The world language program provides students with an experience that incorporates both language and cultural components. Seventh grade students spend a quarter in each of the three language offerings - Latin, Mandarin, and Spanish - as well as a Modern Communications class that incorporates language, speaking, and online etiquette elements. Students experience a basic language introduction and several cultural components for each of the languages. At the midway point in the year, seventh grade students participate in a Global Citizenship and Cultural Competency mini-seminar that builds upon the concepts of stereotypes, bias, prejudice, tolerance, and empathy that are incorporated into the cultural discussions in all three languages. In the spring, seventh grade students preference one language to study for their entire eighth grade year.

In the eighth grade, MJHS students engage in a level I world language class of their choice - Latin I, Mandarin I, or Spanish I - for the entire year. This class is considered a high school level course and students receive credit toward their high school transcript and GPA. Each language focuses upon vocabulary and grammar acquisition through the use of stories and primary sources accessible to these beginning level students. Particular emphasis is placed on reading comprehension, language acquisition through speaking and listening, and beginning writing skills.

The use of Zoom, as well as presentations through Google Slides and Keynote, have helped to facilitate learning and student interaction for remote lessons. Students have been able to share their own voices and speaking skills through apps like Seesaw and Flipgrid. Online, interactive reading sites have also allowed students to further explore language and cultural concepts both in remote and in-person learning environments over the course of the pandemic.

Technology/Media

Mariemont Junior High provides many opportunities for students to study STEM concepts including coding, NBRS 2021

robotics, and augmented reality and virtual reality. Throughout several elective course offerings, coding is an integral part of student creative innovation. Using block coding, students create 3D designs using visual programming. While working in CoSpaces, students use block coding or more advanced script coding to make their scenes come to life in Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality. The robotics program provides opportunities for students to use coding to test their robots and execute projects. Automation and Robotics provides students with an opportunity to experience the design thinking process. Students experience the world of Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR) during an elective course offered at Mariemont Junior High School. The AR/VR experience begins with students exploring the way both realities work, including safety precautions. Students utilize the website CoSpaces to create experiences that we can view in both AR and VR. These experiences are thematic and focus on creative design and advanced coding concepts to make the experience come to life.

Other Curricular Programs/Expeditions

All MJHS students engage in monthly digital safety drills to increase awareness of digital citizenship, cybersecurity, appropriate use of technology and social media, as well as personal branding. The Expeditions experiential learning program features several career and life skills offerings, including: Financial Literacy, My Own Business (entrepreneurship), Landscape Design, Girls in STEAM, Animation, and Ceramics. In addition, MJHS features an annual spring Stock Market Game investing challenge in partnership with Kiwanis International. Principles of investing are taught by local finance professionals, as students compete in collaborative teams.

3. Academic Supports:

Students Performing Below and Above Grade Level

Mariemont Junior High School utilizes a wide variety of evidenced-based best practices in order to reach learners where they are and build upon their strengths to facilitate growth. MJHS uses differentiation and tiered instructional practices across all curricular areas in order to meet the needs of its students. Students are provided a rigorous curriculum that challenges them at each level. Students identified and receiving services through an Individual Educational Plan are included in all classrooms and supported by Intervention Specialists. Teachers are trained to use Leveled Literacy Intervention, Orton Gillingham, Lexia, Read 180, Step Up to Writing and Math 180 Intervention strategies. College-prep English, math, science, and social studies classes, co-taught courses in all core areas (for additional support), as well as advanced English and high school level math courses for those students who are above grade level. Whole grade and subject acceleration is possible for math and English courses, and enrichment is provided to all learners through the Expeditions experiential learning program.

