

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

---

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 919 Allgood Street Suite 2  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Trion State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30753-1305

County Chattooga

Telephone (706) 734-7433 Fax (706) 734-7517

Web site/URL https://tms.trionschools.org E-mail jason.pelham@trionschools.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. Phillip Williams E-mail phil.williams@trionschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Trion City School District Tel. (706) 734-2363

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr Randy Henderson  
(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 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

---

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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	51	35	86
7	45	57	102
8	60	44	104
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	156	136	292

\*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
  - 0.3 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 24 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 70.7 % White
  - 4 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 4%

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	1
(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)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	295
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Spanish, Nepalese

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

9 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 70 %

Total number students who qualify: 203

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 6 %  
17 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>2</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</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: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 13:1

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	96%	96%	96%	97%	95%
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.

The mission of TCS is to work in partnership with students, families, and the community to ensure each student acquires the knowledge, skills, and core values necessary to achieve personal success and to enrich communities as an engaged and productive citizen. Trion Middle School provides a rigorous, in-depth, diversified education which empowers all students to become contributing members of society.

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

<https://www.trionschools.org/>

Non-discrimination Policy: It is the policy of the Trion City School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service.

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**

---

Trion Georgia is a small community of approximately 2,500 people located in Northwest Georgia where families live in close proximity to each other and close to our school's campus. This proximity creates unique opportunities for families to build strong, intergenerational ties with staff and one another. Students will begin and end their education from Pre-K to 12th grade "on the hill" where all three schools share the same campus. When you are allowed the privilege of interacting with and knowing others well, you develop the gift of respecting each other. This heavily influences the culture, values, and expectations that this community has been able to establish and hold on to for decades.

Socio-economic changes and an increase in families with Hispanic heritage have only made our community and our schools stronger over the last several years. The average median family income is well below the state's median level (\$34k vs \$62k). A higher percentage of our families live at the poverty level as compared to those at the state's average (28% vs 15%) and the influx of families with Hispanic origins has increased dramatically over a short period of time.

Most of our parents work in local mills, transport materials, or have jobs associated with building and construction while others mostly work in management, administration, education or health care.

Trion City Schools (TCS) is the center and very heart of this community. Students from differing backgrounds come together each day to learn and unite us. We have a tight knit community that supports and values its children and their education. Trion City Schools (TCS) is synonymous with "Tradition, Commitment, and Success" and is often used as our slogan of choice.

Trion Middle School teachers use a number of effective strategies to challenge, motivate, and support all students to ensure that they excel academically.

Teachers understand that they have a series of essential tasks to ensure students are learning: 1. Create a positive learning environment where students feel safe and respected; 2. Build positive relationships with all students and treat them with dignity and respect every single day; 3. Establish a set of rituals and routines that promote learning by using respectful communication, clear expectations, and clear learning targets; 4. Provide students with engaging tasks, projects, and assignments that require teamwork, student voice, movement, technology integration, and diverse cooperative learning groups; 5. Use assessment results to differentiate instruction, review instruction, reteach standards, provide second chance learning opportunities and after-school tutoring for students who struggle; and 6. Regularly recognize students and celebrate their success.

Student Recognitions and Celebrations:

Student of the Month recognitions promote our monthly character words that help our students develop positive character traits. Our BULLDOG character theme words of the month this year are: Building Unity Loyalty Leadership Determination Optimism Gratitude and Service.

Students who meet a weekly reading goal earn a reward and a ticket for our monthly Reading Plus Prize Drawings. The more you work the more tickets you can earn towards winning our big monthly prizes such as gift cards, hoverboards, earbuds, and a Nintendo switch game.

Honor Roll and Star Roll students receive "Reward Lunches" from a local restaurant after each report card period.

Annual Reward Field Trips to amusement parks, bowling alleys, or other fun locations are given to students with exceptional academic performance or growth.

Building Social Skills at TMS:

Our Teachers As Advisors (TAA) program has allowed students to be mentored by a teacher once a month. Teachers mentor students on behavior, academic progress, or conflict resolution skills. Monthly Club Day meetings allow students to socialize based on common interests. School socials allow students to interact with one another in a positive manner. Socials include areas for pizza, dancing, karaoke, photo booths, and games.

