

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2022 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. Dana Pierce  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Booth Hill School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 545 Booth Hill Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Trumbull State CT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06611-4003

County Fairfield

Telephone (203) 452-4377 Fax (203) 452-4375

Web site/URL https://www.boothhill.school E-mail dpierce@trumbullps.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. Martin Semmel E-mail msemmel@trumbullps.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Trumbull Public School District Tel. (203) 452-4301

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. Lucinda Timpanelli  
(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 signatures 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 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 9 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	39	44	83
1	48	39	87
2	41	43	84
3	43	35	78
4	42	48	90
5	48	45	93
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	261	254	515

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 9 % Asian
  - 9 % Black or African American
  - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 63 % White
  - 3 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	33
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	509
(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, Twi/Fante, Mandarin, Korean, Russian, Hebrew, Malayalam, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Portuguese, Filipino, Polish, Arabic, Albanian, ASL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 17 %  
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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>7</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>39</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>11</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>4</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 15
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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	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 2021.

<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.

Booth Hill School, in partnership with the community, strives to meet the educational needs of all students within a challenging and supportive academic environment that empowers each student to become a life-long learner and to live and participate in a democratic, diverse, and global society.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

[https://www.trumbullps.org/Attachments/pac/policies/6000/6121\\_NonDiscrimination\\_in\\_InstructionClassroom.pdf](https://www.trumbullps.org/Attachments/pac/policies/6000/6121_NonDiscrimination_in_InstructionClassroom.pdf)

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

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Booth Hill School is located in the historic, suburban, Nichols section of Trumbull. It is a tight-knit community that offers many opportunities for people to support one another and become involved. BHS has a diverse population of students. Our students come from families where their basic needs are met. Most students come with a readiness for learning, having attended preschool prior to coming to kindergarten.

When understanding the character of our school, it is important to note that students are met everyday by a staff of dedicated professionals. Our staff recognize the importance of having a solid connection with students, families, and the community. Booth Hill's belief is that having this strong foundation will create life-long learners and future leaders. We are always striving to learn and grow through implementing rigorous curriculum and setting high academic expectations. This led to BHS being recognized as a school of distinction in three areas: a high performing elementary school, highest growth among all students, and highest growth of high need students.

While academic excellence is a top priority, we strongly value the importance of social and emotional well-being for all students and staff. Our leadership supports and encourages establishing a balance between academic and social and emotional learning. At BHS we believe that kindness has a ripple effect. We instill the importance of being the "I" in kind. During our annual "Booth Hill Kindness Week," we teach students ways to spread kindness beyond their classroom and school in order to be a changemaker in the world. For example, our second graders paint kindness rocks with powerful messages. These rocks are placed around our school and throughout the Trumbull community.

BHS believes in being a community that is united through various school-led activities that involve students, staff, and parents to build a united front. Throughout the year, various school-wide events are held to accomplish this mission. For example, One School, One Book is an opportunity for a shared reading experience within our school community. This annual event brings the love and joy of reading to all. Every family receives a copy of the same book with assigned reading each night. Students participate in daily trivia questions and are able to listen to Booth Hill staff members read each chapter on our school's website.

Through Booth Hill's PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions System) program we have instilled in our students the importance of being caring community members through respect, ownership, attitude, responsibility and safety (R.O.A.R.S). By creating and maintaining a safe and effective learning environment, we allow all students to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Each morning, students lead our school's R.O.A.R.S. pledge, starting our day with a sense of unity. Staff members use consistent language and visuals through all areas of the building to promote a positive school culture. For example, classrooms and common areas have posters indicating the expected behaviors in each setting. Students learn these expected behaviors through teacher-created lessons that include picture books, student-created videos, role-playing, and activities across all settings in our school.

Our school sees the value in empowering our students to become leaders. Student Council provides an opportunity for leadership for students in grades 3 through 5. Representatives from each classroom are chosen by their peers. This group of students meets monthly to brainstorm and plan ways to strengthen our connection with each other and our community. Student Council Representatives build connections with students in grades K through 2 by working collaboratively on various service projects, such as writing letters to Santa for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

During Covid-19 our school continued to maintain the importance of staying connected while keeping a sense of normalcy for our students and staff. During this time, all staff members rose to the occasion and created ways to remain united. In lieu of a traditional fifth grade graduation, due to Covid restrictions, staff members lined the perimeter of the building to celebrate and recognize the 5th graders. These students and their families decorated cars and paraded around the school as a final good-bye to BHS. Just as important as celebrating our students, Booth Hill Bobcats celebrated and recognized staff members retiring. The staff gathered to hold a community wide drive-by to send off our retirees in a special, one-of-kind send off. Students and families decorated cars, created signs, honked and cheered to recognize our beloved staff

members.

