

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Fallen Timbers Middle School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6119 Finzel Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Whitehouse State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 43571-9589

County Lucas County

Telephone (419) 877-0601 Fax _____

Web site/URL
<https://www.anthonywayneschools.org/fallen-timbers> E-mail bbocian@anthonywayneschools.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Jim Fritz E-mail jfritz@anthonywayneschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Anthony Wayne Local School District Tel. (419) 877-5377

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Jeff Baden
(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.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	163	172	335
6	167	172	339
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	330	344	674

*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
 - 2.7 % Asian
 - 2.3 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 3%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	20
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	674
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Arabic, Punjabi, Spanish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %

Total number students who qualify: 88

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

87 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>4</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>30</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>35</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	37
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 18:1

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	98%	96%	96%	97%	97%
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.

Our mission is to partner with the community by engaging students in learning opportunities empowering them to be active, responsible, and productive citizens in society.

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.

Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, Fallen Timbers Middle School operated on three different schedules. We began the year using a Hybrid learning model which consisted of students attending school in-person two days a week. As COVID-19 cases increased throughout our community, we moved to a fully remote schedule. Once cases declined, we once again instructed students using the hybrid model. At present time, FTMS has returned to in-person learning for all students five days a week.

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

Whitehouse, Ohio is a close-knit community 20 miles South of Toledo. Fallen Timbers Middle School (FTMS) is the starting point of community cohesion where 675 students in grades 5-6 come together for the first time to enhance foundational academic knowledge, cultural and social-emotional awareness, and physical skills. Central to our programming, “The Portrait of the General” framework distills our district’s guiding principles into five key competencies: A Learner’s Mindset, Communication and Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Flexibility and Adaptability, and Empathy.

Most FTMS students previously attended a PK-4 school within the 77 square mile Anthony Wayne Local School District (Waterville, Whitehouse, and Monclova Primary Schools). FTMS shares a campus with our district’s High School and Junior High School, facilitating close relationships across buildings. Faculty and staff support the transition from smaller community schools to the secondary buildings beginning with family tours and programming that emphasizes a partnership between school and home. We prepare sixth-graders to transition to Anthony Wayne Junior High School through curriculum alignment and school counselor collaboration between buildings.

The education, healthcare, and automotive industries drive the regional economy. Family median annual income is approximately \$110,000; however, 11% of our students qualify for free and reduced meals. Equitable access is maintained by linking families to community support. In 2021, FTMS was recognized as a Purple Star school by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) for developing procedures to help meet the needs of children from military families. The racial composition of the school is predominantly (90%) White; 10% of students are bi-racial, Asian, and African American. We support diversity through our curriculum and opportunities for students to learn and respect various cultures. We leverage familial support through our Parent Teacher Association and frequently invite our families to participate in awards programs, concerts, and as tutors.

FTMS uses Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) for all learners. Through PBIS, students are encouraged to be respectful, responsible, safe, and involved and are nominated for recognition for exhibiting these behaviors. Our engaging, positive environment contributed to a 97% student attendance rate, earning “A” ratings on the most recent ODE school report cards.

With nearly forty teachers and a student-to-teacher ratio of 18:1, FTMS faculty and staff engage students through our curricular framework. School counselors schedule classes to support inclusion (13% of students have Individualized Education Plans), gifted (27% of students), and general education learners. We include instruction in art, band, choir, computer, music, and STEM. The Response to Intervention (RTI) program provides additional support to students who meet with a building tutor for data-driven tiered interventions. All students benefit from a no new instruction period, FLEX, where teachers re-teach material and students practice skills, start homework, or spend extra time on assignments.

Teams of two, three, and four teachers provide instruction in the core subject areas. In our unique structure, bells only chime to start and end each day; otherwise, each team has the flexibility to determine a daily schedule situated around lunch and specials classes. This format allows teams to determine special reward days, offer additional support during FLEX periods, and promotes inclusion and belonging. Teams collaborate frequently through common planning and close room proximity. Each team develops a unique name: some based around the school colors and mascot, such as Blue Crew and Five Star Generals, while others represent fun and learning, such as Funky Monkey and Team Masterminds.