Extra-curricular opportunities:

Approximately 60% of our students participate in extracurricular activities such as team sports, spirit cheer, competition cheer, marching band, concert band, color guard, and 4-H competitions.

Leadership:

Our admin team, teacher leaders, teacher mentors, counselor, nurse, and office staff work together as a team to ensure normal daily activities, breaks, discipline, safety drills, student mentoring, parent contacts, weekly announcements, learning goals, parent meetings, and schedules are met each week. During teacher planning days and monthly faculty meetings an emphasis is placed on our mission and vision for student learning. Teachers are provided collaboration opportunities and interact in PLC meetings, vertical content area meetings, grade level meetings, and new teacher mentoring meetings where they review learning data, assessments, lesson ideas, and share resources.

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

---

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

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

Trion Middle School (TMS) teaches the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) Standards of Excellence Curriculum and follows the GADOE pacing guide in each content area. TMS offers accelerated classes to 6th and 7th grade students, and high school credit classes to our 8th grade students in 9th grade American Literature, 9th grade Algebra I, and 9th grade Physical Science.

Learning targets are identified for each lesson and essential standards are identified by each teacher.

We understand that our instruction must be engaging and relevant. We have high academic expectations and our students rise to those standards. Some of the strategies that we emphasize at TMS are: 1. "Engaging Openings" connect the standards or learning target to a real world concept. We believe creating relevant connections promotes engagement and motivation for learning; 2. "Anchor Charts" are posted on classroom walls during instruction. Anchor charts address a key concept or skill that students will refer back to during the learning process. We believe this promotes engagement and student responsibility; "Engagement Strategies" can include "Think Write Pair Share", "Four Corners Debate", "Give One/Get One", and "Circle The Sage." We believe that promoting movement and giving students a voice during the lesson promotes engagement, socialization, and respect; 4. "Summative Closings" are used to guide students into making connections with the learning target and drawing conclusions. We believe these summaries increase engagement, retention, and critical thinking. Teachers are also able to evaluate student thinking and address misconceptions during this time; and 5. "Technology integration" has shifted from a priority to a necessity. Our ever changing world requires our students to be digitally literate and technologically capable. Recent events related to the pandemic have made these necessities even more urgent. Teachers at TMS have created online learning stations where students can access lessons and assignments from almost anywhere and at any time.

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

The ELA department at Trion Middle School creates a learning environment for our students by vertically integrating goal setting, instruction, curriculum, and progress monitoring. These priorities are essential for our students transitioning into middle school and transitioning to high school. As an ELA department, we believe language arts provides the opportunity for students to become effective communicators, learners, and thinkers through developing their abilities as listeners, readers, speakers, and writers. We all have stories to tell, and teaching students their lives are worthy of study and reflection fosters a sense of compassion, kindness, engagement, and relevance in connecting to their studies.

Assessment pieces used in classrooms include quizzes, work samples, unit tests, lexile and fluency benchmarks, and MAP benchmark assessments. Teachers utilize the information from these assessments to create small groups for instruction, determine needs for curriculum adjustments, and areas for re-teaching the content through remediation or acceleration. Comprehensive, quarterly exams are used to assess long-term retention of knowledge on grade-level standards. Using MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), a benchmark assessment of skills in reading, language, and writing, teachers and students are able to monitor growth. MAP is administered in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of each year.

Conjoined with MAP are computer-based intervention programs called Compass and Reading Plus. Lessons and quizzes from Compass are directly linked to the individual student's achievement level on MAP. These programs meet the students where they are and help them build fluency and comprehension skills to grow their lexile levels. At the middle and end of each grading period, students record grades and goals on their individual "goal sheet." Additionally, as students complete a MAP assessment, teachers conference with each individual on progress and goals. Information from all assessments assists teachers

and students in the preparation for the Georgia end of grade (EOG) assessment, the Georgia Milestones. All academic information is shared with parents/guardians.