Instilling a love of learning is always at the forefront of our BHS Community. As a school we enjoy opportunities to unite the K-5 student body as well as their families. Our mission at Booth Hill School is to provide a safe, supportive learning environment with high academic standards to create lifelong learners. This allows students to become productive community members and responsible world citizens.

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

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

#### **1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas:**

“The child is the true curriculum.” Sally Haughey

We believe that children lead the way at Booth Hill School. Students are engaged in rigorous learning each day in all curricular areas. Each classroom is set up as a workshop community where teachers begin by delivering instruction using common core standards before gradually releasing students toward their independent tasks. In keeping true with the child is the curriculum, teachers meet with flexible small groups in order to reinforce learning and extend thinking. In these groups, students are encouraged to be creative thinkers who use discourse to cooperatively elaborate on their learning. Teachers "coach-in" and provide models and feedback to help guide students to reach their personal goals. Each student is encouraged to “Reach for the Stars” and push their thinking to always do their personal best.

Through the workshop model students become effective communicators, and deep thinkers, learners, and leaders. Both formative and summative assessments aligned with the standards are naturally embedded in all curricular areas. Additionally, students are given multiple opportunities to show their understanding and mastery of skills which connect to the standards taught. Assessment data is used to drive daily instruction as well as monitor and track growth across the years. This cyclical approach across all grade levels in all curricular areas allows teachers to constantly adjust instruction and meet the individual student needs. It also helps achieve the ultimate goal to foster lifelong leaders and learners.

#### **1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

“Literacy is one of the greatest gifts a person can receive.” Jen Selinsky

Booth Hill School implements a balanced literacy framework where students have ownership of their learning through work with teachers, collaboration with their peers, and during their independent work time. The ultimate goal in literacy at BHS is to turn all learners into lifelong readers and writers as they strive towards their individual literacy goals.

In Readers' Workshop, all students spend a significant amount of time in chosen books at their level, practicing the strategies that have been meticulously taught through mini- lessons, interactive read alouds, and shared reading lessons. Children participate in small group differentiated instruction. These flexible groups address the areas of decoding, fluency, and comprehension.

For our youngest students, the focus is on learning to read. Throughout each day, these learners are engaged in reading multiple texts and applying early print strategies acquired during their work with their teacher, peers, and independently. Our balanced approach includes a systematic and multisensory phonics approach using the Foundations program. Meanwhile, our upper grade students are reading to learn about their world and deepen their comprehension and inferencing skills through project-based learning.

In Writers' Workshop, students engage in all steps of the writing process. Teachers guide their students through writing genres such as narrative, opinion, informational, and poetry. Through modeling, teachers provide students with examples of their own writing as well as the craft of well-loved authors. Students are deeply invested in their own writing across grade levels. Our primary writers are sketching and labeling a story with some words across several pages. While our more developed writers are highly engaged in researching real life topics, paraphrasing information, and taking notes in order to write multi-paragraph essays. Students celebrate and share their writing during publishing parties where parents and peers serve as the audience for our burgeoning writers.

Conferring is at the core of our Writers' and Readers' Workshop. Conferring, both individually and in small groups, is something Booth Hill staff and students have spent a significant amount of time developing across all grade levels. Booth Hill faculty has been invited to share our strategies as a best practice at the district level.

Learning, implementing, and reflecting upon our conferring practices has enriched our reading and writing programs. To better improve our teaching, we participated in vertical walk-throughs and created our own learning progressions within the area of speaking and listening to improve student discourse. Not only has this practice been beneficial for teacher conferring but also for peer conferring. Classroom teachers created grade-level peer conferring checklists to support students as they were working with each other to improve their writing.

### **1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think!” Albert Einstein

In mathematics, we use the Connecticut Core Standards and the eight mathematical practices to develop strong mathematicians who will be versatile critical thinkers and future world problem-solvers.

At Booth Hill School, our mathematicians are encouraged to be versatile critical thinkers through a variety of strategies that foster student participation and discourse. The goal of our mathematics instruction is for students to begin the conceptual learning process by using concrete manipulatives and develop into strong mathematical abstract thinkers. The mental math and visual strategies introduced in the early grades are used throughout the grade levels with increasing complexity to build a strong sense of number. Through the use of math journals, teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to communicate and defend their thinking while understanding the thinking of others as they grapple with real world mathematical problems.