Through our outdoor education program, sixth-graders camp for a week in Hillsdale, Michigan; for many students this is their first time away from home. Camp transforms classroom knowledge into applied knowledge. Students experience personal growth, teamwork, and bonding with teachers and camp volunteers through exciting activities including canoeing, water quality analysis, hiking, archery, and a climbing wall.

Teachers volunteer beyond the school day to lead clubs that enhance our strengths in physical, social, and

emotional learning. Blue Man Group offers a blend of physical activities combined with lessons in leadership and personal development. Students also participate in Girls on the Run, a national program promoting self-esteem and positive body image through education about friendship, leadership, exercise, and nutrition.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed one of the greatest obstacles ever faced by those in our school community, forcing the closure of schools and creating anxiety. The FTMS staff turned to the competencies included in the “Portrait” to bond together and serve students in ways previously deemed unattainable.

As obstacles to effective instruction mounted, Collaboration and Communication increased as teachers shared tools and techniques for teaching remotely. Critical Thinking skills strengthened as the school setting was modified for appropriate social distancing and contact tracing. Faculty developed protocols for sanitizing materials between classes. Instead of students transitioning to classrooms, teachers began traveling instead. Our ability to adapt and remain flexible have been critical to our navigation of the pandemic and our continued successes.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Our community of educators collaborates to create engaged citizens. FTMS implements the core curriculum established by the Ohio Department of Education, recently earning an “A” on the state report card for student progress toward mastery of these curriculum standards. Faculty in each content area vertically and horizontally align the sequence of instruction throughout our building and with the other schools in our district, promoting scaffolded, gradual development of knowledge and skills. In each area, students are challenged to propose contextually aware solutions that consider potential impacts on other parts of a system, grounding them in content and critical thinking skills while providing space to practice the core characteristics expressed in “The Portrait of the General.” The “Portrait” includes Adaptability and Flexibility, Collaboration and Communication, and Empathy: traits that comprise the foundation of our educational approach.

COVID-19 galvanized school-wide innovative approaches to instruction and assessment. We collaborated to prioritize “power standards,” in case an increased need for remedial instruction or another unforeseen circumstance impacted our ability to cover each standard. Using Kahoot!, Quizizz, EdPuzzle as vehicles of formative assessment and Edulastic and Google Forms for flexible, differentiated, and digital summative assessment, we ensured we had data to provide individualized support and enrichment. Curriculum choices kept flexibility in mind.

Teachers differentiated for ability and learning style, and also for varying degrees of participation in the learning process. We scaffolded lessons so that students who participated remotely had a fair opportunity to access instruction and demonstrate their understanding. Families were assisted with gaining access to technology and other materials when needed, and videos of classroom instruction supported students who could not attend in person.

Our hybrid model created a unique environment for personalized attention and feedback. While at home, students had access to videos and reading materials to view once or repeatedly, depending on their needs and interests. Accommodations such as fewer answer choices or more visual support such as pictures, diagrams, and even gifs supported below-level achievers. For above-level achievers, challenge questions, as well as additional opportunities for high levels of inquisition, were provided.

ELA teachers support students in making the middle-grade transition from learning to read to reading to learn through interactive lessons in Google classroom, breakout rooms for pre-teaching and re-teaching, and Youtube videos of classroom instruction for students who are unable to attend in person. Our reading series, “Wonders,” not only integrates digital supports to meet the needs of various readers, it also weaves social and emotional learning competencies into the ELA lessons. This curricular choice has been popular with students because it includes texts that are interactive, including audio-visual components and games.

Instructional units include analysis of literature and informational text; the craft, structure, and complexity of the written word; text types and purposes; and presentation of knowledge. The shift to remote learning provided an opportunity for students to integrate found materials in their homes into projects, increasing their creativity, adaptability, and critical thinking.

