

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 [X] Magnet[X] Choice

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

Official School Name Meigs Middle Magnet School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 713 Ramsey Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Nashville State TN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 37206-4015

County Davidson County

Telephone (615) 271-3220 Fax (615) 271-3223

Web site/URL http://www.meigsacademicmagnet.org E-mail samuel.underwood@mnps.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Adrienne Battle E-mail adrienne.battle@mnps.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Metropolitan Nashville Public School District Tel. (615) 259-4636

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 Christianne Buggs
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 70 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 29 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 15 High schools
 - 55 K-12 schools

169 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

- 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

- 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 | 81 | 90 | 171 |
| 6 | 93 | 80 | 173 |
| 7 | 88 | 80 | 168 |
| 8 | 75 | 96 | 171 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 or higher | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Students | 337 | 346 | 683 |

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9.8 % Asian
 - 26.2 % Black or African American
 - 7.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 56 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: 1%

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

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

| Steps For Determining Mobility Rate | Answer |
|--|---------------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 0 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year | 9 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 9 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019 | 694 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.01 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 1 |

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

Somali, Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, Castilian, Bengali, Japanese, Chinese, Central Khmer, Amharic, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, Kurdish, Sinhala/Sinhalese, Uzbek, Persian, Karen languages, Romanian/Moldavian/Moldovan, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Yoruba, Malayalam, Telugu, Turkish, Hungarian, Undetermined/Ghana, German

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11 %

Total number students who qualify: 73

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %

32 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>0</u> Autism | <u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>9</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: 10

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 | 3 |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 34 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 9 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 3 |
| 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 20:1

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

| Required Information | 2019-2020 | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 | 2015-2016 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 97% | 97% | 97% | 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. 2013

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

Our mission is to provide a rigorous liberal-arts curriculum that will allow our capable learners to perform at high standards of academic and social development.

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.

Our story of overcoming closures and challenges in 2020 began on March 3, 2020. In the middle of the night, an EF-3 tornado ravaged our city and our school building. On March 4, we were notified that our building would need extensive repairs and that we would be relocated for the remainder of the school year. Our entire school network — administrators, teachers, students, parents, district personnel — showed up at the Meigs building on March 5 and 6 and packed up the entire school wearing rain boots, headlamps, and winter coats because the building was cold, wet, and dark. We had no electricity, holes in the roof, and water everywhere. In a matter of three days we packed up an entire school building — including every book in the library, moved across town, unpacked, set up, and greeted students with smiles on our faces on Monday morning March 9. We had school for three days at this location before school was closed due to Covid-19. We finished the school year virtually and then were notified the day after the school year ended that, once again, we needed to pack up everything to be moved back to our building. Our boxes were moved by the district back to Meigs, where they were stored for the summer. When August arrived, school remained virtual and our building remained under construction. Because of the active construction zone, teachers were not allowed to enter the building. So, we began the 2020-2021 school year at home without access to any books, materials, or curriculum as it was boxed up and inaccessible.

We started the school year 100% virtually. The district worked to procure computers and hotspots for every student in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) who needed them. The district

purchased curriculum from Florida Virtual School (FLVS) for use in each of the core content areas district-wide. Teachers and students accessed FLVS via the Schoology platform. MNPS outlined parameters for scheduling online learning. Weekly, each course was required to have both synchronous and asynchronous class days. The limits were set at three one-hour synchronous classes with all students present in a live Teams meeting, and two asynchronous class days, which involved additional course work to be done on a flexible timetable. We arranged our master schedule paying close attention to the amount of screen time required for a student in any given day. To minimize screen time, we planned our master schedule so that no student would have more than three synchronous classes—three hours—in one day. Additionally, each teacher scheduled open office hours as well as lunch and planning daily. By January we successfully achieved 1:1 technology for virtual learning.

Our district rolled out a plan to return to in-person learning in October of 2020. We began planning and scheduling. We essentially scheduled two schools with one staff, one in-person and one virtual. Elementary schools successfully reconvened, but middle and high school re-opening was delayed due to a spike in Covid-19 cases. In December, families completed a school option survey to attend in-person or virtually. In February our city met the Covid-19 metrics for returning to in-person learning. We successfully welcomed fifth grade students who chose in-person learning back into our building on February 23, 2021, and sixth, seventh, and eighth graders a week later, on March 2.

In order to provide an equitable educational experience for our students who are learning in-person and at home, teachers continue to teach three synchronous and two asynchronous classes per course per week. We were able to schedule most classes to be made up entirely of either virtual or in-person students, so the majority of teachers are teaching in only one medium at a time. However, ten teachers have classes that contain both in-person and virtual students at the same time. In these instances, this was done to maintain equity and access for all students, especially regarding the related studies classes. The curriculum and modes of delivery have not changed since returning to in-person school. We continue to use the FLVS curriculum pushed out via Schoology, both teachers and students access resources and assessments electronically. Our students and teachers were tasked with both new curriculum and a new medium this year.