In grades K-1, we use two complimentary programs. Our core program focuses on learning as a collaborative and social endeavor through the workshop model. We incorporate game-based activities to support the process of constructing meaning while developing conceptual understanding. Our students solve problems using visual models and manipulatives. Students talk and move about the classroom as they are actively engaged in their learning. Students are held accountable for their own learning while supporting others in their learning process. For example, students are encouraged to self-reflect on their thinking. We also use a skill-building program that revolves around the classroom calendar. It provides daily fluency practice along with a preview of the broader mathematical concepts that are formally taught in the core curriculum. Assessment includes both informal checklists, individual interviews, and written assessments to check for understanding and to provide data for differentiated instruction.

In grades 2-5, each unit of study follows the concrete, representational, and abstract model (CRA) for instruction. Our instructional approach includes demonstration, modeling with hands-on manipulatives, and guided practice followed by independent practice. We use exit tickets as a daily formative assessment to provide teachers with immediate feedback of a student's level of understanding. These guide the teacher's decisions for additional individualized instruction as needed. Teachers use a variety of questioning techniques to elicit productive discourse throughout the lesson. Students are grouped flexibly to allow for productive struggle in a safe environment. Along with the daily formative assessments that are used to make instructional decisions, we have mid-unit and end of unit assessments which provide the students an opportunity to show mastery of skills and concepts. We also utilize a district purchased universal screener that is administered to all students three times per year which is another key indicator of student growth.

At BHS, we work collaboratively as a community of learners, often using after-school faculty time to engage in grade level walk-throughs and vertical discussions about the mathematical standards and practices in each grade level. These vertical planning sessions and grade level observations help ensure that we have clear learning expectations that are consistent throughout the school. Working together, we can be certain that our strategies and content help support and prepare students for higher level mathematical thinking as they progress through their education. We take pride in our strong BHS mathematical thinkers.

## **1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

“Impossible is not a scientific term.” Vanna Bonta

The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are the core of the science curriculum. Through the 5 E’s (Engage, Explore, Evaluate, Elaborate, and Explain) students become scientists. The teacher begins by introducing the class to a phenomena to get their brains thinking and focused. Students are then encouraged to pose questions based on the phenomena using the scientific process of claim, reasons, and evidence. Upon drawing conclusions, students often demonstrate their understanding using their engineering skills. Through a hands-on inquiry-based approach students predict or make a hypothesis, investigate, analyze, and test. All grade levels collaborate and participate in developmentally-appropriate STEM projects. For example, our youngest learners create habitats for their newly hatched chicks in the spring, while our older students design and build beaver dams. These projects allow students to collaborate and simulate real-world science scenarios.

Throughout each unit students across all grades keep a science journal in which they record and reflect on observations, activities, investigations, and experiments. Journals are also used for students to communicate their understanding of concepts, as well as a place for teachers to provide personal feedback.

Our district is fortunate to have the Trumbull Nature Center which offers programs that align and enhance our curriculum. Their staff visits our school to plan and implement culminating experiences for all grade levels. For example, our fourth graders participate in a plant and seed project where they discover the process of seed germination. These programs allow for parent volunteers to be involved, strengthening the home-school partnership.

## **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The heart of the social studies curriculum is for students to gain a developmentally-appropriate understanding of the world around them and how they play a vital role in shaping that world. At Booth Hill School, kindergarten students are immersed in learning about the world around them and the role they play in the community as a citizen. Students teach each other about their unique family traditions and how this fits into our diverse community. This foundation sets students up to learn how they can become changemakers in society.

In second grade, students have the opportunity to research influential changemakers in our society through primary sources and what positive changes these influencers have made to society. These students prepare a culminating activity that is aligned to Common Core Standards for speaking and listening. Students present about the influence their changemaker had on society. This is an opportunity to prepare students for future leadership roles. Our oldest learners are immersed in the history from the earliest settlements in North America through the American Revolution. Students analyze and compare what life was like in the three regions of the original thirteen colonies in order to understand, analyze, and evaluate the historical mosaic of the United States. Through project-based assessments, students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. After studying the midwestern region, fourth grade students worked in small teams to develop a commercial highlighting a new product they researched. Using green screen technology, groups acted out their commercials to be shared with their peers.

## **1f. For secondary schools:**

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

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

The visual arts program at Booth Hill fosters creative thinking and expression in learners by enriching their thoughts, feelings, and ideas through the use of symbolic language, form, and materials. The program's goals are derived from the National Core Arts Standards for Visual Arts which focuses on four primary categories: creating, presenting, responding, and connecting. Using a variety of media and techniques from paint to clay, printmaking to weaving, each student is given the opportunity to discover who they are as a person and as an artist. The students' appreciation of art is developed through the exploration and study of art history and world cultures. To grow students who are both creators of and an audience for art, student pieces are displayed prominently throughout the halls of Booth Hill and at our annual spring art show for families and the community. Select pieces are also chosen for display at Trumbull's public library.

