

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 11420 South Western  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Oklahoma City State OK Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 73170-5820

County Cleveland County

Telephone (405) 735-4540 Fax (405) 692-5624

Web site/URL  
<https://www.mooreschools.com/site/Default.aspx?PageID=11192> E-mail [danschwarz@mooreschools.com](mailto:danschwarz@mooreschools.com)

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Robert Romines E-mail robertromines@mooreschools.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Moore School District Tel. (405) 735-4200

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 Mrs. Allison Richey  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 25 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 34 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	165	160	325
8	168	148	316
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	333	308	641

\*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):
- 3.4 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 13.8 % Asian
  - 3.6 % Black or African American
  - 14.5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 43.8 % White
  - 20.9 % 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: 6%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	37
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	642
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Spanish, Nepali, Vietnamese, Korean, Bengali, Gujarati, Beja

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %  
12 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 20 %

Total number students who qualify: 125

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

85 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>16</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>10</u> Orthopedic Impairment                |
| <u>1</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>42</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>4</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>5</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 27:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

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

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

Educators, parents, and the community work together in order for students to acquire necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become successful, responsible, and productive individuals.

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.

Brink Junior High School is operating as a hybrid model this school year. We are open as usual, but all students have the option of being in person or online only. About 20% of our students chose Odysseyware, our online learning platform, to do their learning at home and the other 80% chose the open as usual model. All students working online are assigned a teacher and work from home all year via Odysseyware, a self-paced digital comprehensive curriculum. On average, Brink has around 80% of students attending in person and 20% attending virtually due to COVID-19 concerns.

Moore Public Schools had a long-term strategic plan that provided one to one Chromebooks to junior high students by the 2023-2024 school year. However, due to the pandemic, funds were reallocated and the one to one device rollout for junior high students advanced to the fall of 2020. Through virtual in-service and faculty meetings, principals and the district's Educational Technology department, provided training for teachers on the district's newly acquired learning management system, Canvas, as well as best practices regarding virtual learning. In order to seamlessly transition students in and out of possible quarantine situations, teachers are expected to keep all daily lessons on Canvas as well as upload supporting video for their content. In theory, this would allow students to participate in the classroom instruction even while at home. Staff members have gone above and beyond meeting this challenging expectation. Basically, they have housed their curriculum content on the virtual platform while still meeting all the needs of students

attending school in-person.

One major challenge was efficiently distributing over 500 devices to the students at Brink Junior High. In addition, time had to be allotted for teaching the students to use the Chromebook and Canvas system. Device deployment occurred at Brink for students who elected to attend in-person. Evening deployments at the district's technology department were scheduled for students electing to participate in virtual learning. Due to outstanding planning and efficiency of the Brink staff and the district technology department, all devices were deployed at Brink in less than two hours. After each student had been assigned a device, they were taken through a series of instructional videos that walked them through both the features of the Chromebook as well as Canvas. Although instructional videos were provided by the EdTech department and the site tech at Brink, the classroom teachers at Brink did a wonderful job of facilitating the process and helped students trouble shoot issues as they arose.

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**

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Located in southwest Oklahoma City on land sold by the Brink family, Brink Junior High was built in 1979 as the 5th of six junior high schools in Moore Public School (MPS). With over 25,000 students, MPS is the fourth largest district in Oklahoma. Brink has transitioned from farmland to suburbia. Currently, eight members of our staff attended Brink and have returned because the positive impact the teachers had on them. One of our teachers use to ride her horse over to Mrs. Brink's house to check on her and bring her food!

Families are drawn to Brink for its academic excellence and commitment to the growth of each student. Teachers seek to educate students to their greatest personal and intellectual potential through differentiated instruction and personalized focus. Student progress is tracked through varied assessment tools including state assessment, STAR Reading, pre and posttests, etc. In their Professional Learning Communities (PLC), teachers use an instructional model where they preview strategies before introducing new content and design engaging lessons based on prior knowledge, conceptual framework, and metacognition. Assignments are designed to apply material and integrate technology, presentation skills, written communication, and group work. To promote academic growth, lower-level students are instructed based on their ability and Response to Intervention (RTI) plans are developed to help them set goals, monitor progress, and provide support in specific areas. Additional RTI for all students is offered through a teacher monitored After-School Peer Tutoring Program where students are mentored to improve understanding and increase academic confidence. Teachers volunteer at Saturday school, designed for students to complete missing or incorrect work. Students seeking additional academic challenge can enroll in honors courses with high school credit being earned in Algebra 1 and Geometry. To keep a focus on fun, rewards are offered at all levels. Students can earn a lunch at a Food Truck bonus by completing the monthly attendance challenge. These initiatives allow students to become better adjusted citizens who can obtain a feeling of self-worth through their accomplishments.