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

Meigs is a free, public, academic magnet school open to fifth through eighth grade students who meet the academic requirements and reside in Davidson County, TN. We offer advanced, in-depth instruction to meet the needs of a high-achieving student body. Students must have an academic average of 85 or above for all subjects combined for the spring semester of the previous school year and the first grading period (whether six weeks or nine weeks) of the current school year, with no failing grades for any grading period (whether six weeks or nine weeks) in this time frame. Students applying must meet the test score requirement with national stanine scores in Reading and Math from the 2019-2020 school year that total 13 (14 for a normal year) or higher. An English Learner will meet the requirement with a stanine of 6 or higher in either of the two subjects. Once the application is submitted, verified, and accepted, the student is assigned a number. Students are then selected for admittance through a random lottery.

PART III - SUMMARY

We have a long-running inside-joke that working at Meigs is like working in a “big tub of butter” where “students can embrace their inner geek.” Meigs is a family. A general atmosphere of respect between our staff, students, and families makes our school community unique and special. There is a pervasive commitment to empowering great humans; we all — students, parents, teachers, support staff, administration, district personnel, custodians, cafeteria staff — model a growth mindset and work to be better every day.

Our school community exists in a downtown urban area characterized by all elements of big-city life. We are influenced by tourism that includes both the arts and athletics. We are within walking distance of Nissan Stadium, home of the Tennessee Titans and Nashville Soccer Club. The Titans partner with our school through the NFL Play60 program and as good neighbors. Both the Titans and the Nashville Predators impact our commute and are good sports when we tweet with them #NotEveryoneHasFamousNeighbors. The arts also influence our school community. Our building is located in the very artistic community of “East Nashville,” home to the Tomato Art Fest which “has been touted in the Oxford American and Southern Living, Southwest Airlines Magazine, Travel and Leisure and has been voted a ‘Best Festival’ consecutively from 2007-2020 in Nashville Scene Reader’s Polls.” This festival drew over 65,000 people in 2019 and adequately represents and describes the year-round community of East Nashville as being “known for bringing people from all walks of life together—uniting them through creativity, spirit, and celebration funneled into love for East Nashville” (<https://www.tomatoartfest.com/ourstory>). The artistic bend of our community permeates and defines our school culture as well.

As a Nashville public school, we benefit from the music industry with support from the Country Music Association, the Nashville Symphony, the Country Music Hall of Fame, as well as smaller music venues located in East Nashville. Many of our families are connected to the entertainment and art industries in some way. This is evident in our yearly talent show when the community, parents, and students come together and put on a talent show that rivals professional events seen throughout Nashville.

The diversity of our students and families reflects the diversity of Nashville. Our students come from all socioeconomic backgrounds. Within blocks of our school are both million-dollar homes and low-income housing projects. We have students who come from great privilege and students who receive free meals at school. Our parents have all levels of educational background, from high-school dropouts to eminent professionals with terminal degrees and international acclaim.

Despite their different backgrounds, our families share a combination of unique characteristics. They show a deep commitment to their children and are proud that their children attend Meigs. Parents give back to the school by donating their time, money, gifts and service by maintaining a supportive and successful PTO. Parents are pleased that students receive an outstanding education that challenges them in a supportive and caring environment. Our families value education and want the best for their children, so they are proactive and open-minded as they choose a school outside of their assigned geographic zone. By entering the lottery and choosing Meigs, families prioritize education and then demonstrate an unyielding level of advocacy, perseverance, and determination to their students as they take advantage of the many opportunities offered at Meigs to grow and pursue passions. Students are united in their educational goals, drive, confidence, and the commitment to learning. These commonalities supersede socioeconomic disparities such that all students view each other as equals. Students rise to meet high expectations set by their families and by the school and willingly engage in challenging and meaningful academic work.

We encourage independent thinking and provide an environment where continually asking questions and taking academic risks is safe. We challenge all students to develop to their full academic, emotional, physical, social, and cultural potential.

Meigs employs a myriad of academic strategies, programs, and extracurriculars to stretch and develop our students’ intellects. We teach students to think critically with confidence. Students are presented with high-level tasks that require them to think deeply. Students must approach problems from a variety of

perspectives, rely on prior knowledge, look for patterns, make connections, and collaborate with others. Students often have different thoughts on what is "correct" and are encouraged to justify and revise their point of view with evidence from reliable sources. This challenges students to generate original ideas and take ownership of their learning. We offer course acceleration for students to ensure they are both academically challenged and intellectually stimulated. At least two high school credit courses are standard for all eighth graders: physical science and world language. Students also have the option of earning up to three credits in high-school mathematics.