The foundation of our performing arts curriculum is based on the National Core Arts Standards for Music. Kindergarten through fifth grade students are encouraged to not only perform and create music, but also to respond to and make connections through music. In addition to our general music program, students in grades three through five also have the opportunity to participate in string orchestra and band. Fifth graders also participate in chorus, providing an opportunity for students to gain in-depth knowledge of the preparation and performance process. Twice a year, chorus students collaborate to present a culminating concert for the entire student body and families. Our music teacher also collaborates closely with classroom teachers for other musical events during the school year including our Kindergarten Stepping Up event, First Grade's International Night, and Third Grade's Flag Day assembly, embedding art as a hallmark of celebrations at BHS.

Our physical education curriculum is based on the National and Connecticut Content Standards and is designed to encourage physical activity that significantly contributes to the total growth and development of each student. For example, students in grades 3 through 5 set personal fitness goals and assess their physical activity level using heart-rate monitors purchased through a PTA grant. Our physical education teacher organizes and promotes events during the school year that encourages living a healthy lifestyle including the Kids' Heart Challenge (school-wide fundraiser to benefit the American Heart Association), a walking program celebrated at the town level with a Final Mile celebration event, afterschool March Madness hoops contest, and an end of year Field Day competition between grade levels.

The Booth Hill Library Learning Commons is a fluid and active physical and virtual space that supports and enhances literacy and learning. The Library Media program is based on the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) standards as well as the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards. The teacher librarian works closely with classroom teachers to support curriculum goals, co-teach lessons in research and digital literacy, and curate and share resources including virtual libraries and choice boards. In addition, the teacher librarian organizes author visits, promotes the Hour of Code, and oversees the Dewey Crew - a student-led group that assists with the day-to-day operations of the Learning Commons.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

At Booth Hill School, we are student-centered and all educators strive to deliver rigorous and differentiated Tier One instruction at all times, striving to meet the learning needs of all students. Student progress is closely monitored through daily classwork and a variety of assessments such as I-Ready, the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, and End of Unit Math Assessments. When a student performs below grade level standards for a period of time, we have an Early Intervention Team (EIT) process that is implemented. Teachers, the building academic specialists, administrator, and/or the mental health specialists are all included on this team. The EIT process becomes the foundation of supporting our students.

At these EIT meetings, a student plan is created with input from all members of the team. The individualized student plan includes a specific student goal which is developed based on the assessment data provided. This plan may include small group instruction by an academic specialist along with small group instruction in the classroom. The student plans are in addition to the core classroom instruction. These are both closely progress-monitored. Students are reviewed at six-week intervals and next steps are determined based on individual progress and needs.

At the Tier Three level, students receive more intense support using research-based interventions. This includes more targeted strategies in the area of need for maximizing student outcomes. Progress monitoring occurs more frequently and this data is then used to make decisions on next steps, such as a referral to special education if needed. We implement a collaborative support system, which includes universal screeners, six week cycles of research-based intervention, progress monitoring, clear and focused objectives, along with strong communication with parents to fully support students performing below grade level. This process allows for students to reach their full potential in all academic and non-academic areas.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

“With your entire focus on your goal, you will reach levels of achievement that you never thought possible.”  
Catherine Pulsifer

At Booth Hill School we recognize students that would benefit from enriched learning beyond the curriculum. There are a variety of opportunities for students to extend their thinking and stretch their learning.

Within the ELA curriculum students are challenged by providing them with above grade-level complex texts. Students are encouraged to explore across genres to expand and deepen their comprehension. In the reading workshop, students are encouraged to “push their thinking” by responding to the next grade level’s standards on the vertical learning progressions which run from K-5. While in the writer’s workshop, students are motivated to employ more sophisticated craft in their pieces. This progression is a purposeful sequencing of teaching and learning expectations across grade levels. Once a child meets their grade level standard, they are challenged to try and apply the next grade’s standard to their work while referring to models. Supplementary resources such as Raz Kids, and Epic give students the opportunity to enrich their learning at their level regardless of their grade. These resources are also available for students at home.

In Math, students are given opportunities to enrich their problem solving skills. Each unit provides students with higher level enrichment opportunities to further indulge in the concepts being taught. These opportunities require students to integrate multiple skills such as problem solving and communicating effectively. During math workshops, games are differentiated to meet the variety of learners in the classroom. Also, based on students' performance, many are chosen to compete in the Noetic Math Challenge, a problem solving contest.