The math curriculum includes Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Fractions, Measurement and Data, Geometry, and Ratios supported by a digital textbook, direct instruction, and Khan Academy. Throughout COVID-19, the math department created instructional videos, recorded labs, and used simulations.

While remote, dry erase boards were used for each student during GoogleMeets to gather real-time feedback related to individual progress. Problem based learning, such as a Water Bottle Flip Challenge, engaged math standards while reinforcing scientific inquiry. Assessments were converted to Google Slides and Google Forms to increase accessibility. Khan academy gave students the opportunity for extra practice in weak areas and to work ahead for enrichment.

Science teachers cover a trifecta of earth, physical, and life sciences. Each week, teachers pose a question on Monday and refer to it throughout instruction. Each Friday, students make a conclusion statement answering the question, giving teachers rich descriptive data to plan instruction for the following week.

Efficacy of summative assessments was increased in the digital pivot: trends of frequently missed questions and concepts became more apparent, providing data to support impactful re-teaching. Teachers made daily determinations about lessons while remote, planning hands-on instruction for likely favorable days. Hands-on science equipment was delivered to homes so that quarantined students were able to participate in lessons including the solar system, light and sound, energy and force, and ecosystems.

Our social studies curriculum focuses on ancient civilizations, world religions, the founding of the United States, and interdependence in the modern world. Teachers use student choice for project development (i.e. Minecraft, drawing, building, writing), and virtual reality Google Expeditions to make locations of study salient to students. COVID-19 has provided the opportunity for virtual field trips all over the world, and to invite guest speakers from major religions into our digital classrooms to connect and share their experiences. Converting formative and summative assessments to a digital format allowed us to make decisions about group work, re-teaching material, and enrichment.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At FTMS students build skills and knowledge in subjects beyond the core curriculum. Students elect to participate in band or choir, while all students participate in art, computer, music, physical education, and STEM. All classes were modified to use Google Classroom to maintain flexibility and meet safety protocols during the pandemic.

All students participate in art as a holistic practice building physical dexterity, critical thinking, problem solving, and spatial reasoning skills. We responded to limitations on sharing materials by instituting art journaling. Journals were exploratory and allowed students to invest in their own creative choices. Throughout the pandemic, we sent home supplies and created instructional and time-lapse videos to assist students in completing projects.

Fifth-graders meet twice and sixth-graders meet three times weekly for band. Band enhances problem solving, listening, teamwork, and math skills, including fraction relationships. In response to COVID-19, we instituted smaller groups, implemented bell covers and face shields, and taught students careful management of moisture and condensation. Grading shifted to target content over procedure, focusing on the achievement of attainable goals. Students took ownership of their learning by choosing from a variety of internet resources to support practice.

Our choir meets three times a week and incorporates focused units throughout the year. Performing a stage musical incorporates elements of set design, management skills, and choreography, and our unit about street performers explores cultural diversity. Throughout the pandemic, we have encouraged students to develop mindfulness and hope through music. While COVID-19 stopped progress on the performance of our musical, students were able to read musicals and experience them through singing at home. New opportunities were created such as outdoor singing.

Computer class supports communication, physical dexterity, and life skills. We cover keyboarding, video production, and how to prepare documents. Through the facilitation of breakout rooms and expertise in Google Classroom students gain valuable practice with educational technology processes. Students work

together in the breakout rooms to solve problems in small groups.

In music, students are presented with traditional and contemporary music to apply terms that include meter and rhyme. Students explore instruments and musical forms across historical periods and cultures and learn to identify major genres and periods in music. They practice active listening and are able to describe the dynamics, meter, tempo, and tone in various musical pieces. Due to COVID-19 protocols, the use of recorders was changed to spoons in order to practice accompaniment without lifting masks or blowing into instruments.