Curriculum and instruction pieces used vertically at Trion Middle School include Thompson and Kemnitz The Word within Word, No Red Ink, CommonLit, and Read Works. Instructional pieces implemented vertically are used for daily grades, remediation, acceleration, formative, and summative assessments. Resources, including materials and professional learning resources, are directly related to academic goals. In our vertical/departmental meetings, teachers and leaders analyze data to create goals. Once a goal has been identified, instructional strategies are determined. The group determines if any specific resources or professional learning are needed in order to provide the strategies and meet the academic goals.

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

Trion Middle School math teachers continually collaborate vertically to ensure students are on target for the learning objectives at each grade level. Using the GSE curriculum guide and Frameworks, teachers plan lessons in which students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and become empowered to master standards and teach students. At each grade level priority standards are chosen, taught, and assessed throughout the year.

Just as mathematics is a spiraling curriculum, the instruction and assessment spiral to ensure students reach their full potential. Teachers focus on relevant real-world examples and connections during instruction to promote authentic learning in the math classroom. MathShell, MARS tasks, 3-Act tasks, GSE Frameworks tasks, games, scavenger hunts, task cards, interactive notebooks/flipbooks, and teacher created lessons are implemented across the middle grades at TMS to engage and give voice to our students. Instruction also includes student summaries as closings, tickets out the door, Socratic-style student questioning and reflection, and student-led debates of lessons. Students are also exposed to technology in the math classroom through the platforms of Study Island, ThatQuiz, Quizziz, Kahoot, Compass, and a variety of interactive math manipulative websites for skills practice. Students develop math projects to show mastery and integration of the standards taught within each unit i.e. developing probability simulations, drawing house plans and making posters (scale-factor), relevance of angles through city mapping (angle relationships & Pythagorean Theorem), etc.

Both formative and summative math assessments include multiple choice, true/false statements, always/sometimes/never statements, multiple choice, drop down menus, or constructed response. Testing platforms include Study Island, thatquiz, wiseme, and teacher-made tests. Formative assessments are used to guide teacher led instruction throughout units, develop small groups for remediation and enrichment, and center focused activities. Teachers keep a running record on standards that students need more practice on and continually assess the developing math schema throughout unit instruction. Small group Compass classes are assigned to students who need extra remediation on math standards using assessment data. Summative unit assessments are built by teachers using backwards design. This helps guide the instruction throughout the unit as well.

TMS was very fortunate in that we delivered face-to-face instruction to our students during the pandemic with the exception of March-May of 2020. Students who were quarantined were active with their peers and teachers through Google Meets and Google Classroom. Math teachers were provided with headsets and school-led training in the use of conducting effective Google Meet sessions with those students at home. We experienced a high number of quarantined students logging on live during actual instruction to participate in class with those that were at school. Teachers also converted the majority of instructional materials to PDFs and Google Slides, allowing them to be uploaded to our math Google Classroom platform for each math class. Students were trained on how to copy materials, insert and submit answers, and use proper digital classroom etiquette for online participation.

Students collaborated together on Google Docs used in partner/group assignments during math classes during the 2020/21 school year. We saw many kids return from quarantine completely caught up and ready to join their classes with current instruction. In summary, students at TMS are taught math in a hands-on manner in student-led cooperative learning classrooms.

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

The Science department at Trion Middle School aligns vertically in the context of curriculum and assessments with the state standards. The concepts and procedures we use are structured around the organizing principles of each domain. As a science department, we feel it is important to meet the needs of our students through various types of instruction and assessments. We work on designing lessons with structural activities, in real or simulated situations, allowing students to experience real word problem solving and inquiry in situations drawn from their personal experiences.

Linking new knowledge to what students already know and presenting concepts in a conceptual, logical, and sequential order helps to build on previous learning within and across grade levels. Starting with the sixth grade, students work in laboratory settings to help them develop knowledge that supports problem solving skills. Providing students with several opportunities to practice and demonstrate what they learn in a variety of contexts and tiered lessons deepens their understanding of the standards.

Goal setting is a priority at Trion Middle School. Integrating vocabulary strategies and written response questions improves content mastery and helps students to reach ELA goals. A vertical integration of vocabulary implementation strategies has been used in a variety of assessments. Common assessments used in our science classrooms include lab reports, tickets out the door, hands-on projects, research projects, studyisland, reflective discussions, kahoot, quizzes, tests, webquests, concept maps and benchmarks. These assessments help teachers to create small groups for re-teaching, and to monitor student growth.