More opportunities arise through after school enrichment programs which include Spanish, writing, and science where students work together to expand on their personal interests through a variety of projects and themed activities.

In addition, our Talented and Gifted Program (TAG) identifies students in grades 4 and 5 who would benefit from completing enriching projects. Students are chosen through standardized testing, teacher recommendation, and classroom performance. Students meet biweekly to work with the TAG teacher who facilitates enriching activities beyond the standard curriculum.

### **3c. Special education:**

“The world needs all kinds of minds to work together.” - Temple Grandin

At Booth Hill School we strive to meet the needs of the whole child. The special education team supports students with a variety of needs through a student’s individualized education plan (IEP). These plans provide students with highly specialized instruction and related services. Planning and Placement Teams come together with families in unison to develop the most effective programs for our students. BHS values inclusion where each student is unique in what he or she brings to all classrooms. Our special education team works seamlessly with general education teachers and specialists. Collaboration among a student’s team is ongoing, where the student’s academic and emotional successes are at the forefront.

The special education team creates a safe haven for students to let their guard down and express themselves in a smaller setting. Every success is highlighted, which builds student confidence and self-esteem. We celebrate students during the school day in ways in which they will continue to feel loved when they leave BHS. For example, having a birthday party during lunch for a student with all of his previous teachers and support staff present is part of the norm of our special education program. In April, BHS staff celebrate students with Autism by wearing T-shirts to bring awareness and unite our student population. This is emblematic of the relationships that form among students with special needs. BHS has a personalized way of encouraging and accepting all students in our community.

During COVID-19 in the 2020-2021 school year, BHS operated in two cohorts. Groups of students attended school in-person for three days and virtually for two days. Students with IEPs were provided the option to attend in-person learning for four days out of the week. By extending this opportunity to our families, students received more consistent specialized instruction to support their specific learning needs.

### **3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:**

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world." Ludwig Wittgenstein

At Booth Hill, English Learners (ELs) receive instruction via push-in and pull-out service models. Service time depends on students' second language acquisition (SLA) levels, which vary from Newcomer to Approaching Proficient. Students are seen between one and five times per week, depending on individual needs. Some students are supported via a consult model, while others receive direct instruction from the EL teacher.

Direct instruction in English language structure, vocabulary, grammar, and syntax is at the core of our program. Academic language such as: select, decide, compare, organize, and explain is essential for ELs to access their interdisciplinary learning. Learning units are thematic and teach vocabulary, comprehension, and oral fluency through songs, short stories, and interactive games. Visuals, sentence frames, repetition, gestures, realia, and role playing are successful strategies within our program. Using tangible artifacts makes learning more concrete, while role playing provides the opportunity to empower students through real-life language exchange.

LAS Links (Language Assessment Scales) is a statewide electronic mandated assessment, given annually, and used to determine proficiency levels in English. It tests reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The results are used to drive instruction, formulate groupings, and determine exit criteria from EL instruction. To exit, students must receive an overall score of Proficient or Above Proficient. In addition, both the reading and writing subtests must also have a score of Proficient or Above Proficient.

In addition to servicing students, our EL teacher acts as a cultural sensitivity ambassador who provides support to students by consulting with teachers about cultural diversity awareness. This effort helps to deter misrepresentation of EL students and their native culture. Our EL teacher maintains close communication with classroom teachers to align lessons with what students need to access their learning. She assists teachers in developing a repertoire of strategy skills and best practices for use with ELs in the classroom.

### **3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant, homeless), if a special program or intervention is offered:**

Trumbull Public Schools participates in Cooperative Educational Services's (CES) Open Choice program. The Open Choice program was established by legislation in 1997 to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation and improve academic achievement among students. Each year, students living in Bridgeport's urban areas have the opportunity to apply for and attend school in Trumbull. Booth Hill has had the privilege of educating many families from nearby Bridgeport.

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

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

“ROAR!” We are the Booth Hill Bobcats! The “Booth Hill Way” is to create a community that fosters a love for learning while building relationships among staff and students. When our students walk into Booth Hill every day, they feel safe and inspired to do their personal best.

Each day, students are warmly welcomed by staff as they exit their cars or buses, and enter the classroom. Students select a greeting such as a high five, fist bump, wave, or hug to greet their teacher. These genuine greetings are carried throughout school wide morning announcements where students recite the Booth Hill R.O.A.R.S. pledge. Following the pledge, students take part in morning meetings with their teacher and classmates where they continue to build a positive classroom culture.