In response to the pandemic, MPS fast-forwarded our one-to-one device plan for junior high by three years, which included the adoption of the Canvas online learning management system. Canvas gives teachers, students, and parents 24-7 access to class assignments, notes, and resources, and the ability to communicate and collaborate when necessary, and was a significant factor in our decision to go back to the classroom five days a week, with a full online option, at the start of the 20/21 school year. Students' full-time access to devices, coupled with the adoption of Canvas, has bolstered our district's teacher/student/parent networks.

The mission of Brink is for students to develop habits, attitudes, and skills necessary for a productive, satisfying life today. Each student should understand the duties and privileges of responsible citizenship locally and globally. We partnered with the University of Oklahoma to do a campus wide beautification project. Through student-led club fundraisers, campus wide-activities, donations and a school-wide assembly put on by Student Council, students raised over \$5000 for the Regional Food Bank backpack for kids' program and Moore Firefighters Santa Express. Last school year students volunteered over 5,500 hours. Our staff collects money and partners with Wal-Mart to provide online food pick-up for many of our families. Brink sponsors a Healthy School Initiative to promote healthy and active lifestyles posting healthy eating and activity calendars on Canvas so students can create a healthier version of themselves.

Extracurricular activities such as choir, band, athletics, Student Council, NJHS and Robotics are an integral part of the school experience and encourage character building, social skills, team work and sportsmanship. Athletic coaches follow the motto "We Over Me: one mission, one family, one team" and the five pillars of Brink athletics are community, team first, excellence, integrity, and growth. Coaches model and focus these ideologies every day to develop adolescents who can apply these life-long skills outside of their school activities. Our Robotics and Archery Teams are competitive on a national level demonstrating challenging work and perseverance pay off. Student Council sponsors social activities such as our Thanksgiving drive allowing students opportunities to develop social skills outside the classroom. After school, Multicultural Club and Art Club bring cultural awareness to students by learning about specific cultures and their customs, traditions, and art.



The “See Something/Say Something” initiative started by the counselors gives students, parents, and staff a voice to bring attention to any issue confidentially and without fear of retribution. This gives students a sense of safety and belonging which helps them thrive. It is not one program which stands above all others, but all the programs together which make Brink the school it is today. Creating a positive school climate involving all stakeholders based on establishing relationships, has provided a foundation for the strong learning environment which has been integral for Brink Junior High’s success over the years.

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

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

Moore Public Schools began the 20-21 school year providing families the option of in-person learning (five days each week) or full-time virtual learning using a commercial online learning program. An existing pre-pandemic strategic plan for one-to-one student devices was expedited, and junior high students were provided a device to smoothly transition learning between home and school. In addition, MPS adopted Canvas, a districtwide learning management system, called Canvas allowing for students to access learning while quarantined or learning from home.

Canvas allows Brink’s teachers to provide an extensive range of instructional opportunities to students. Teachers can link lecture videos and notes, assignments, quizzes, tests, digital textbooks, and online simulations/games (like Quizlet). Canvas also enhances digitally based cooperative learning opportunities through discussion boards and access to shared interactive documents. All student work submitted within Canvas affords teachers opportunities to score and provide rapid feedback regarding student progress. Canvas, by connecting to Zoom, allows learning to continue during sudden school-wide closures (i.e., inclement weather). Although Canvas has been a learning curve for students, staff, and families, the possibilities for the future of collaborative learning at Brink are endless.

Brink’s core curriculum is grounded on the Oklahoma Academic Standards and curriculum frameworks provided by the state Department of Education. Our curriculum is further enhanced through comprehensive resource pacing guides provided by our MPS district Academic Resource Team. Across grade-levels and within each content area’s courses, we seek to develop routines that target skills and content knowledge students will need for continued education and careers. Instructional methods include direct instruction and modeling, full-class and small group discussions, independent practice, collaborative inquiry activities, and projects. Brink’s teachers collaborate horizontally and vertically within departments and cross-curricular grade-level teams to design and share learning opportunities, including through Canvas, which reflect students’ interests and abilities enabling them to meet high academic expectations.