Students in physical education learn to support each other, focusing on physical skill, health, celebrating passion, and following instructions. All year, students at FTMS practice actual Olympic events culminating in our Track and Field Day which was held virtually this year. Throughout remote learning, we encouraged families to develop a sense of community in fitness, immersing students in laughter with activities like the Chicken Dance and dress-up days aligned with learning targets (i.e. a banana for food groups).

In STEM, all fifth and sixth-grade students learn research skills that support learning across the curriculum. Our STEM teacher is also our media center specialist, and students are immersed in mechanical and technical problem solving through programs like Scratch, Hour of Code, Sphero robots, and TinkerCAD.

While we do not have a traditional library class, we assist students with finding books in our media center that meet their reading level and interests. To adapt to COVID-19 protocols, the media center specialist delivered books to students by creating a “portable library” which was taken to classes.

3. Academic Supports:

At FTMS instruction is provided to suit the needs of all learners through tutoring services, intervention and gifted services, a no new instruction period, and support for basic needs. We support students who are below, at, or above grade level with engaging curriculum and instruction that appeals to various learning styles. At this time, FTMS services three English Language Learners (ELL) students who receive support, coaching, and instruction from our Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) specialist.

Students performing below grade level receive tutoring through our RTI system. Teachers adjust reading levels to the needs of each student. Modified readings allow learners to access content by building from their individual skill level in order to increase fluency and comprehension. Learners benefit from pre-teaching concepts to scaffold progressively more sophisticated texts and content. We reteach concepts and skills from the general classroom, as well as provide redirections during instruction. Staff ensures students are referred for additional services when appropriate.

Intervention specialists and teachers tailor instruction for identified students by adhering to IEPs and 504 plans by using data to drive instruction toward meeting grade level standards. Accommodations are documented and evaluated to determine whether they were effective. Intervention specialists provide all classroom teachers with a list of accommodations and also serve as a resource, collaborating with teachers to better serve students. Testing accommodations are followed per the IEP; in cases when assessments are modified, staff ensures the same content and standards are assessed, documenting each modification in the online gradebook.

Above grade level students are challenged with enrichment opportunities and differentiated readings at their level. Our Learning Enrichment and Acceleration Program (LEAP) provides accelerated course offerings in mathematics, ELA, and science to above grade level students. Sixth-graders are tested to enter Honors courses in seventh-grade to ensure the continuum of services as they transition to Junior High School.

The district gifted coordinator uses assessment data and collaborates with faculty to plan for the needs of gifted students. Each gifted student is provided with a Written Educational Plan (WEP) indicating their strengths and detailing the services that are provided. Many of our gifted students participate in LEAP, where students are met with rigorous coursework and advanced content.

As the 2020-2021 school year began, FTMS promoted “Maslow before Bloom.” This philosophy, named after Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Bloom’s Taxonomy, encourages us to address the basic human needs of a child prior to learning. The approach was championed by faculty as their awareness of the impact of COVID-19 on families spread throughout our community. Many students were coping with a newly unemployed parent, a pandemic-related loss, and the overall fear of the unknown.

FTMS confronted a rise in homeless students as a result of the pandemic. As students are identified as homeless, the district reaches out to families to connect them with resources and support services. We ensure families are provided transportation to and from school regardless of their present locations. In supporting homeless families, we have partnered with area districts to foster a wide network of support. Students are offered additional educational services through tutoring and/or counseling.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Empathy, communication, and meeting basic human needs have driven our engagement efforts for students. Each approach was in place prior to the pandemic, but has grown in importance as we have worked to help students thrive in a difficult or unpredictable environment. We aspire to create a learning environment where students look forward to participating, whether digital, hybrid, or all-in. Our district-wide implementation of Google Classroom as the primary organizational tool for each class regardless of learning model proved beneficial for student engagement throughout the pandemic. AWLS provided professional development to teachers and resources to families to maximize Google Classroom proficiency. All FTMS faculty achieved Google Level 1 Certification through this process.