To continuously promote students reaching their fullest academic, social/emotional potential, our building utilizes a positive behavior intervention system (PBIS). Students have the opportunity to be “Caught Roaring” and receive a “Blue Ticket” throughout their day. For example, students who exemplify role model behavior, such as going above and beyond to help a friend in need or taking responsibility in keeping our school building clean. At the end of the week, classroom teachers pull R.O.A.R.S tickets to celebrate student success. Students are welcomed to choose either a tangible or intangible reward to honor their accomplishment. Some rewards might be a “BHS” water bottle or lunch with the principal or their teacher. This program is highly motivating as each week students look forward to hearing the principal announce their names over the school intercom. This recognition is motivating for students to continue to demonstrate positive behaviors.

During school closures due to COVID, we came together as a community to stay connected through weekly videos from the principal. We also stayed united through staff videos to students with powerful encouraging messages to remind them that we are still a team and a family even though apart. Additionally, teachers created schedules with lessons and community building activities for students to join in on live Google Meets for a sense of normalcy.

Through a collaborative effort, our support staff push into classrooms to teach lessons with a focus on social/emotional learning to help build an all-inclusive environment. These lessons encompass topics that teach that we all learn in different ways. For example, the younger learners may read a story about a child in a wheelchair with a physical disability, while older students may read a story about a child with autism. This allows every child to feel welcomed, accepted, nurtured, and valued within our building. During this time students are encouraged to be themselves and share what makes them special.

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

At Booth Hill, we have a strong community connection through our parent organizations. We are fortunate to have an active PTA and Father’s Club that are committed to supporting the entire school community. The engagement with our families begins with an orientation for our incoming kindergarten class. Our PTA welcomes these newcomers with a meet and greet breakfast that helps build relationships before the children officially become Booth Hill Bobcats. Our Back to School Night events provide an opportunity for new families to join and volunteer for these key organizations.

Both of these organizations plan a variety of events and opportunities to assemble our school and parent community. From an annual Back to School Barbecue to a Pancake Palooza, fundraisers and social events give families the opportunity to be part of our larger Booth Hill family. Additionally, proceeds raised fund resources and special projects for school improvement, including: home to school communication folders for every child, books for One School, One Book, gymnasium renovations, and flexible classroom seating. Moreover, our PTA organizes an after school enrichment program which provides access to educational opportunities beyond the school day.

Weekly Booth Hill happenings from the principal's desk are communicated with families via our school newsletter, where student achievements are highlighted and upcoming events are shared. During the pandemic, this norm kept our community connected, as we adapted our ways of communication to ensure families still felt supported. For example, Booth Hill Bedtime Stories was a platform where students still felt connected to their teachers while homebound. During this time, student-led video updates were produced. These videos captured teacher interviews, principal reviews, and updates from community members.

Consistent with our philosophy of a student-centered school, our student council plays an integral role to impact others beyond our school walls. These efforts to make a difference in the community are illustrated in ways including: organizing food drives to supply local food banks, hosting school spirit days to raise funds to buy Toys for Tots, and writing encouraging Valentines for Vets. Through these service projects, students grow in empathy and leadership skills.

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

Booth Hill School is an extraordinary place to work due to its culture and climate. Walking the hallways reveals a friendly, supportive, and collaborative feel. This is highly motivating for staff, making them feel valued and supported. We celebrate our biggest joys, both in school and personally, while supporting each other through life's challenges. BHS is all about coming together in, what we like to call, "Our Booth Hill Way." This sense of unity came from growing and maintaining relationships with our colleagues beyond the classroom. Monthly breakfasts allow us to socialize with those we don't see everyday. We have staff spirit days throughout the year, such as "wear your college sweatshirt to school day." During the month of February, we "Spread the Love" by doing secret cupid, where staff lift each other through sweet notes and treats for one another. Finally, on Fridays staff wear school colors to unite as Booth Hill Bobcats.

BHS also comes together to support our community. Our entire staff participated in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge to raise money in honor of a parent fighting the disease, and the school was featured on the news for coming together to raise money in support of a worthy cause and to extend the challenge to other Trumbull schools.

Our climate is built on the idea that when something happens to one staff member, it happens to us all. For example, most recently, for our music teacher who has family in Ukraine, we came together to show support through a blue and yellow day. Monetary donations were collected to buy medical supplies for Ukraine. We also provided the staff member the emotional support needed. This sense of connection is above and beyond your typical work environment. Empathy begins with us, as a staff, and we bring that to our students.