Literacy skills are taught with a focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening in accordance with the Oklahoma ELA Standards. In Reading, students’ comprehension skills are assessed using STAR Reading (an online reading diagnostic program) to determine instructional focus and intervention needs. Students learn comprehension strategies, literary analysis, critical thinking, and vocabulary building skills as they study a wide range of genres that explore the diversity of our nation and world. In English, students expand and improve their writing and communication skills through various narrative, informative, and argumentative writing and presentation opportunities. Formative writing assessments are used to guide instruction which incorporates using the writing process and applying grammar skills. Teachers incorporate various resources into their instruction including StudySync (an interactive online literacy learning platform), novel studies, research and presentation projects, and independent reading and writing.

Teachers within Brink’s math department go beyond surface-level instruction by exploring more depth to help students understand the “why” of numeric calculations. Even prior to Canvas, our math teachers used an innovative online platform to enhance their assignments and assessments. This program addresses all levels of learners from students who perform well in math to those more challenged by math instruction. In addition, it allows students to check answers and find video tutorial assistance before submitting assignments. These can be used as enrichments as well as assigned tutorials to help students master concepts. Our online math textbooks use embedded video examples as well. Educational gaming platforms are used to engage students on subjects as needed. Brink’s math department consistently earns gold standard ratings on the state report card. Our math teachers have been very intentional in identifying and reorienting curriculum timelines to mitigate the impact of learning gaps caused by last spring’s COVID-related school closure.

Brink’s science department uses science and engineering practices and cross-cutting concepts to assist students in observing and investigating core science concepts and linking those concepts with skills and ideas they learn in other subjects. Students use what they already know to develop questions about what they

don't understand in the world around them. The science team helps students investigate those questions through labs and activities leading to understanding of why things work the way they do. Logically sequenced labs and activities engage students in planning and carrying out investigations, making observations, and collecting and analyzing data to construct evidence-based explanations communicated in logical and understandable ways. Science utilizes inquiry-based OpenSciEd and the 5E Model to engage various learning styles and promote students' scientific reasoning skills – skills which will promote success throughout their futures.

Understanding human interaction and developing important citizenship and critical thinking skills are the focus of Brink's social studies department. Simulations, problem-based learning, and hands-on interaction with tools used by geographers and historians deepen students' content understanding and develop wide-ranging geography and history based critical thinking skills. Formative assessments guide and summative assessments demonstrate our students' abilities to explain the historical or geographical context of a primary source document along with the intended audience, point of view, and purpose of its author or creator. The deep analytical skills our students gain are the hallmark of civics-based college and career readiness.

As a data driven school, teachers focus on both formative and summative data. Through PLCs, Brink's teachers have been trained how to create shorter formative assessments to focus on specific standards, concepts, and skills. Using technologies like Grade Cam and Canvas Quiz Diagnostics, teachers can analyze student mastery and identify which standards need immediate whole class or individual remediation.

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

MPS participates in the State of Oklahoma's ICAP, Individual Career and Academic Plan, program. Beginning in seventh grade, students are given a career interest inventory through the Oklahoma Career Guide Survey. The data gathered from the survey is used to assist students in the development of their personal ICAP. Brink guidance counselors meet with students to help map out future course work that supports their plan. They also organize career days, introducing students to a variety of career options.

In addition, Brink students have access to the beginning of multiple pathways toward career and college readiness. Honors courses, that are strategically aligned with high school Advanced Placement courses, are offered in all core content subject areas. Project Lead the Way STEM programs are available to students offering them electives in Computer Applications, Bio-Medical, and Pre-Engineering. Students in eighth grade tour our regional Career Technology Center and learn about high school course programs housed on that campus. In both performing and visual arts, electives are offered to students. The fine arts programs are taught by a team of teachers connected to the high school programs, ensuring a smooth transition if students wish to continue in high school.