We are piloting a push-in versus a pull-out gifted program for our district. That said, our gifted program is fully integrated into all content areas and grade levels. Our gifted teacher consults with all teachers in the building to differentiate activities and assessments making sure we have best practices in place for our gifted student population.

Students are offered extensions that go beyond regular content area requirements via enrichment days that are built into our normal schedule and extra-curricular clubs that meet after school. During enrichment time students have opportunities to individualize their educational experience based on their interests. Teachers offer experiences to enrich students and often bring in other members of the community as well. Some of our enrichment opportunities include Robotics, Math Olympiad, Battle of the Books (a city-wide reading competition), Media Team, Yearbook, and Student Council.

We have a comprehensive SEL program and curriculum embedded in everything we do. We prioritize this work and have a designated SEL facilitator to provide lessons, resources, professional development, and wrap-around support for all members of the school community. Our intentional SEL work has ensured our continued ability to educate and support students.

All students have physical activity time every day that cannot be omitted or withheld for any reason. Students walk the half mile lap around the park adjacent to the school and then have recess. Enrichment classes such as cheerleading, basketball, and soccer are available to all students. Students in grades 6-8 can participate in the school's athletic program. Students also develop physical potential through our drama program through choreography and dance.

As a liberal arts magnet school, our students' social and cultural development is paramount to our work. We have an active student council that empowers student leadership by facilitating service projects and social opportunities throughout the year. Our student body is a powerful artistic community living in a historically artistic city. As such, our school community comes together to put on a noteworthy talent show each fall and presenting "Evening with the Arts" in the spring. These events draw huge crowds and showcase the impressive artistic, musical, and theatrical talent of our students. We celebrate Black History month in February by tapping into our school's proud legacy of graduating the first class of African American students in Nashville. Interacting with Meigs alumni is a unique and powerful expression of community and solidarity with history.

The recognition as a 2013 Blue Ribbon School has allowed Meigs to attract quality staff members who pursue excellence and earnestly strive to help students develop interdisciplinary skills that transfer across all content areas to prepare them for successful careers. Additionally, outstanding students and families are attracted to the school due to its stellar reputation.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Despite being a school without a building or access to our physical resources, the Meigs faculty has risen to the occasion by committing to teach virtually with excellence while keeping our students' social and emotional needs at the forefront. We have dedicated time and resources to unpacking the depth of the learning goals inherent in the state standards and planning instructional approaches that will engage students' higher order and critical thinking skills, whether in person or virtual. We maintain our commitment to fully implementing the district's mandatory scope and sequence and adopted virtual curriculum, while working to adapt it to meet the individual needs of all students and maintaining the rigor our stakeholders expect and deserve. This has required strategic curriculum compacting, adjusting the time previously spent on units of study, creating new activities specifically for virtual learning, using shorter and more frequent assessments, and adapting lessons to engage students virtually.

Core curriculum in ELA is “designed to prepare students with the most important knowledge and 21st century literacy skills necessary to succeed in post-secondary and workforce arenas. The standards emphasize critical and divergent thinking, problem solving, active listening, recognition of patterns and anomalies, and evaluation and questioning of source material. The standards reinforce the three ELA instructional shifts: regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary; reading and writing grounded in evidence from literary and informational text; and building knowledge through content-rich literary and informational text” (<https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards.html>). Curriculum loops to includes the same goals but increases in depth and complexity as students mature through the grade levels. Students work through standards that fall into four content bands: Reading (fiction and non-fiction), Writing (argumentative, informative/explanatory, and narrative), Language, and Listening and Speaking. Students demonstrate what they know and are able to do through a variety of tasks and assessments that encompass all the dimensions of language acquisition and proficiency: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and visualizing.

Core curriculum in Math focuses on “eight standards for mathematical practice which are important components of the mathematics standards for each grade level and course. The Standards for Mathematical Practice describe the varieties of expertise, habits of minds, and productive dispositions that educators seek to develop in all students: make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others, model with mathematics, use appropriate tools strategically, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure, look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning” (<https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards.html>). In fifth grade, students focus on core operations, fractions, decimals, and whole numbers. In sixth grade, students move into proportional reasoning, fluency with operations, and are introduced to equations. Seventh grade extends the proportional reasoning, goes deeper into equations, introduces geometry and probability and statistics. Eighth-grade math covers solving equations and systems of equations, introduces functions, and adds more geometry and statistics. At Meigs we also offer the first two years of high school math which are called Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. These courses cover content from Algebra I and Geometry, addressing both linear and exponential functions and transformations in geometry. IM2 covers quadratic functions and introduces polynomial functions. Students work on geometric proofs and probability and statistics. Math at all level at Meigs is considered Honors Math because teachers offer a more in-depth focus on topics, more application, and even delve into the history of math.