BHS is regarded as a district pioneer for providing professional development opportunities. As noted by our past Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Jonathan Budd, "When the district looks to reading and writing, it looks to Booth Hill." Upon reflection on our curriculum several years ago, we felt the need for a more rigorous approach to teaching writing. As a result, our principal advocated for all teachers to attend Teachers College for Readers' and Writers' Workshop at Columbia University in New York. This allowed BHS to inspire and establish a quality, research-based, curriculum within our school building. Teachers were given the opportunity to learn from each other within our building and paved the way for launching these programs at the district level.

New teachers are offered many supports from the minute they walk into our building. This current school year, a new teacher was hired after the start of the year and it was "all hands on deck" in order to transform an art room into a kindergarten classroom. Teachers pulled furniture, rugs, decorations and classroom library books from their own rooms to support our new colleague. Additionally, our math specialist and literacy consultants offered her additional support to model lessons and to help navigate the new curriculum. This is the common practice for all new BHS teachers. Veteran teachers also have an open door policy to welcome and embrace new teachers, answering questions and providing support when needed. New teachers are also paired with a TEAM trained mentor. This mentor provides guidance with the different aspects of being a new teacher.

with some students opting for distance learning. Our goal was always to keep our school community united, connected and supported. At each stage of transition, we were provided with professional development opportunities at the district and school level. We learned how to use technology to effectively engage with all students, present curriculum and assess through different platforms. For example, we had professional development from the technology integration specialist on how to create videos using WeVideo. These pre-recorded videos allowed the teacher to provide meaningful instruction and connect with students during a challenging time.

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

“The role of the principal is not to be the sole leader of the school but to grow leaders.” Roland Barth

Booth Hill believes and operates on a collaborative leadership model. With only one administrator for 515 students, this model is essential for the success of our school. It is also a significant contributor to the positive climate and culture of BHS. Because of this, staff and student leaders emerge through various committees throughout the school.

Teachers are not only encouraged to lead, but are empowered decision makers and participants in all school committees. This includes our Leadership Team, Student Council, Safe School Climate Committee, Positive Intervention Team, and Parent Teacher Association. One of the most impactful committees is our Specialist Committee. This team consists of our literacy consultants, math specialist, media specialist, and principal. They meet bi-weekly to examine our building goals and make thoughtful recommendations to translate these goals into action plans for our grade level teams and departments. One example of this involved creating student to student, kindergarten to fifth grade conferring progressions in writing based on the common core listening and speaking standards. Members of our specialist committee met with grade level teachers to discuss the standards and to listen to ideas to adjust our after school faculty meeting time. This teacher led approach has significant power. It allows multiple voices and input to be heard before we move forward on initiatives and creates a collective culture of discussion that values all professionals.

Additionally, we strongly believe in student led leadership. As Booth Hill Bobcats, we create the atmosphere, structures, and opportunities where students lead our school. Our fifth grade students wrote our Booth Hill pledge that students read every morning to start our day. Booth Hill students composed our school song that we play as part of our morning announcements. Students lead our school-wide and grade level assemblies in our gymnasium. Our Student Council meets on a monthly basis to plan spirit days for our school and plan fundraisers that can contribute to our community, as well as beyond the walls of our town.

Booth Hill strongly embraces the concept that teacher growth is directly related to student growth. BHS teachers are not only held to the highest instructional standards based on our teacher evaluation plan, but hold themselves to even higher standards. Teachers regularly participate in instructional walk-throughs to observe their colleagues teaching math, writing, or reading. Collaborative discussions follow afterwards to highlight best instructional practices witnessed. More importantly, teachers brainstorm how they can enact what they observed in their own classrooms the next day. While this internal process of “making our instruction visible to each other” is deeply embedded in our culture, it is also reflected in teachers’ action plans that are tied directly to their annual goals. It is common practice that teachers will request release time from their classrooms to observe other teachers that they feel can improve their practice or help them grow in different ways. This system has created a culture of trust and collaboration, as opposed to a culture in which teachers compare and compete against each other. Because of this philosophy, Booth Hill teachers are frequently chosen to lead district-wide staff development sessions and to spread the spirit of collaboration, reflection, and trust to other professionals in the district. We recognize that growing as professionals is a never ending process to improve student learning.

Our collaborative leadership philosophy extends to our parent community. Our PTA and Father’s Club sponsor events, provide ideas, and funding that contribute invaluable to the experience of our students. They are also willing to lend their expertise to our school. When we developed our positive behavior intervention system one parent designed the posters of respect, ownership, attitude, responsibility and safety that are proudly displayed throughout our school.