Students are also encouraged to participate in extra-curricular opportunities that support their career goals such as Robotics, Academic Teams, National Junior Honor's Society, student leadership groups, athletics, and a wide variety of content specific school sponsored clubs. Brink's teachers encourage students to participate in a variety of state or privately sponsored summer programs and internships specifically designed for younger students. These extra-curricular opportunities academically support our students by increasing their levels of confidence, introducing them to college campuses and new community experiences, providing opportunities to develop sportsmanship, and affording additional collaboration opportunities with classmates and peers from around the state.

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

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Through 2-D or 3-D visual arts and vocal or instrumental performing arts, Brink's Fine Arts courses seek to develop and reinforce important literacy and math skills from our core programs. Students learn to "read" paintings or sheet music; they evaluate mood and tone. Students create art by applying perceptions of depth,

dimension, and distance and they count and sub-divide musical compositions into measures, notes, and beats. These courses develop skills that empower students to make sense of the world through making and performing their own art and through responding to the work of others.

Brink takes physical education, health, and nutrition seriously realizing that research proves coordinated-bilateral physical activity and cross-body movements stimulate brain growth and improve testing scores. Unique to Brink, we combine physical strength techniques to assist our students with academic growth. In PE, we discuss nutrition, water intake, stretches, and daily cross-body exercises and explore how these physical activities impact other aspects of life, including academics. Our endeavors have been recognized through the Award of Excellence from the Oklahoma Certified Healthy Schools and a Gold status rating on the state report card in safe and healthy schools.

Students have access to a wealth of technology resources highlighted by personal Chromebooks assigned for their educational needs (wi-fi hotspots for home as needed). Students have access to Microsoft Office 365, Google, Canvas, Clever, and programs specific to adopted curriculum programs. Sudden Covid-related school closure in Spring 2020 rapidly accelerated our use of Canvas as a learning management system. Students' digital citizenship skills are enhanced as they learn responsible email/social media use and other online etiquette. Brink's onsite technology director provides real-time troubleshooting and offers a daily 30-minute Zoom opportunity to assist students and parents with short-term virtual learning. Through Infinite Campus's parent portal option and Canvas's parent observer option, parents can easily monitor students' academic progress.

Our media center collection's circulation has increased as a color-coding system has helped students more easily identify genres of interest to them. Students can digitally access the library through their Chromebooks and can also checkout a variety of e-books. Our media specialist sponsors book clubs and competitions related to the Sequoyah book list for students and facilitates all teachers in maintaining a "What Are You Reading" poster outside classrooms to model our desired school-wide culture of literacy.

The Brink Robotics Team is comprised of students from diverse abilities who participate in a program called VEX IQ. Annually, the team faces a challenge requiring them to design, build, and program a robot which they use to compete with teams in game-based engineering challenges. Additionally, students research and present a project on an assigned STEM topic, including answering questions from judges. Significant teambuilding, critical thinking, and public speaking skills are practiced in a safe environment. This team is a natural extension of our new STEM class.

Brink Crew is a leadership and mentorship program for students entering the eighth grade. Students apply for Brink Crew and those accepted go through intensive summer leadership training. Beginning with Brink's "Back to School" activities and events, these selected students take on not only leadership and facilitator roles within the event, but more importantly a mentor role for incoming seventh grade students. Seventh graders are encouraged to seek out Brink Crew members with questions they may have about procedural issues within the school. These students are a wonderful representation of our school, and through their leadership help to create and sustain Brink's culture of excellence.

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

Brink Junior High uses an extensive layered approach when it comes to academic supports. Everyone plays a part in educating each student. All students are taught time management techniques and are given a student portal to track their grades and progress. Parents are encouraged to sign up for parent portal, allowing them to track their child's grades and attendance in real time. These features allow students and parents to communicate about their academic progress and get help from their teachers, counselors, and principals when needed. Parents also have the opportunity to be parent observers in Canvas.

The teachers track the progress of their students. A Response to Intervention (RTI) is implemented for those students, who according to assessment data, have developed achievement gaps.

Assessments, like the STAR reading tests, pre and posttests, and state assessments, monitor student progress throughout the RTI process. Students operating above grade level have many opportunities to thrive at Brink. Honors classes, STEM classes, and the opportunity for pre-engineering at the high school level freshman year are all explored.