Core curriculum in Science is an exploration of all three dimensions of science instruction: science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas. The eight Science and Engineering Practices reflect the types of engagement a scientist or engineer encounters as part of their work and are incorporated in a grade-appropriate manner in all grades. The four Disciplinary Core Ideas provide organization of content, further clarified and developed in component ideas: Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Earth and Space Sciences, and Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science. The seven Crosscutting Concepts reflect conceptual understandings that transcend any particular discipline, yet permeate into mastery-level understanding of any given discipline (<https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards.html>). In science, we intentionally focus on

these cross-curricular concepts as they are being taught or refined in other content-area classes, so students see how these skills are indeed inter-disciplinary. In science classes at Meigs, students are constantly engaged with the curriculum through higher level questions, hands-on experiments, data collection, and analysis and discovery. We pride ourselves on students discovering their own science knowledge through constant exposure to experiences, experiments, and asking and answering their own questions before we present the topics. This way, they solidify the learning of new concepts by attaching them to a solid foundation of their own background knowledge. One way we do this is through partnering with Vanderbilt University to bring standards-based hands-on science experiments to our students that allow them to experience authentic scientific discovery. This also exposes students to college students and the college lifestyle as well as myriad scientific majors and careers.

Core curriculum in Social Studies focuses on students becoming college and career ready. It is through social studies that students prepare for their futures by opening doors to a more diverse, competitive workforce and responsible citizenry. Teachers center instruction on inquiry-based models, which require students to engage in critical thinking, self-assessment, reasoning, problem-solving, collaboration, and investigation in order to make connections in new and innovative ways as they progress through social studies education. As future leaders, students need to be able to understand the complexity of the world and be aware of the changing cultural and physical environments of Tennessee, the United States, and the world. They need to know and understand the past; read, write, and think deeply; and act in ways that promote the common good. Social studies courses offer the critical knowledge necessary to create a framework for understanding the systems of society and becoming college, career, and civics ready (<https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards.html>). In fifth and eighth grades, students study United States History. The fifth-grade course surveys US History from indigenous peoples through the Civil Rights movement all through the lens of Tennessee History. In eighth grade, students dig deeper into the details and focus on the colonization of the Americas through the Reconstruction. Sixth- and seventh-grade courses study ancient civilizations from Mesopotamia to the discovery of the Americas splitting at the Fall of Rome. Content strands run parallel to content standards and are focused on seven disciplines of social studies that provide a way of categorizing knowledge about the human experience. These include culture, economics, geography, history, politics/government, and Tennessee History. The content strands help to organize the various themes of social studies instruction from kindergarten through high school, at age-appropriate levels. At Meigs, we supplement our social studies work with as many guest speakers and field trips as possible. We involve local universities and organizations such as Fisk and the Nashville chapter of the NAACP as much as possible and take students to see historical sites and places of worship to learn about civil war history and world religions.

This year, teachers have learned to utilize different online platforms and software such as Nearpod, Desmos, and PearDeck through Schoology and Microsoft Teams in order to convert classroom practices, lesson presentation, and formative and summative assessment methods to virtual formats so none of the educational experiences were lost because of circumstances or teaching medium. For example, every seventh-grade social studies student normally participates in the National History Day competition, creating entries that show synthesis of extensive research, depth of knowledge, and original thinking. Due to excellent adaptation of multiple processes, students were still able to compete successfully this year.

Teachers found numerous strategies and techniques to promote student engagement and check for understanding this year that many will continue to use in the future. We have worked proactively to find better ways to evaluate the progression of student learning in the virtual setting. For example, the Desmos website has been a significant tool for math instruction and feedback. Desmos allows teachers to access all steps of student work, so teachers get a clear snapshot of student understanding.

Collaboration has been more important than ever. Planning in advance and learning new tools to deliver content has been critical. We have adapted our assessment techniques, making them shorter and more frequent than in previous years. Because we have committed to teaching the same content as a normal year, we have had to adapt our methods and are better for it. In a normal year, fifth graders begin learning the art of Socratic seminar. Students continue to hone their listening, speaking, critical thinking, and argumentation abilities through cultivating this skill through eighth grade. We are proud that we have been able incorporate this signature practice virtually.