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

“Culture opens the sense of beauty.” Ralph W. Emerson

Our norm at Booth Hill School is to celebrate diversity by providing opportunities to honor cultural and culture awareness within our staff, students, and the community. We have a strong commitment to personal self-awareness and professional learning, which support a diverse classroom and provide equitable access to all learners. Through the responsive classroom approach, students in our community are taught to treat each other with empathy and respect. We value the assets of all students, focusing on what they CAN do - not what they can't. We believe our students bring a wide set of experiences and perspectives to the classroom, which is why diversity is a strength at our school.

One of our efforts in cultural responsiveness included inviting Charles R. Smith, author of 28 Days, to speak to our school in celebration of Black History. Students were excited by this dynamic African American presenter, who ignited a school-wide flame to read assorted books by varied authors. The excitement was palpable throughout the building and opened up our cultural literary eyes. Moreover, we use morning announcements to highlight famous African Americans or notable women and their achievements during Women's History month, to help with building cultural competence.

Another example is our well-attended annual International Night, a culminating event for Holidays Around the World. Students are taught customs and traditions of different countries and have the opportunity to greet each other daily in a different language during Morning Meeting. Students learn what other countries value and reflect on their learning by comparing it to their own experiences. This interdisciplinary event involves the music teachers who teach international songs and dances in a student-led celebration of culture and represent the many nations that give us Booth Hill pride.

In Trumbull, we have a District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) made up of administrators, program leaders, and teacher representatives. This initiative was developed to directly meet the needs of students. At the school level, School Equity Leadership Teams (SELTs) have been formed and students, as part of focus groups, have a voice where their opinions are welcomed, heard, and valued.

Our school goal is to make learning relevant to all students by integrating their cultural references in the classroom, which in turn maximizes learning. We believe this intentional approach creates culturally responsive learners who understand that differences are not strange but rather a unique opportunity to open our minds, grow our hearts, learn, and accept new perspectives inspired by others.

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

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com·mu·ni·ty

/kə' myoʊnədə/

noun

a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals

Booth Hill School has one driving force that sets us apart: we believe that fostering a strong community is the primary practice that leads to our school's success. We have worked hard to create a sense of community at Booth Hill that is above and beyond other schools in our district and state. It has taken determination and resilience to create a setting where students and staff uphold a strong commitment to each other. Once this community became established, we have been able to use it as the foundation of our attitudes, beliefs, and goals.

Our fostering of community drives the firm belief that the whole child should be at the center of our academic decision making. We know that each child is unique and it is our job to create an environment for all to succeed. It is common practice at Booth Hill to take the curriculum provided by the district and make it our own. Our district's curriculum is rigorous and fast paced. As a school community, we believe what makes us stand apart is continuously modifying our instruction to meet the current needs of our students. For example, when third graders were struggling with the concept and curriculum of fractions, we knew there were adjustments that needed to be made. Our principal, math specialist, and third grade team collaborated to develop reinforcement lessons and games. This allowed the focus to be on teaching the needs of the child, rather than just delivering a scripted curriculum. Another example of our fostering community is when we realized our students were lacking the necessary speaking and listening skills to have meaningful peer conferences within the Writers' Workshop. Our district's curriculum did not address these needs. The curriculum lacked embedded lessons and learning progressions in order to help teach these skills. Over the course of two school years, our school created and implemented learning progressions for conferring across all grade levels. This was an opportunity to keep the feeling of fellowship centered around one common goal. We learned from each other by conducting walkthroughs at each grade level and allowing time for teachers to observe one another. By implementing these progressions, students achieved more success due to common learning goals across the building. The movement forward in communication connected everyone at BHS and built bonds in the school community.

We share the common attitude that in order for high academic success to be achieved, we must first and foremost establish a safe, welcoming, and supportive school community. We understand that a child needs to feel supported and connected to be available to learn. This begins as soon as students walk in the building on the first day of school. Lessons centered on building a classroom community, respecting each other's differences and recognizing our personal strengths allows students to immediately feel safe. Throughout the year, staff can be found supporting students at their sporting events on the weekend, attending academic awards ceremonies, or visiting a student at their house during a challenging life event. Our teachers often volunteer time outside of school to support students and families. Booth Hill has set up meal trains for families in need, hung Christmas lights at a house of a family with a terminally ill parent, provided lawn mowing services to help a struggling family, and created and sold bracelets to raise funds for a student battling cancer. This is all done in the spirit of making sure students feel safe and supported by their school community which allows for high achievement.

Once students graduate, they continue to remain a lifelong community member of Booth Hill School. Teachers often attend high school graduations of former students to show support and reconnect. "Once a Bobcat, Always a Bobcat" - THAT is the Booth Hill way.