Working with our local 4-H program provides extra resources for our students in and out of the classroom. Science teachers and 4-H representatives promote students' and parents' involvement in meeting student goals. We believe that continually working with each other to improve learning and to create lasting experiences makes a difference in our students' progress.

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

The Trion Middle School Social Studies Department utilizes the curriculum frameworks and resources from the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) for Social Studies to pace and plan for instruction. Our team plans vertically to drive instruction, review data, adjust pacing, plan remediation, consider professional development needs, share ideas, address concerns, and monitor progress.

Our units are designed to promote inquiry and foster an individual, community, and cultural identity. By connecting themes with real-world/personal experiences and cultivating a desire for an enduring understanding of our world, we hope to equip students with the ability to become productive citizens and life-long learners.

The curriculum and instruction materials utilized by our team include but are not limited to: CommonLit.com (an online bank of nonfiction passages), Study Island, USA Test Prep, Scholastic Magazine, Flocabulary.com, Cloze Notes, Discovery/Inquiry Learning, CNN-10, overnight field trips, and Georgia Public Broadcasting.

Information is presented in a variety of ways to meet all learning styles. Instructional materials utilized daily in delivering the curriculum are ViewSonic/ ViewBoards, dry-erase boards, anchor charts, graphs, maps, pictures, Google Classroom, 1-1 ratio Chromebooks for each student, diagrams, WizerMe, political cartoons, videos, audio clips, and a variety of nonfiction literature.

Some of the instructional strategies utilized by our team are inquiry, projects, circle the sage, gamification, jigsaw learning, dramatizations, questions/answers, field trips, resident experts, discussion, lecture, think/pair/share, problem-solving, dramatization, and independent study.

A variety of diagnostic, formative, summative, and criterion-referenced assessments are utilized to collect data. Assessment data is used to determine remediation and acceleration needs, drive instruction, track progress, monitor growth, and determine staff development needs. Students are assessed through daily

observations, journals, 4-corner debates, quizzes, International Fair Presentations, work samples, Golden Question Benchmarks, Unit tests, and comprehensive quarterly tests. Some data collection vehicles are thatquiz.org, Quizlet, and FlipGrid.

We host a variety of educational activities and overnight field trips which encourage student and community involvement. Students tour The National Center for Civil and Human Rights Museum in Atlanta, travel across Georgia for an overnight field trip to discover several historic sites in Georgia, host a career day, present an educational international fair for the community and elementary students, maintain a community flower and vegetable garden, collect and distribute nutritious food products and snacks to children in our community through Helping Hands Ending Hunger, and participate in several 4-H community service projects.

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

Trion Middle School offers accelerated classes to 6th and 7th grade students in the areas of math and ELA and high school credit classes to 8th grade students in the areas of 9th grade American Literature, 9th grade Algebra I, and 9th grade Physical Science. Students are chosen to participate in these classes based upon prior year's academic performance such as quarterly report card grades, MAP benchmark scores, and Georgia Milestones test scores. The state of Georgia has an accelerated curriculum for 6th and 7th grades where teachers in math and ELA teach the middle school standards for that grade level plus one half of the next year's curriculum.

By the time these students reach the 8th grade they have already been taught all three years of the middle school curriculum for those subjects and are prepared academically to be taught the 9th grade standards for math and ELA in 8th grade.

Eighth grade science is a physical science course, so we are able to offer high school credit by teaching the 9th grade high school curriculum which includes 8th grade standards plus the additional curriculum associated with the high school course.

Qualifying 8th grade students may take one, two, or all three high school credit classes based upon their previous year's data. These students follow the same guidelines as high school students regarding taking required end of course exams, seat time, and their grades actually count towards their high school GPAs. These students are often ultimately enroll in high school honors classes taking AP and/or dual enrollment courses.

Our school counselor guides our students through an online career interest survey that helps them prepare for specific courses and programs of interest before registering for high school classes.