In addition to state testing data, Mariemont uses district wide assessments to determine each student's instructional levels and to monitor social and emotional well-being. The MAP Reading and Math Assessments are the universal screening tools administered to students in order to monitor their academic growth. Additionally, for students receiving intervention, results from assessments such as the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment, EasyCBM probes, and Scholastic Reading Inventory/Scholastic Math Inventory are the basis for monitoring the effectiveness of individualized plans. In order to monitor students' social and emotional well-being, MJHS administers the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire and Prevention First drug and alcohol survey every other year. Teachers use formative and summative assessments in the classroom to make instructional decisions. Data teams review assessment results in order to recommend instructional and intervention changes when appropriate.

Mariemont Junior High uses the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model to identify students with targeted intervention needs. Based on data and needs, students are able to move

fluidly between various levels of support as staff implement evidenced-based interventions and continually monitor student progress. Teacher teams meet with the Principal, the Intervention Coach, Special Education Supervisor and other school personnel (i.e. director of student services, school psychologist, school counselor, or intervention specialist) to review individual student data and create intervention plans to be implemented and monitored.

Mariemont Junior High is dedicated to closing the achievement gap of our economically disadvantaged subgroup population. Administration and staff meet regularly to monitor the academic and social-emotional progress of these students. The MJHS faculty understands that children learn best when many non-educational needs are addressed. Homework assistance is offered by an intervention specialist everyday after school and the district provides free busing to remove any barriers to accessing this service. Free breakfast is offered every morning to those in need, and through donations, and a fund coordinated by the Mariemont Schools Foundation, clothing and holiday support are provided to families in need.

Special Education/Students with Disabilities

Intervention specialists offer a variety of lab classes to deliver specially designed instruction in reading comprehension, decoding, written expression, and math. The research-based curriculums utilized include Orton Gililnham, Leveled Literacy Intervention, (LLI) Read 180, Math 180, and Step Up to Writing. Mariemont Junior High offers co-taught sections of ELA and math. These classes are shared by a general education teacher and an intervention specialist. The class consists of heterogeneous groups of students with disabilities as well as their peers. A guided study hall is available for students with goalwork in organization and executive functioning skills.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Throughout this past year, MJHS students and faculty have continued to be flexible and resilient. Personal relationships have been key to building a positive school environment. On a daily basis, teachers foster student growth not only academically with their content, but also socially and emotionally as they adapt and adjust to Covid-19's impact on the world around them. MJHS's number one priority has been building relationships with students, both during school closures/remote learning and when students are able to learn in-person. During remote learning, MJHS faculty engaged in daily check-ins with students, and provided one on one support to provide academic and socio-emotional support. Faculty continue to check-in with students on a regular basis, during homeroom periods, and provide many opportunities for students to share their feelings with trusted adults. Sources of Strength student leaders and faculty advisors have been provided support and a positive influence through remote learning, during the spring of 2020, and in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year. During the spring of 2020, Sources of Strength student leaders created videos and social media content to reinforce positive choices, connection, and support for peers while students were learning in a fully remote environment. As students have returned to in-person learning, beginning with the fall of 2020, Sources of Strength programming has adjusted to help students identify their preferred methods of stress relief, development of mindfulness and calming strategies, recognition of the challenges faced by teens, and reinforcement of the value of having trusted adults present in the lives of students.

At Mariemont Junior High School, "Our 20 Square Feet of Influence" is emphasized in providing a framework for positive interactions and an engaging culture that supports growth academically, socially, and emotionally. The premise of the 20 square feet is that each member of the learning community has a profound influence on those they come in contact with throughout the school day. That influence may take place in the classroom, on the school bus, in the hallway, or in the cafeteria. Students and faculty have the opportunity to influence in a positive or negative manner. MJHS faculty reinforce that each member of the learning community has the opportunity to positively influence school culture on a daily basis.

Junior high school is a bridge to high school, and programming is focused on providing students with a broad array of opportunities that help them to get involved in the school and follow their emerging passions. The goal is to support the whole learner and to nurture development in providing a well rounded experience. Mariemont Junior High School offers a number of Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) interscholastic athletic opportunities, community service and civic clubs, as well interest based clubs for students to engage and lead, including world language, math, environmental, STEAM, and Project Lit. MJHS students have additional opportunities to perform in the annual spring play or to compete as a member of collaborative Power of the Pen writing team.