The library is integral to successfully addressing our curriculum. Collaboration between librarian, students, and teachers facilitates the development of research skills that are applied across all content areas. Our librarian is instrumental in delivering explicit instruction for locating and utilizing resources for classes and projects as well as cultivating life-long readers by engaging students in summer reading, Battle of the Books, and leisure reading.

All the work we do is based on the analysis and application of data. Students receive differentiated support based on results of MAP tests via FastBridge, iReady, Language Live, office hours, personalized learning time with classroom teachers, or enrichment/remediation lessons with instructional coaches. We use state test data to analyze areas for school-wide improvement and MAP test data to identify individual student, class-level, and school-wide trends. Students track and analyze their MAP scores to understand their current levels and set improvement goals.

Summative assessment data is used to analyze student performance and make instructional decisions. Types of summative assessments include but are not limited to teacher-created assessments, district benchmarks, and FLVS assessments. Assessments are fill in the blank, short answer, multiple choice, and speaking/performance exams (both live and pre-recorded). Data is used to see how individual students, groups of students, classes, and all students are performing, what needs to be retaught and what needs to be clarified for one or many. Teachers also conduct item analysis of test items and reteach the standards where gaps are found.

Formative assessment data is used to craft and revise lessons and units that respond to students' needs, to form small groups, to differentiate assignments, and/or pull-out individual/small groups for responsive instruction. Teachers use various types of formative assessments that include but are not limited to bell ringers; exit tickets; math maintenance assignments; homework; Flipgrid, Kahoot, Quizizz, whiteboard.fi responses; Nearpod, Teams, and PearDeck poll responses; quick writes; and oral responses. We use our formative assessments to adjust how we approach students and adapt materials in class and to identify students who need help on specific skills.

Although the year has presented many challenges, we have worked together to live up to the high expectations that have been established by Meigs and maintain our stellar reputation.

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

We work diligently to prepare students for college and careers. Students are exposed to college students and personnel through different programs. Undergraduate students from Vanderbilt regularly facilitate science experiments. Gifted students participate in the Duke TIP program. The Fisk University historian speaks to students about the history of Fisk and its place in Tennessee history and the Civil Rights movement. School counselors offer leadership training through small-group lessons, the student ambassador program, the Kuder Career Assessment, classroom lessons on transitions, and Student Council. Course acceleration for high school credit provides opportunities for students to earn college credits in high school. Students who follow the magnet pathway to high school can graduate with up to a year's worth of college credit from Advanced Placement exams. Students often visit college campuses for various regional and state competitions. Participating in activities such as National History Day teaches students the critical thinking skills needed to make an original claim, interpret texts and apply historical evidence. It also allows for collaboration and public speaking. We prepare students for college and careers by teaching them strategies and skills that set them up for success. Students in the performing arts and sports learn to be disciplined with their time, more organized, more socially adept, and involved citizens. There are many areas where students can pursue interests through our enrichment program and by participating in our annual college readiness week. Talking about college early to encourage accessibility for all is powerful. The goal of preparing our students for college and career ultimately frames all the work we do.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The mission and vision of our program are focused on the liberal arts. These “other” areas are where the core content merges and manifests in meaningful ways. Students pursue their passions, demonstrate their talents, and prepare for their careers.

Meigs students take world language classes in eighth grade for high-school credit. This puts them on track to take Advanced Placement language in high school. World language incorporates content from all other core classes. World language teachers collaborate with literacy teachers when selecting and teaching literature. Teachers highlight math concepts through teaching metric and monetary conversions. World language integrates social studies when studying geography and culture. Students are exposed to a new world view as they learn about global issues.

The visual arts courses incorporate aspects from all core content areas. The humanities are reinforced through critical analysis of artwork. Students analyze the historical, social, and political context in which a work of art was created. They discuss why and how artists do the work they do. Through study of visual arts, students develop technical skills to express their point of view. Math standards involving symmetry, scale, and geometric relationships are used when creating works of art.

The computer science curriculum focuses on four essential college and career readiness skills: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Students at all levels learn coding languages such as Java. Students in the advanced eighth-grade class are encouraged to explore topics of interest such as game design, drone flight, robotics, and digital editing and design. Additionally, our library contains a makerspace where students can experiment with digital design and imaging complete with a 3D printer that is accessible to all.

Over 400 students are involved in the band or string programs daily. We have a robust private lesson program to help students maximize their potential. Our student groups engage in numerous performances and competitions each year on campus and around the region. Music students at Meigs have won numerous individual and group awards throughout the years. More students qualify for Mid-State honors from Meigs than from any other single school statewide.