Students are able to engage authentically when they feel safe, which is why we focus on building a supportive peer network. We use peer tutoring, small group projects, and instruction to build empathy between students. PBIS plays a role in creating empathy as well, through providing incentives to demonstrate respect and care. Counselors facilitate classroom conversations related to academic, social, and emotional growth, giving students the language to express their feelings. FTMS participated in “Start With Hello,” created by Sandy Hook Promise, a week-long program with activities to help students connect and empower them to end social isolation.

FTMS links students in need with local resources to help fulfill basic human needs. During COVID-19, we increased our involvement to support families. Our food service departments and community volunteers provided students and their families with take-home meals and delivered meals to students without transportation. In partnership with a coalition of local churches, we provided food and hygiene supplies to students and their families. We offered free wifi in our parking lot and partnered with local churches who opened their doors so that families could access the internet for learning. FTMS distributed over 100 computers along with instructional materials. In some cases, teachers delivered devices and supplies to students so that they could participate in remote learning.

During COVID-19, FTMS recognized that communication between school and home was essential. Each staff area worked to facilitate communication about academics, procedural changes, and student social-emotional wellbeing as the pandemic protocols began and shifted. We created common language used by all teachers and staff members surrounding student expectations, which promoted engagement through clarity. If a student failed to report to their digital classroom, teachers placed their name on a central list. Working from this list, counselors followed up with families to identify needs, clarify procedures, and encourage attendance.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our families and community are vital partners in the education of our students. Effective communication is a simple strategy with complex execution. We employ a variety of techniques to communicate including phone calls, email, social media, a newsletter, and traditional media coverage. More than any single communication tool, our overarching mission to engage families and communities is through invitation.

Invitations are often managed by teams of teachers who frequently reach out to parents throughout the year, inviting them to be a part of their classroom. Parents volunteer to tutor students and assist with classroom duties. Ethnic food days and special activities like decorating gingerbread houses are an opportunity for family and community members to come into the classroom and share experiences with students.

Invitations to engage with FTMS were not thwarted on account of COVID-19. As a central piece of our communication, we invited family and community members to attend remote school events from home. Some programming was redesigned for social distancing: our annual honors breakfast was redesigned as a drive-through breakfast where students could still be recognized in the presence of their families.

The Anthony Wayne Parent Teacher Organization (AWPTA) is another vehicle for family and community involvement. The AWPTA organized a number of fundraisers to support school initiatives, including support for STEM education and updated signage in the building. Further, the AWPTA helps us communicate with the community at large through their social media accounts and general word of mouth.

A resounding theme present in our communication strategy is one of gratitude to our parents and community for their support. At our annual Homecoming parade, our student participants distribute letters of appreciation to community spectators along the route. Further, class projects often include messages of gratitude to parents and guardians.

The community learns about student achievement at FTMS through our positive relationship with local media outlets, including the weekly newspaper and local television channels. Recent news coverage highlighted our COVID-19 response, lessons students learned during the pandemic, and the friendly competitive food drive our students engaged in with a neighboring district.

We strategize our communication to meet the needs of our students as well as those outside the immediate FTMS family, demonstrating mutual beneficence. Our school participated in a penny drive for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society which helped raise over \$6000. Additionally, FTMS students participated in Kids Helping Kids' Operation Surprise Attack by writing letters of support to children in Northwest Ohio who suffer from dire health conditions.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

FTMS fosters a professional climate for all team members. We attract and develop talented educators. Our faculty consists of 38 licensed teachers, 73% of whom hold a Master's Degree. Additionally, 6 teaching aides work with students in support of our faculty. The climate is guided by our core competencies expressed in the "Portrait" and maintained through professional development opportunities, scheduling, and support of wellness.