Eighth grade students participated in a presentation called "Be Pro Be Proud." Students who showed an interest in specific career fields attended this workforce workshop featuring a customized, interactive tractor trailer loaded with information, and virtual skills challenges for careers in truck driving, welding, and healthcare.

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

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

Students in each grade are offered opportunities to take art, band, PE, computers, or weight training courses as part of their connection classes (elective courses) in middle school. Students will attend two of these classes per semester and rotate on an A/B class schedule. Students are then scheduled to participate in two different connections courses the following semester unless they are in band which they take both semesters. Students often repeat PE or weight training classes the second semester as well.

We only have a limited number of connection courses and connection teachers at TMS partially due to our limited FTE funding since we are a smaller school. However, our teachers often provide opportunities for students to be artistic and use their creativity when completing projects in their regular content area classes. A science teacher will require students to build models of different habitats using a shoe box. Students will bring in items from home to create scenes where animals live in the forest, the jungle, the desert, or a polar region which requires artistic expression. An ELA teacher will require students who are studying Romeo and Juliet to create a sound track of current music that is associated with that theme. A physical science teacher will require students to build a model of a plastic car using limited supplies and their knowledge of science principles and aerodynamics. Students then prepare for a race, pushing their finished products down a ramp and competing for the fastest time. Social studies students will create a TikTok presentation where they present content from a specific social studies standard in the format of a TikTok video which may include a rap, a song, a poem or a dance. Despite our lack of courses that provide direct instruction in art programs, our teachers recognize that our students have a need for art. Creating engaging lessons where students can express themselves using artist or creative design lends itself to good teaching and student engagement.

We will be adding a computer science course in the future per the GADOE middle school guidelines. At that time we hope to introduce coding and robotics courses for our students as well. Although we only offer these limited courses, our monthly club meetings allow for some students to express themselves artistically. Some students choose a club where art is integrated into their club's program. For example, there is a performing arts club where students who are interested in singing and dancing prepare all year for a talent show competition in the spring.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

Trion Middle School has a number of academic supports for students who may be performing below grade level in any given content area. Our first tier of instruction includes many strategies that are proven to impact students at all ability levels such as: student engagement, cooperative learning, differentiation, connections to prior knowledge, real world connections, and formative assessments for the purpose of reteaching and creating groupings for reassessments. Along with these strategies our daily schedule provides more time for math and ELA instruction and practice (almost twice as many minutes) as it does for social studies and science classes.

Students who are not making adequate progress at each report card (interim) grading period (every 4.5 weeks) are "required" to attend "Mandatory Tutoring" before or after school. Additionally, students who may be behind on just a few assignments or who are missing work are "recommended" to attend "Remediation Tutoring before or after school.

Students who are not showing growth on our quarterly MAP benchmarks are placed in a "COMPASS" remediation class twice a week. The COMPASS program collects data from the MAP benchmark and addresses specific concepts and standards based on which questions students answered incorrectly. Students are given folders of remedial lessons to review and a series of brief quizzes that address their deficits based on benchmark scores. A vast majority of the students who participate in the COMPASS lessons and assessments show growth on the next round of MAP Benchmark assessments.

Teachers identify a set of "Golden Questions" created from priority or essential standards that they review every 4-5 weeks. The list of questions grow as the year progresses and our teachers provide re-teaching and re-assessing opportunities for all students who do not maintain a current understanding of these priority standards.

Reading Plus is a new program that we just initiated at TMS to help ensure students at all levels are increasing their comprehension and fluency levels. Students who have completed at least 40 online reading lessons on Reading Plus this year have gained an average of 40+ words per minute in fluency and two

reading levels in comprehension. Reading Plus also addresses vocabulary acquisition skills and can be used to re-teach specific reading and grammar standards.

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

Trion Middle School is a leader in student achievement in northwest Georgia. The academic success of our students will lead to opportunities beyond graduation, which is our ultimate goal. In order to meet our mission to have them become contributing members of society, it is imperative that we not just meet the needs of our below grade level and grade level learners, but that we create experiences for our students above grade level to continue to accelerate and thrive. The high expectation for quality instruction, activities, and tasks is established in our school, as well as expected efforts to achieve, connect, and cooperate from our students. There is a common quality among our faculty, staff, and students to always find a way to improve and grow. Teaching these students the importance of building relationships will stimulate their interests and fuel their ambitions.