Students reinforce and expand upon all elements of language skills through the drama program. Students practice these skills as they write, design, and perform scripted scenes. Drama classes combine performing and visual arts, as well as math, through designing sets, costumes, lighting, and makeup. Drama classes include areas of acting, dance, music, singing, and instrumentalizing. The biggest 2020-2021 adjustment has been focusing on teaching students to perform for the camera versus on stage for a live audience. Skills and assessments have been altered to accommodate the digital world.

In physical education, students gain knowledge and acquire skills that manifest in sports, athletics, and good health. Students also develop life skills of sportsmanship, healthy living, confidence, and self-esteem. Despite challenges of virtual P.E., teachers and students have found ways to get active and learn about health and the components of fitness and nutrition.

3. Academic Supports:

At Meigs, academic support is as diverse as the students who need it and the teachers, coaches, and administrators who provide it. As an academic magnet school, we have many students who are performing above grade level; therefore, we offer an all-inclusive gifted and talented program called Encore. The gifted teacher consults with all teachers to differentiate and adapt content to keep our highest achieving students engaged in work that addresses standards, increases rigor, and is meaningful. Additionally, high achievers meet in small-group settings, enrichment clubs, and accelerated courses.

Conversely, students who struggle receive equitable time and attention. Teachers work with

coaches, administrators and itinerants to find ways to help underachieving students. Remediation is based on data gathered from multiple sources and is offered daily in personalized learning times. Teachers use flexible grouping to pull students who need certain skills reinforced. We employ a variety of resources to help students close achievement gaps. Teachers go above and beyond by providing both remedial and advanced work weekly.

Our schedule includes office hours for teachers, which has been a powerful way to support students. We have utilized an “all-hands-on-deck” mentality to set up regular one-on-one check-in meetings with students. Every adult in the building is routinely meeting with individual students to encourage, support, and help those who are struggling academically, socially, and/or emotionally.

School counselors support students in countless ways: one-on-one counseling, group counseling, and interventions. Counselors coordinate and facilitate support teams to meet individual needs of students, and they consult with outside mental health agencies when necessary. Counselors provide classroom and small group lessons on academic, study, and organization skills. They manage referrals to the Duke TIP program and help procure grant money for students to enhance their strengths.

Students with disabilities receive extensive support from our exceptional educators who consult with teachers daily and facilitate transitions between grade levels. Students communicate with exceptional education teachers through daily check-ins. They have access to Immersive Reader and participate in surveys such as Prevocational Checklist. Exceptional educators communicate frequently with families, students, teachers, and administration while monitoring and addressing student performance. The exceptional educators have the flexibility to adjust their schedules as needed in order to accommodate emergent student needs.

To meet the needs of NELB and EL students, our staff is currently participating in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol training, and teachers are intentionally supporting students through visual supports such as pictures, diagrams, and graphs. Teachers communicate with the EL teacher and collaborate to help EL students succeed. Appropriate accommodations and code switching are used where necessary.

We currently have an achievement gap of 17 percentage points between the test scores of all students and the test scores of our African American students in ELA. We are addressing this gap by revamping our summer reading program and required class novels to include more diverse authors and literature/protagonists. We are also in an on-going professional development series with our district’s Office of Equity and Diversity.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Together we succeed. Teachers, administrators, and staff work hard to see each student as an individual, form personal connections, and keep students engaged. Our goal is to ensure that each student feels like (s)he has a personal connection with at least one adult in the school building. We emphasize the importance of knowing and pronouncing each student's name correctly and learning about each student's interests. Virtual and in-person classes start with opening rituals that require each student to answer a fun question or share out in some way. Teachers include weekly discussions and conversation in lessons, classes, and homework assignments. Teachers use questioning techniques to challenge students to think and respond using higher-order thinking. We focus tirelessly on students' SEL status by using SEL language, taking brain breaks, offering self-regulation tools, and practicing mindful breathing. Because of our SEL focus, we choose to operate under an umbrella of grace—assuming positive intent when interacting with each other at all levels. When students feel seen, heard, and valued, they feel safe enough to take risks with their learning and engage in the work. When teachers feel seen, heard, and valued, they feel safe enough to take risks with their teaching. This season has reminded us of the importance of working hard and learning together.

As a school, we maintain high expectations for students and ourselves. We plan high quality lessons and are mindful of the engagement of students during class. When we expect our students to be great and verbalize it, they rise to the occasion because they feel supported and valued. The fifth-grade team is very intentional to carefully scaffold and raise expectations gradually to avoid overwhelming students as they transition from seventy different elementary schools to one middle school.

Keeping the big picture in mind, we help our students set long term goals. We enrich the standard curriculum to prepare students for future academic success in high school, college, and career.