Professional development (PD) at FTMS is aligned with district goals and surrounds continuous improvement for our building. Teachers are frequently provided with professional development opportunities as a full staff and for individuals. Throughout the year, two days of PD are scheduled along with two-hour delay PD days that occur twice during the school year. In the past, this has included topics such as Trauma-Informed Care, Google Certification, and core competencies. Faculty are additionally encouraged to pursue development opportunities that relate to their current positions. We reimburse for graduate-level college courses, workshops, and conferences. To meet new needs driven by COVID-19, teachers were offered flexible PD over the summer this past year to become fluent using Google Classroom, our primary tool for managing instruction throughout the pandemic.

Our schedule is designed to foster teacher collaboration and autonomy through flexibility. Teachers work in teams to create their own daily schedule based on the needs of instruction. FTMS educators are entrusted to plan a schedule that maximizes instructional time. Common planning allows our teams the time and space for fruitful discussions related to all elements of the learning process.

In response to COVID-19, three learning models were established: remote, hybrid, and all-in. A one-week delay in the start of the school year provided faculty the opportunity to adjust to these models. The extra time provided our faculty and staff an opportunity to collaborate and plan using new technology. Additionally, leadership established Virtual Mondays for use during our hybrid model. Each Monday, teams had additional planning time, and classroom time was used for pre-teaching and relationship building with students.

We communicate respect for our faculty and staff by considering their holistic needs. When COVID-19 vaccinations became available for educators in our county, FTMS teachers and staff were offered two days to receive the vaccination. Throughout the pandemic, additional mental health support was offered through an employee assistance program. Comprehensive support, offered at no cost to our staff and their families,

includes counseling, coaching, managing stress, anxiety, depression, and dealing with loss and change. Investing in the wellness of our staff strengthens our professional culture.

4. School Leadership:

Our school leaders include the building principal, assistant principal, counselor, psychologist, and nurse along with teacher chairpersons and department heads. Our approach falls in accordance with McGregor's (1960) identification of Theory Y management style. This leadership style involves a positive, optimistic opinion of organization members, which fosters a collaborative, trust-based relationship between teachers and the leadership team. At FTMS, teachers take pride in meeting educational challenges and are trusted to take ownership of their work and do it effectively. Time and care are given to the assignment and hiring of faculty as described by Fullan (2020) to have the "right people in the right seats" based on their individual strengths.

The FTMS leadership team works closely with district-level leaders, especially the directors of student services and gifted services, who lead the identification and placement of students with exceptionalities. Decisions related to student placements are reached through careful analysis of outcomes on the Ohio AIR test, IOWA tests, Response to Intervention (RTI), and classroom achievement. Through the RTI process, student academic support is offered through three tiers of intervention. The STAR progress monitoring program is used in our RTI process. Data generated through the aforementioned assessments show trends helpful to the leadership team to identify student needs and priorities for instruction. To establish an environment conducive to desirable student outcomes, we use PBIS to promote positive behavior.

The leadership team worked to ensure the safety of everyone in the FTMS community while still protecting instructional time. Instructional time was preserved through effective planning using our flexible scheduling model. Rather than having students transition between classrooms, teachers traveled from room to room, which increased safety and saved minutes each day. We eliminated student locker use, prioritizing student engagement in academic pursuits.

The roles and daily duties of the leadership team shifted significantly during COVID-19. In addition to the traditional roles of conducting teacher evaluations using the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES), principals monitored COVID-19 updates from our district administrative team and school nurse. COVID-19 data drove the development, organization, and implementation of new safety protocols at FTMS including social distancing, seating charts in lunch, masks, zones at recess, and frequent use of hand sanitizer. Dismissal and arrival were modified to allow for social distancing. The assistant principal led our contact-tracing efforts by compiling seating charts throughout the building and school vehicles and matching them to quarantine data from the central office.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

FTMS honors the diversity of our students, families, and staff and constructs a respectful environment where differences are celebrated. Students learn through PBIS that a culture of equity is created through inclusion, respect, and cultural exchange.