Special education students are an important part of the success at Brink. All special education students are put on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Every student on an IEP has a meeting with a team to discuss areas of strength and weakness for the student. The team then decides on a plan that best fits the needs of the student. Since every student is different, every IEP is different. At Brink we recognize the most important person in that meeting is the student and tailor the plan toward that student. The student's assigned case manager is responsible for making sure the IEP is being followed and that the achievement gaps are closing. They meet with all teachers to collaborate on lessons and discuss pedagogy for academic achievement.

Counselors constantly monitor student progress. When a student is struggling either with attendance or classwork, the counselor intervenes and works with the parent, student, and teacher. Counselors can set up tutoring, study hall, or meetings to produce an academic plan. In addition, there is a district Licensed Professional Counselor that is on Brink's campus once a week providing intensive therapy sessions for any student struggling with mental health issues.

Principals can do all the things the counselors do plus they are the school leaders in instructional planning. Instructional planning is geared toward student success. Principals make sure the teachers are working together and instruction is continuing to improve. Principals and teachers engage in meaningful conversations about how to close achievement gaps in students.

Brink offers a Saturday School to address zeroes and achievement gaps. Students that have fallen behind in their studies are given a chance to make up zeroes by attending school Saturday morning to work on their studies. Brink's staff recognizes things do happen and there are times when students just need extra time to catch up.

COVID-19 has made it tough on some students who are not motivated at home. Even though all students can complete their work at home using Canvas, many students struggle to get things done when they are not in class. This is where the layered approach is helpful to all students providing them with a healthy support network. Because of this system, we see very few students who do not succeed on state tests or who are retained. Collaboration of teachers on lessons and instruction through Canvas allows us to share videos and connect content making it more user friendly and effective for both students and parents.

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

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

Brink recognizes and values the critical role a positive school climate and culture plays in students' growth and development. Resources are provided to capitalize on each facet of a positive environment, from academic to social/emotional development as well as post-graduate readiness. The 2020-2021 school year has set several new precedents and brought forth new pathways to student education, but we continue to strengthen our positive school climate and give students the greatest chance of succeeding during these challenging times.

Brink Crew, as previously mentioned, provides incoming 7th graders with tours around campus, introduces them to unique aspects of the school, answers questions, and offers suggestions about how to make their Brink experience the best possible. Clubs and organizations are offered to unite students with a common interest.

Yearbook produces a fun newspaper each month spotlighting a teacher, an 8th grader, a 7th grader, and additional fun information about the month. Monthly podcasts, created by students, cover a variety of topics and are a must listen for all families.

Brink's teachers and technology specialist host open Zoom hours for students who need more "face-to-face" interaction or assistance with material. Zoom has also been used for school-wide check-ins from students who are virtual due to quarantines or weather-related closures. This also provides technology support for school devices, since all students are expected to use their Chromebooks for every class.

Counselors do a significant job with parent outreach for overarching student issues such as grades, behavior, and emotional issues. Teachers and counselors monitor students' grades and success with coursework and prioritize parent outreach when a student falls behind with turning in assignments. Tracking usage is an integral part of this process.

The media center website is popular among students and offers several resources such as academic challenges/games, book recommendations, research materials, and more. This has been an invaluable outlet for students, as it provides easy access to informational and recreational resources.

Lunchtime at Brink is also a community-building time. We implement Healthy and Fit kid challenges executed through games and competitions, counselors' Quizlet games for college and career readiness, Brink trivia, and other community games. These all provide students ways to become more connected with their school and teachers, which helps create a sense of unity among Brink's student population.

As a fun celebration for testing and schoolwide encouragement, teachers, administrators, and staff created a music video. By using a popular song, a fun and meaningful message was portrayed to Brink's students that we are all here for each other. This video was a great boost to our school's atmosphere and is appreciated during these challenging times.

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

Brink implements family and community engagement programs and initiatives to expand Brink's presence within our community. We expand existing programs, implement new initiatives, and modify high-contact strategies to comply with the COVID-19 environment. Brink strives to serve our community, just as it serves our students. We continuously work toward developing new partnerships with both businesses and organizations. We also strive to build and maintain existing relationships within our community. Our Brink families, partner organizations, and business partnerships are the heart of our engagement efforts.