Everyone greets students positively and maintains comfortable, safe classroom environments that are focused on learning. During virtual learning, each grade level held weekly online social hours and community building activities such as trivia games and GimKit challenges. Teachers held lunch-bunch groups that allowed students to socialize. Virtual clubs were offered to students at all grade levels to provide a sense of community that was initially lacking in the virtual world.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our parents are one of our greatest assets in our school community. In a normal year, we provide simultaneous and separate orientations for students and parents to convey culture and set the tone for all interactions between school and home. We establish mutual respect and invite parents to partner with us in doing what is best for students. This year we substituted for this event by having each teacher call their homeroom families to welcome them. We also held drive-through events to greet students and families, make connections and distribute materials. Most families participated in at least one event, and feedback unanimously stated that the events lifted everyone's spirits. Connecting and engaging with families has been integral to our success this year.

School counselors support students in countless ways. They send a monthly newsletter to parents containing strategies for supporting adolescents and include articles in the weekly Meigs Memo. They work with local agencies to provide clothing, meals, and other support such as resources for rent and mortgage pandemic assistance. They also provided support to families who needed assistance recovering from all of the traumatic events of 2020-2021: Covid-19, tornado, Nashville bombing, derecho, and flooding.

Our school has a unique connection to its history. Meigs was the first public high school for Black students in Nashville. Despite becoming a middle school, we have a long-lasting relationship with alumni from the high school. Each February we host Black History Month events to honor those alumni and the school's heritage. School departments collaborate to provide an assembly with music, drama, art, dance, singing, and a guest speaker.

Our PTO provides invaluable support to the school community by contributing time, money, and talents. They rally around all major events such as orientation, book fair, talent show, opening of school, athletics, and reward days.

We also have positive relationships with businesses in our neighborhood who partner with us in various ways. The food truck alliance of Nashville provides concessions and refreshment options on reward days and for evening events such as open house, the talent show, and Evening with the Arts. We have a connection with a local Super Walmart to provide food, drinks, and school supplies for both students and teachers. Various food vendors in our neighborhood provide meals on different occasions as well. Students come from the entire county; even so, Meigs is a valued member of the East Nashville community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

It all starts at the top. Administration goes above and beyond to make sure teachers feel valued and supported. Collaboration has been key to our success with virtual learning. Administration relies on teachers in-house to be expert educational practitioners. Therefore, professional development this year was provided by Meigs teachers. We taught each other about strategies and tools we discovered and found effective — specifically technology, apps, platforms, and other digital tools teachers needed to be successful — ensuring that the information was relevant and immediately applicable. It also helped foster a sense of community and generate respect for each other. Additionally, our district provided copious virtual professional development opportunities of which teachers took advantage.

We carefully consider our school's data when planning for professional development to close gaps and address areas in need of improvement. For example, when student voice and engagement emerged as focus areas this year, we turned to student council for help problem solving and looking for ways to improve these areas. We are also preparing professional development on how to offer more voice and choice in the classroom, essays, assignments, tasks, and projects.

Despite the virtual setting, our existing communication system has continued to function to disseminate information and make decisions. Grade levels have continued to hold regular team meetings and to communicate information discussed in leadership meetings. Content teams have continued to hold regular planning meetings with instructional coaches both horizontally and vertically. Existing lines of communication and some new ones are open and accessible around the clock. Administrators frequently check-in on staff and offer whatever support is needed. Teachers new to Meigs have expressed appreciation for the attention and support they have received from administration during distance learning. Administrators and coaches continue to make sure all teachers are feeling valued and supported.

Teachers have experienced highs and lows during this crazy year. Thankfully, we have been able to balance and support each other through all of this. We have spent time learning from one another and sharing hints and tips that have been successful in the virtual setting. We continue to openly help and teach each other on a regular basis. Meigs truly operates as a team working to support one another on both professional and personal levels.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy is one of service — service to students, families, teachers, and staff to ensure students reach their full academic potential. This is exemplified through establishing and maintaining a culture of care in which every person who comes into Meigs for any reason feels valued, seen, and heard. The administrative leadership team consists of an executive principal and two assistant principals who are in constant communication, ensuring consistent school operation. Assistant principals, counselors, and exceptional educators loop with students in order to build relationships and provide familiar and meaningful support for students and families. Each looping team of assistant principal, counselor, and exceptional educator reports directly to the executive principal. Further utilizing a team approach, administration relies on a leadership team with members from each department and grade level in order to give and receive feedback. This team approach builds capacity by empowering teacher leaders and maintaining a sense of

ownership in school-wide decisions.

In addition to working with grade-level teams for student support, instructional feedback, and teacher evaluations, each administrator has designated responsibilities. The executive principal manages the budget, hiring processes, and master schedule. One assistant principal serves as test coordinator, school-wide tiered student support leader, and social media account and technology manager. The other assistant principal serves as textbook administrator and building maintenance manager. This administrator also coordinates and monitors the school improvement plan by writing, editing, compiling and submitting proper documents.