The teachers at Trion Middle School continually work with each other to improve learning and create lasting experiences for our students. In each grade level, we take the students on overnight field trips, including an 8th grade, three day-two night tour of Georgia which correlates to the Georgia Studies curriculum, and trips to 4H centers in grades 6 and 7. Other field trips are encouraged and expected, because learning is more than what happens within these walls. Trion Middle School also offers clubs that meet monthly. These clubs were created based on student interests, and other experiences with Art, Band, athletics, and community outreach. 7th and 8th grade students are provided the opportunity to compete with the Trion High School Marching Band and Bass Fishing Team. Students are also encouraged to compete in District and State competitions through 4H, as well as various writing competitions, Math Team, and Reading Bowl.

When students enter eighth grade at TMS, they are given the opportunity to begin high school course work through the Honors Course track. Teacher recommendations, test scores, and the QUEST/Gifted Program allow high achieving students to take Honors 9th Grade Literature, Algebra I, and Honors Physical Science. Students begin their GPA course work in eight grade which provides them with the opportunity to accelerate and build their resume for post-graduation opportunities. Whether students attend college or trade school, it is important that they begin to plan for their futures.

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

At Trion Middle School, the Special Education Department embraces progress monitoring as an opportunity to show students how they can grow academically. Student Support teachers collaborate with the regular education teachers in an effort to look at students strengths as a tool to help them improve and grow in their area impacted by their disability. In doing this, students with disabilities are often provided the opportunity to participate in leadership roles among their peers. It is common for students with disabilities at Trion Middle School to be seen collaborating with a small group of peers in a teaching capacity in order to showcase their strengths. In addition to looking at student strengths, student support teachers focus on student growth. Special Education Teachers at Trion Middle school believe that a learning disability should never become an obstacle for academic growth. Teachers analyze data on a regular basis and use it in student conferences to assist students with setting and reaching attainable academic goals. With student data in mind, teachers seek research-based interventions in an effort to meet students where they can be successful and then provide scaffolded support to urge them on to academic growth.

In addition to student growth, Student Support Teachers at Trion Middle School are provided with professional development opportunities as needed based on yearly teacher needs surveys. Departmental, grade level, and vertical team planning are other important opportunities for teachers to grow professionally. Also, new Student Support Teachers are provided with specific training on IEP development/goal writing. New Student Support Teachers are also paired with a mentor teacher at the beginning of the school year. New teachers meet and plan regularly with their mentor teacher. At Trion Middle School, every effort is made to place Student Support Teachers in their area of content strength in co-teaching classes. Student Support Teachers are provided with professional paperwork days to complete needed progress reports and other IEP documentation.

When looking at the Student Services population for TMS over the last five years (2018-2022), an average of 91% of our student services (students with disabilities) population have been served in the inclusion setting, while only 9% have been served in both the inclusion and small group (resource) setting.

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

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

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

---

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

"Every single student deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, every single day." (Todd Whitaker) If students do not feel safe and respected, they will not reach their full potential. We believe making students feel safe and respected has to be an "every single day" occurrence at TMS.

"Education makes no sense if you have no future story." (Ruby Payne) We believe students must see the value of an education on a personal level and must make personal connections between learning and creating personal goals. Learning that is relevant is engaging and motivating. The better we become at tackling this challenge the better we are able to engage and motivate our students.

Learning is an essential part of being a happy, healthy, and independent person. Middle school students are striving towards becoming those type of people. The two quotes by Whitaker and Payne summarize our core beliefs about creating an engaging, motivating, and positive learning environment.

By being positive and compassionate role models for our students we are planting small seeds and creating a nurturing environment that promotes engagement. By modeling kindness, respect, equality, and forgiveness we communicate that all students have value and that our school is a safe place to learn. By holding students accountable we are creating high expectations that will help them to mature into productive members of our community. Creating a place where students believe they can share their ideas, ask questions, and make mistakes without the fear of being ridiculed is essential. Creating a place where students have a voice is essential. Creating a place where students feel like they belong is essential. We realize that the better we are at creating this type of learning environment, the better we are at engaging and motivating our students.