Promoting inclusivity and connection is at the center of the Mariemont Junior High School student culture and all activities. Student recognition is also important at Mariemont Junior High School. Each month, four students are recognized as students of the month. Recognition celebrates positive student impact within their 20 square feet of influence. Student-led climate council nominates students of the month, as well as the weekly Friday recognition of four to six students for demonstrating positive character traits, passion for learning, and resilience.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The educational experiences of students at Mariemont Junior High are enhanced through partnerships with three support groups – PTA, Music and Arts Association (MAA), and Athletic Boosters. These groups work collaboratively with the Mariemont Schools Foundation to provide important resources and financial support to enhance and extend student programming. Positive relationships with support groups is beneficial in keeping stakeholders well informed.

The Mariemont City School District provides weekly targeted emails, known as the "Warrrior Weekly" to

families within the district. Additionally, a monthly newsletter is provided to families of MJHS students, to provide building specific information, which supplements the Warrior Weekly message. Social media postings are created by the junior high school faculty and principal and are in alignment with promoting the good news of students, staff, and support groups.

Family orientation and transition sessions are provided and have been adjusted to virtual events due to Covid-19 safety guidelines. The sixth to seventh grade transition has been tweaked to become a virtual event, with each faculty member providing an introductory video to help students and families get to know staff and course offerings. A student-led tour of the school building has been created and will be added to the virtual open house website. The Mariemont Junior High Success Guide will be provided in hard copy format, and the electronic version will be linked with virtual open house materials (videos, course descriptions, virtual tour, success guide). A follow-up question and answer session will be provided for students and families to ask questions of the school counselor and principal via Zoom video conference.

Mariemont Junior High School has continued to engage parent participation during Covid through the use of quarterly parent engagement surveys, Zoom meetings for PTO, live-streamed athletic events and music performances, and updated dashboards of active Covid-19 cases. Mariemont Junior High School has partnered with the Mariemont Schools Foundation to utilize an angel fund to provide hotspot wifi access and meals for families that have a need due to circumstances related to Covid-19 or the spring 2020 Ohio school closures (buildings closed; remote learning). The school foundation's angel fund is sponsored by community partners, families, and local businesses.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

One of the most crucial components of the work at Mariemont Junior High School is the culture developed for and support given to the professionals in the building. This philosophy has been in place prior to the Covid-19 pandemic's influence on education.

In adapting to remote learning during the spring of 2020, the leadership and professional development teams devoted a week to develop a lesson template to assist teaching faculty in the creation of streamlined lessons for their students. During this time, support was provided for teachers to enhance technology proficiency to make learning accessible in the remote environment, as well as extension opportunities for teachers ready to progress to the deeper levels of technology utilization. Weekly collaborative meetings were held to coordinate instructional adjustments, needs for support, and sharing lessons learned through remote learning. At the end of the 2019-20 school year, the district created a week of experiential learning, branded as Mission BEyond, for students to have a soft end to the school year, while making up for Expeditions experiential learning sessions that were canceled due to the closing of Ohio schools. During the Mission BEyond week or experiential learning, MJHS faculty engaged in professional learning to assess needs, reflect upon remote learning, and to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.

For the 2020-21 school year, additional professional development days and early dismissal days were added to the calendar to provide teachers with time to make adjustments for the return to in-person learning, with Covid-19 safety protocols in place. Many times during professional development, teachers and staff are provided windows of time that are unstructured, to allow for the flexibility to personalize their needs and professional learning goals.