As we recovered from the tornado and worked through the pandemic, administration's goal was to hold students at the forefront of every decision and ensure equitable learning for all. Administrators committed to meeting the multiple and varied needs of students, families, and faculty. At the beginning of the school year, administrators worked tirelessly to minimize negative impacts of working from and managing two different school buildings. This involved monitoring Covid-19 protocols at two different locations and construction oversight. Once in-person school resumed, administration shifted from managing two buildings to managing two master schedules — virtual and in-person. Additionally, the administrative team embraced the demand to meet the most basic physical and emotional needs for students, families, teachers, and staff. Each challenge provided opportunities for creativity and optimism. In order to ensure equity and access and promote student achievement, administrators facilitated drive-through pick-ups and home deliveries for meals, laptops, wi-fi hotspots, art kits, school supplies, winter clothes, musical instruments, and books to more than 200 homes.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Students' academic and cultural backgrounds are recognized and considered in interactions with students and families. Respect for various holidays and traditions are recognized. When we learn of specific cultural needs from our students' families, we share them with relevant personnel and strive to meet them. When we aren't sure of a cultural concern, we clarify and work with students and families to be respectful of their desires at school and during teaching. To ensure equity and cultural awareness the EL office and the Office of Equity and Diversity provide professional development to teachers and staff. Along with this, if we become aware of an equity or cultural awareness issue, we disseminate the information and respond appropriately with teachers and staff.

Demonstrating the importance of each person's name by making a deliberate effort to pronounce it correctly sends the message that every individual is important. We established a procedure to learn the proper pronunciation of each name. Further, we strive to respect and use each student's preferred pronouns. We designed a specific way to disseminate, document, and share all of this information with every adult in the school to ensure that all students are always addressed appropriately. This is an established part of our SEL belief system.

We are striving to be more culturally responsive through our professional development. We have worked through a series of professional development with our district's Equity and Diversity coach to unpack personal biases, their effects, and how to best acknowledge, address, combat and wield them in our classrooms. This training gives us tools needed to appropriately address current events and social movements with students. We have nine teachers who are EL-certified on staff and who incorporate best practices when delivering content such as: giving extra support at the beginning of tasks and providing visual supports such as pictures, diagrams, and graphs. Additionally, 34% of our faculty is currently choosing to get trained in Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) to better address the needs of EL and NELB students.

We are currently working hard to incorporate more culturally relevant and responsive literature into our curriculum that reflects the diversity of our students and our times. We are striving to

make sure that all our students read books that can serve as both windows and mirrors for them as they sort through the rocky terrain of adolescence.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The past five years of intentional SEL work has culminated in the practice that allows Meigs the ability to successfully educate and support our students: the “Power of Pause.” This allows each student, teacher, and family member to take an extra moment to examine how they are feeling, consider their array of management tools, and apply a tool that will be most beneficial.

The work is more than a program or a curriculum for us; it has become a belief system, a shared language, and a way of life. It includes mindful breathing, daily and weekly SEL lessons, motivational emails, inspirational posters, mindful movement, professional development for teachers, “Move This World,” an SEL newsletter, SEL Parent memos, and a dedicated SEL website.

Instead of feeling overwhelmed, the Power of Pause allows a student to take a breath, quiet his mind and try to identify the cause. Am I anxious? Afraid? Excited? The ability to identify their emotions allows students to respond instead of react. That response may involve taking deep breaths, asking for help, stretching, journaling, talking to a friend, resting, taking a walk, or one of many other management tools.

The pandemic has caused much anxiety. It is exacerbated by the loneliness that social distancing and isolating at home has caused. Even so, there is noise and activity everywhere. There is outer noise from our environment, and the inner noise of our thinking minds. Thoughts continuously bounce from one to the next, filling our minds with constant chatter. Utilizing this pause greatly benefits learning by increasing short-term memory and allowing information to move into long-term memory. Pausing allows students and teachers to reflect and take a more mindful approach to their work.

Our SEL work grows and changes through input from faculty and students. Students serving on the SEL Student Advisory Board bring new ideas to the table. SEL Surveys are administered three times per year to measure progress and needs.

A successful SEL program takes a shared vision and someone to facilitate the teaching and learning, an administration that promotes and encourages social and emotional learning, and a faculty who walk the walk to set an example for the students they teach. At Meigs, we walk the walk because it puts children’s well-being first. This work transcends middle school, ensures life-long learning, and carries the promise that our students will be successful in their personal and professional lives.