By modeling a positive attitude, a growth mindset, and determination we communicate that all students are capable of the high expectations that we push them towards each day. Academic, social, and emotional growth requires teachers to go beyond their content area expertise, beyond their effective instructional practices, and beyond their knowledge of student data. At TMS teachers understand that they must build positive relationships where all students feel valued and respected. They must create systems within their classrooms that set norms for behavior and student performance. They must give their students a voice and opportunities to work together and share ideas during their lessons. Students must experience the gifts of being valued, being heard and being respected before they too can value, listen to and respect each other.

Trion Middle School never closed its doors during the pandemic but we did bring remote learning to students who worked from home during long periods of quarantine. These students participated in class digitally via Google Meets. These students not only received and submitted their daily assignments and instruction from their teachers remotely, they also remotely interacted with their teachers and their classmates on a regular basis. Being able to talk to, ask questions, and work with your classmates remotely (via Google Meets) played a critical role in helping our students build and maintain the social and emotional growth that they needed during such a challenging and difficult year of learning.

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

Trion Middle School teachers regularly invite community members into classrooms. We have several industries in our area that give demonstrations and discuss with students what is involved in careers at their place of employment, as well as what is involved in being a good student and community member. Mount Vernon Mills and Mohawk Industries are two such workplaces. Civic clubs and organizations like the Lion's Club and Rotary Club are involved in TMS through speaking engagements and special recognitions for student achievements.

The REACH Scholar program has been another source of community involvement at TMS. Each REACH Scholar is assigned a mentor and an academic coach before they enter high school. We have strong support from our community in volunteers for this program. Students are given the opportunity to meet with mentors

and discuss future plans as well as ask questions and seek guidance on navigating school choices to ensure they are prepared for life after high school.

Another area the community has been involved with TMS is through our 4H program. We have a very active 4H program among our middle school students. Local 4H advisors visit the school monthly. They not only provide instruction, but also help maintain our greenhouse and break area. Students are encouraged to participate in county activities such as public speaking competitions, poultry projects, showing animals, and BB/rifle/shotgun teams. Our students are known to be very competitive not only in the county, but within our region and state.

The Angel Tree program is an outreach ministry to our community. This program has allowed TMS to forge many relationships among our lower socioeconomic students. Sponsors of the program work throughout the year to ensure that students who qualify are gifted Christmas presents, needed clothing and supplies for school. Sponsors reach out to community partners to obtain funding. We have several community members who do not even have children at our school who donate to this program annually or monthly. TMS students are involved in the program also and look forward to participating in choosing “angels” from the Christmas tree to purchase gifts for each year. Our Beta Club, student leadership, and general student populations all participate yearly in this program. Our Trion community has embraced this program, and it has seen much growth and success since its inception.

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

Our ability to create a professional culture where everyone feels valued, supported and respected lies in our ability to become an effective and passionate team of educators. Our small team of 20 educators lends itself to developing positive, collegial and professional relationships. Having colleagues with varying levels of experience, different backgrounds, and with differing strengths and opinions makes us a better team. We are not a great team in spite of these differences. We are a great team because of these differences.

Our teachers respect one another and meet together consistently. Our common vision and mission unites us when there is a disagreement. Content area teams and grade levels teams find neutral ground and work together to ensure they are addressing any obstacles they may interfere with student learning. Regularly scheduled faculty meetings and PLC meetings ensure that we are on the same path, sharing learning data, meeting our goals and addressing any concerns associated with schedules, student trends, or behaviors that interfere with learning.

Teachers establish a set of standards and expectations on their hallway or within their content area and they work together. They share ideas and resources. They collaborate, debate, share, research, compare, and discuss best practices. Sometimes they use different strategies, different ideas, and different resources but they still work together.

During the pandemic the necessity to work as a team was never more relevant. Teachers were trained on how to use technology to meet the needs of our remote learners. Their varying ability levels became evident during this training but so did their ability to work as a team. Teachers worked together to ensure that everyone was able to use the Google education platform's tools to create remote lessons with links, assessments, recorded videos, and live video chats online. The learning curve was far smaller and the success of each teacher was far wider because our teachers worked together as a team and assisted each other.