Brink's relationships with local businesses and organizations allow our school the opportunity to assist Brink families and community members who are in need. Our local Wal-Mart stores provide food for Brink

to distribute, which alleviates stress for many students who would otherwise not have their basic needs met. Less stress at home results in happier, healthier students who can focus on their success at school, rather than from where their next meal will come.

Brink frequently partners with local restaurants to host fundraising events that benefit both the business and our school. We enlist the help of our staff, our students, and our surrounding community to encourage participation to make these events as successful as possible. This level of engagement directly correlates to the amount of funds raised. Our community sees the benefit as the funds are directed toward bettering our school for Brink students and staff. Brink also partners with these restaurants to offer student and teacher reward programs and events.

Our philanthropic programs elevate our involvement within our community, while engaging our students in giving back. Brink participates in “Moore Love”, a district-wide philanthropic campaign to fundraise for selected local nonprofit organization. Brink also partners with The University of Oklahoma to participate in campus beautification projects as part of their “Big Event”, OU’s official day of community service.

Brink implements extended office hours via Zoom to answer parent questions or concerns and to assist with online enrollment. This remote option presents parents with a contactless method of communication while still allowing them the opportunity to engage with our school and staff. Our school has also modified our interaction with local libraries that offer free tutoring and ACT prep classes, including online offerings to reflect the COVID-19 environment.

Canvas extends our outreach in a strong way. This platform offers a parent observer option that engages parents in student learning. Currently, we have 588 students using Canvas, 404 Parent accounts created, 13,071 files uploaded, 521 discussion topics, 676 active media recordings, and 7,960 working assignments. 69% of our parents are active in their student’s educational process, which is an increase from our experience with parent portal.

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

Providing a supportive and professional environment is imperative in cultivating positive workplace culture. Brink administration prides itself on creating and maintaining a dynamic workplace environment where our teachers and staff feel valued, supported, engaged, and rewarded. We believe that culture is not only about the morale and behavior of our employees, but also the interactions we have with each other and the values we believe in.

Leadership at Brink encourages frequent collaboration and communication between departments and colleagues with departmentalized team meetings, blocked out brainstorming time during all-staff meetings, team lesson development, and shared content Canvas pages. In this partially remote and highly virtual environment, Brink gives teachers continuous opportunities to build their online curriculum and collaborate to develop high quality online assignments and activities. This allows for collaboration on test preparation materials, on Canvas assignments, on virtual learning strategies, and most importantly on vertical and horizontal learning.

Brink provides teachers with a fluid, continuously updated, and collaborative forum that contains teaching tools, strategies, and recommendations of many platforms for lesson preparation and content delivery. The thought behind this forum is to prevent our teachers from having to “reinvent the wheel.” We all put in the work together, which allows more time for our teachers to contribute to direct student learning.

Brink recognizes the dramatic shift in learning environments due to COVID-19 and technological advancements, and we want our teachers and staff to feel knowledgeable and prepared for these transitions. Prior to the start of the school year, we implemented Canvas help office hours with our administration team and technology support team to answer any questions regarding our learning management system. We have also developed “sandbox” courses to encourage teacher engagement, development, and hybrid learning techniques.

When the pandemic began, “survival and endurance” became common buzzwords. Initially, this school year was tremendously taxing on every single teacher, staff member, and administrator. Everyone understands how difficult it is to make others feel valued while not feeling valuable themselves. At Brink, believing we are all in this together as a school family, we are doing everything in our power to make certain that no one feels isolated or undervalued. Through emotional, technological, and curricular supports, we continue to focus on our culture of teamwork and collaboration.

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

Our relationships with our students, parents, and teachers are the foundation for trust and the willingness to work for a common goal. The principals lead in fostering these relationships, and as a result we see the students wanting to work hard. Our leadership believes that all students can learn in a safe and secure environment. As our world is rapidly changing, we provide the environment in which students can adjust to these changes while preparing for the future. The students know that if they have a problem, they have a network of teachers, counselors, and principals who are there for them and want to help.

Our administrators want teachers to push the boundaries of teaching while having minimal classroom disruptions in order to maximize time on task. Lesson plans are data driven using Star reading tests, pre and posttests, state assessment scores, and IXL to identify areas of weakness for remediation. Aided by a districtwide instructional model, teachers develop lesson plans utilizing all learning styles. Brink’s teachers are encouraged and willing to try new ways of teaching their students without fearing failure. In fact, teachers encourage principals to observe their classrooms when trying something new and different.