MJHS professional learning is framed within the Mariemont Academy structure. Mariemont Academy days are themed, and the professional development menu is offered in an interest based conference-like format. The district leadership team and faculty professional development representatives gather feedback after each Mariemont Academy day and use that feedback to develop future professional learning opportunities. A district professional development team, composed of teachers and staff from each school building assists in the planning and delivery of Mariemont Academy professional learning sessions, to ensure staff input and ownership. The collective approach for professional development is to personalize and differentiate professional learning time and opportunities to meet teacher needs and goals for growth.

4. School Leadership:

Mariemont Junior High School embraces a shared leadership style. The principal is involved in all aspects of daily school life. The principal actively interacts with students in the morning, between classes, in the cafeteria during lunch, and at dismissal. The principal places great importance on getting to know students, visiting classrooms, and being present at events during and after school. The emphasis on connection and presence is the foundation for positive relationships with students, families, and faculty. With feedback from the district leadership team and school board, the principal sets building goals and targets for professional development and achievement each school year.

Covid-19 provided opportunities for school district leaders to work with building level leaders and teachers to create a safe atmosphere for students to learn and grow. This strong collaboration began with the faculty's willingness to adjust pre Covid-19 teaching style(s) to accommodate safe teaching through physical distance. Teachers and administrators worked together to develop safe practices for dismissals, arrivals and hallway activity. Leadership roles were established to coordinate daily temperature checks, hand sanitizing, cleaning of student desks and supplies, along with procedures to support facial coverings.

School district leaders, building leaders, support organizations, families and the community (Kiwanis, local businesses) partner to support MJHS students. District leaders, building principal and teacher leaders work together to do what's best for kids. All leaders are approachable and willing to do whatever it takes to support staff. When there is an issue or concern, there are procedures in place to facilitate the discussion of and/or arrive at a resolution. The Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for collaboration and support for the shared mission of serving students and families. For example, the MJHS principal was required to quarantine due to family Covid-19 exposure on two occasions. While the principal adjusted to lead remotely, members of the district leadership team stepped in as acting principal to lead the in-person day to day activities of the school day. As MJHS teachers have been required to quarantine, the building principal or teacher leaders have stepped in to provide substitute coverage and assistance with technology and lesson planning. When a teacher needs a bit of flexibility to attend a family matter or child's performance, the school team works together to enable the teacher to be present for the family. The MJHS faculty and principal regularly work together to support each other in providing the best possible learning experience for students, while providing the best possible vocational experience for faculty.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Ensuring equity, cultural awareness, and respect in the classroom are valued in Mariemont. The staff has participated in multiple professional development training sessions led by the building and district Global and Cultural Perspectives teams. The staff collaborates with the district Director of Equity and Inclusion on examining and implementing resources that support culturally responsive and proficient instruction. The district is working through an equity audit in which refinements will be suggested based on data collected from classroom walkthroughs and observations throughout Mariemont Junior High School building. The building Global and Cultural Perspectives committee meets monthly to discuss the climate in our building, community, and nation in order to stay aware of and respond to support the students in the area of equity, cultural awareness, and respect in the classroom. The Student Voices: Social Justice Student Alliance group is led by the Social Studies department. The Student Voices group is focused on supporting club members in engaging in allyship, advocacy, and action. The students who are involved in Student Voices are creating a resource for our building to use as a guideline for civil discourse and interaction. All seventh and eighth grade students engaged in a lesson learning about qualities of civil discourse and the Student Voices group is using that data to create the resource that will be displayed throughout the building. The Social Studies department collaborates on creating & implementing current events lessons, weaving them into the 7th and 8th grade curriculum. Students have an additional opportunity to engage in civil discourse in the Model United Nations club.

The Model United Nations club allows for students to develop collaboration skills as well as increased cultural awareness throughout conference opportunities over a diverse area of subject

matter. Students engage in discussions with students from other schools to work to solve real world issues such as international peace agreements, and access to clean water. This past year marked the 3rd in-house conference for Mariemont Junior High students in which teachers facilitated and designed opportunities for students to engage in collaborative discussion surrounding various historical topics.