We teach about social movements through programming during Black History Month and Women's History Month. While 90 percent of our student population is white, we help students understand the culture and history of cities around the world through music, art, history, literature, religion, and news. Students are provided with a news broadcast created for adolescents, in order to learn about current events, sparking respectful discussions. Scope Magazine supports ELA standards for each grade level through culturally diverse stories, ensuring that students have reading material that represents them, as well as material that expands their empathy and understanding of others.

A unique focus at our school is connecting to cultures through religion. Part of the sixth-grade

social studies standards is to teach world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism). We invite guest speakers who not only answer student questions and bring artifacts to show, but provide a different perspective on the religion than the teacher. Field trips are organized for students to visit the places of worship for these religions.

Students perform cross-curricular research on global health through a science unit that examines conditions for children in developing nations. They developed a partnership with Missions International of America, supporting their Brad Reddick School in Savanette, Haiti. They held a video meet with the teachers there and were able to gain a cross cultural perspective on education.

School counselors teach lessons that center on empathy. Small group counseling meets the needs of specific groups of students. Topics vary by need and include self-esteem, anger management, and friendship. Individual counseling provides 1:1 support and students may request this service or be referred by staff or parents. We support students facing obstacles such as a family member with a medical difficulty like cancer through individualized attention such as counseling, home visits, and facilitating a connection with other students in similar situations.

Families provide insight into the family structure, interests, and barriers unique to each student through surveys. The information gained from family outreach surveys helps us respond to situations with empathy and support. We collaborate with teachers from each of the PK-4 buildings to gain an understanding of our students before they arrive. When creating schedules, school counselors assess if each student learns best as an auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learner in order to best meet their needs. Diversity, inclusion, and belonging begins with investing time to know each student. We use each of the aforementioned strategies to remain culturally responsive in our teaching.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Community stakeholders throughout the district spent 2019-2020 developing a “Portrait of a Graduate” with Battelle for Kids to provide our schools with core values for all Anthony Wayne students. Unknown to us then, the final product, “Portrait of a General” (after our distinct mascot), would become the single most instrumental strategy to thrive throughout the pandemic. This tool guided district faculty and staff to focus on Adaptability and Flexibility, Collaboration and Communication, Empathy, A Learner’s Mindset, and Critical Thinking.

The “Portrait” defines Adaptability and Flexibility as a commitment to change course given shifting needs while maintaining dedication to the ultimate goal. As the pandemic necessitated remote and hybrid learning environments, we centered this principle to embrace new pathways to student success. Using this competency, our modifications to the schedule and safety protocols created fresh opportunities such as digital field trips around the world.

Collaboration and Communication drove the creation of new protocols and instructional techniques. A General articulates ideas in a professional manner, elicits diverse perspectives, and takes collective action. The staff of FTMS collaborated at a high level by sharing their knowledge of technology and online resources with colleagues. Teacher collaboration was observed daily as they expanded their Google Classrooms with resources developed by team members.

All of FTMS practiced Empathy for those within our school community. Our Generals demonstrated awareness, sensitivity, concern, fairness, and respect in order to connect with others. Empathy was enacted as teachers delivered instructional materials and computers to students without transportation. Empathy was vital when students and staff were quarantined, isolated, or lost loved ones.

Those with a Learner’s Mindset progress through the cycle of learning, failure, growth, and reflection with integrity. This works in tandem with Critical Thinking to analyze, assess, and reconstruct information to propose solutions. As CDC guidance evolved, we used the lessons of each previous shift to better plan the next one. We created solutions for practical concerns such as room layouts, masks, sanitizer stations, temperature checks, and the flow of the building from entrance to exit. Some lesson plans were not portable to the hybrid or remote environment, thus we focused on ways to grow skills and reimagine lessons. Multiple recordings of video lessons provided a new tool for reflection and avenue for improvement.

The “Portrait” began as a vision of traits a General would possess, and became a tool for our own growth during a challenge. Its successful adoption came from globally applicable competencies built by local stakeholders. As the pandemic has refined this approach, it has surpassed a vision for our graduates, and become a professional framework that has invigorated our entire learning community with confidence and hope.