The principals value input from the leadership team (department heads and counselors) before making changes and shifts in the way we do things at Brink. The team knows it has the freedom to voice opinions and make suggestions in order to make improvements. Also, After Action Reviews (AAR’s) are done on a regular basis to allow all staff to express their concerns and know they are a valued team member. It is our belief that a good idea can come from anyone on the team and that idea may change things for the better.

The pandemic has been very challenging. The leadership team worked nonstop preparing for a safe and orderly return for the students and staff. Hours were spent identifying areas of classrooms and common areas for social distancing. Seating charts became an essential tool when a student might have been exposed to Covid. Charts were constantly updated, monitored, and turned in to administration to enforce social distancing. Schoolwide training on Canvas was a top priority for teachers to learn the program which allows for lesson plans to be online. No resources were spared to help the teachers learn and utilize Canvas at warp speed. Students who are quarantined or choosing to be virtual learners can access all their class lessons from home. Since this was Brink’s first year utilizing Canvas and Chromebooks, training sessions were set up for students as well as tutorials for parents to help access and navigate the program.

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

Brink’s demographics show our diverse population which we are proud to honor with respect and equality within our school. Currently, we have seven different languages spoken at Brink, all of which play a significant role in making our population rich in culture. Moore Public Schools recently purchased the Talking Points app which automatically translates school communication to a family’s preferred home language. In addition, MPS contracts with an in-person translation service, which is frequently utilized for parent teacher conferences and special services meetings. Our goal is to maintain meaningful educational communication between administrators, teachers, students, and families.

As current events unfold in our community and around the country, teachers and staff address the appropriate events by making appropriate curricular connections. Through our counselors, we provide an anonymous feedback opportunity to help students who are impacted by such events. Currently, Brink has implemented a Diversity Committee made up of a principal, counselor, and



students of all ethnicities. This committee not only addresses any current concerns, but also reflects and discusses in order to create meaningful change. Additionally, teachers are very sensitive to the language used within the classroom and explore changing or modifying the language to make it culturally sensitive and inclusive. For example, teachers are transitioning from using the word “slave” to the phrase “enslaved persons” and continue to evaluate all curriculum resources with an eye to include equity and inclusion. We pride ourselves in being a family and having effective and appropriate communication to support this.

MPS administration highly supports our teachers at Brink and empowers them to be the change. Administrators embrace an open-door policy with all faculty and staff allowing them to feel comfortable discussing problems and differences. We educate the students in this same manner as well, creating an atmosphere to freely express and communicate concerns. This is one of the many reasons why Brink Jr. High stands out and is a very special school.

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

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The one practice that continually shows success for Brink Junior High is our layered approach to helping make every child successful. Brink is a collaborative school that works together to build bridges in everything we do. Students, teachers, parents, and administrators are all a part of the process that makes learning achievable for everyone. The PLC (Professional Learning Community) model is one that is followed. Teachers use planning time to collaborate with each other and develop lesson plans that target all learners and is data driven. Students are responsible for keeping track of their progress and grades and are expected to ask questions and probe the why of things.

When a student starts to fall behind in classwork, we host a round table meeting with the parents, teacher(s), and either the counselor or principal. As a group, with feedback from everyone, a plan is put in place for the student to succeed. The student and parent must have input in the meeting for the new plan to be successful. The plan is re-evaluated after four weeks if the student is not having success.

The closures and craziness of COVID-19 have compelled us to re-evaluate aspects of our layered approach. During the spring of 2020 we became reliant on technology. Teachers met with their students over Zoom and began incorporating Canvas-based lessons to continue classwork. Even more Zoom meetings helped principals and staff continue to meet face-to-face. This had a positive effect of not only maintaining interpersonal connections among teachers, students, and administration, it also allowed our significant and strategic collaboration efforts to continue.

In a roundabout way, the technology enhanced things we were already doing. Our lesson plans are more refined, and teaching videos are more thought out for the students and parents to access on the Canvas page. The collaboration of teachers with the same subject area has increased, and the principals have become more succinct and reliant on their team (department heads and counselors). The use of Canvas, Zoom, Loom videos, etc., allows Brink to continue our layered approach to supporting student success whether at school or at home.