Project LIT is a grassroots network of student-led book groups that aims to get young people excited about reading by highlighting diverse, high-interest, culturally relevant books. Students, who choose to participate in Project Lit, typically meet during lunch or after school to discuss their current readings. The MJHS language arts department facilitates Project LIT meetings and serve in an advisory capacity.

World language clubs provide students the opportunity to further explore and experience cultural aspects beyond the classroom. Students participate in the Pulsera Project (selling of pulseras - colorful bracelets - made by artisans in Nicaragua and Guatemala, with one hundred percent of the funds going directly to support artisans and their families).

Seventh grade students participate in a Cultural Awareness and Global Citizenship experience. Students engage in several learning activities led by their world language teachers. Themes of emphasis included: tolerance, acceptance, respect, culture, cultural competence, diversity, cultural sensitivity, stereotypes, multiculturalism, prejudice, discrimination, bias, evaluation of literature, rol play exercise, and discussions related to cultural awareness.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Mariemont Junior High School has focused on ensuring continuity of instruction during the Covid-19 closure and reopening of school in 2020-2021. In order to do so, the junior high school team had to plan for procedures to ensure consistent participation and regular student attendance. Realizing that Covid-related quarantines, remote learning, and ever evolving safety protocols had the potential to lead to instability, MJHS and the district team collaborated to develop a plan to create stability for students' core instruction. Continuity of instruction was achieved through the use of technology infrastructure, instructional and technology integration coaching and a district adopted plan to ensure student and staff safety during the fall 2020 restart. In order to meet the needs of all learners and staff, the MJHS team aimed to provide a unique experience utilizing technology to provide consistent access to instruction and learning opportunities. Every student is provided with a school issued iPad, stylus and a keyboard along with access to our school district learning management system, Schoology. Schoology was in an exploratory phase, as schools closed during March of 2020. The 2020-2021 school year has seen a robust development of Schoology as the hub for learning and communication, helping to bridge the challenges created by student and teacher quarantines and four weeks of hybrid learning.

Each teacher is provided a professional license for Zoom video conferencing, in order to ensure safety and privacy for the learning experience. Each teacher is issued an iPad, stylus, keyboard, along with a MacBook pro laptop. This technology infrastructure made the continuity of instruction possible. Many of the structures utilized to allow for continued learning through the Covid-19 pandemic were in place prior to March 2020, but they weren't utilized as consistently or as effectively as they had to be once the closures began. Thankfully, the MJHS faculty had a base familiarity with the components which allowed them to flourish during this time. Teachers were also provided a basic instructional template, as well as instructional and digital coaching and support to assist in the transition from in-person instruction to the March 2020 shift to remote learning.

For the 2020-2021 school year, students and families were able to decide on their preferred learning environment. The vast majority of families selected in-person learning for their students, while approximately ten percent selected a one-hundred percent virtual option, known as Online Warriors. For Online Warriors students, the MJHS faculty collaborated to provide a classroom experience, as opposed to an asynchronous course with limited interaction and connection. Online Warriors students and teachers regularly utilizing Zoom and Schoology, are broadcast into a classroom with a live teacher, and follow their daily junior high bell schedule. Online students are provided live instruction and opportunities for collaboration, similar to their in-person peers. Likewise, if a student is quarantined and unable to attend school, the student has the option to Zoom into class and continue education in real-time. Another element of continuity of instruction has been the provision of remote lessons when teachers have been home due to Covid-19 quarantines and contact tracing. Teachers have made use of Zoom to provide instruction from home, while students are present for in-person learning and accompanied by a member of the school's faculty for supervisory and technical support. Adapting to successfully educate and support students throughout the Covid-19 pandemic has required a delicate blend of human connection, resilience, instructional adaptation, and technology infrastructure. The Mariemont Junior High School staff has embraced this challenge in order to provide the best possible educational experience for their students.