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

Our school leadership model is based on shared leadership strategies, servant leadership, creating a team culture, promoting collaboration, and providing a clear focus on our vision and mission for learning. Our administrative team provides leadership, feedback and support in the areas of best practices, assessment uses, data collection, positive learning environments, student discipline, professionalism expectations, communication with parents, scheduling, and PLCs.

Each grade level has a teacher leader who provides leadership and support within that team. Teacher grade level leaders ensure that their team is working together and implementing behavior, academic, assessment and scheduling practices common throughout our school.

Each content area has a leader who provide leadership and support in providing common strategies and lesson ideas associated with teaching their specific content. They collaborate vertically with teachers in their content to share resources, clarify expectations and provide information regarding integrating technology.

New teachers have a teacher mentor who leads them by providing additional support related to teaching the curriculum, assessment expectations, data collection, and behavior management ideas just to name a few areas.

We believe good leaders empower others to lead. They provide timely feedback and support to their team. They provide opportunities for their teams to build unity. They model the positive character traits that they desire for their team to adopt - traits like honesty, respect, loyalty, patience, perseverance, professionalism, and flexibility.

This year we started our in-service training by creating teacher teams that competed against each other by playing fun, team building games for "the Bulldog Cup" trophy. Teachers completed a slideshow presentation for our faculty meeting titled "This Is My Why!" on why they chose teaching as a career. Teachers completed a "Team Scavenger Hunt" where they had to take team photos of their team completing "tasks" throughout the building and throughout the community in order to build unity and positive relationships. Photos were collected for a slideshow presentation and shared at our faculty meeting before students arrived on campus. Teaching is a challenge, it is hard work, it requires sacrifice and a lot of determination. Working on a good team that values and respects you lightens the burdens associated with teaching and increases our impact on our students and our community.

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

Trion Middle School has placed an emphasis on establishing a culture that is respectful and representative of the community culture in order to ensure all stakeholders feel valued. The school believes that establishing positive relationships and learning about the students we serve is the foundation for culturally responsive teaching and learning. Establishing an understanding of the community serves as a valuable tool for getting to know who students and families are as well as their needs and desires. Once an understanding of the community is established, the school plans collaboratively on how to best meet the needs of all students.

As the old saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words." Trion Middle School doesn't stop with just getting to know our students. Instead, this knowledge is acted upon and used to create classroom environments that are representative of the cultural diversity present within the school. Teachers are asked to periodically analyze the content hanging on the classroom walls and ensure that it reflects the cultural backgrounds of all students. This is most often seen in word walls where students can find the key words in multiple languages. Students not only gain a sense of belonging by seeing their culture represented in the classroom environment and learning curriculum, but also have opportunities to learn about other cultures different from their own.

Classroom learning activities are strategically chosen using evidence based practices that allow for less teacher-led instruction and more student-centered learning. Students are given a voice in the classroom and provided opportunities to work collaboratively in flexible groups on rigorous tasks with high expectations established by the teacher. Teachers understand that not all students learn in the same way and provide students with various opportunities to demonstrate content mastery.

Trion Middle School staff participates in professional development dedicated to continuing to increase their knowledge of people, cultures, languages, diversity, equity and racial literacy. Professional development provides the staff with the knowledge they need in order to address challenging situations in a constructive manner. Teachers often feel comfortable incorporating current events into their curriculum even when controversial due to the knowledge they have gained in professional development sessions. Staff members

who exhibit strong culturally responsive practices are often observed by their peers in order to increase culturally responsive teaching school-wide.

In a sense, the school functions as the family in the small community by being representative of the shared attitudes, values, and beliefs of all stakeholders. It is the belief of Trion Middle School that positive relationships are essential to student success, staff morale, parent satisfaction, and school climate.

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

---

The most instrumental character trait and practice that runs through every single successful program, idea, or concept that we use at Trion Middle school to help students succeed is UNITY! Teachers practice unity when the leadership team asks them to adopt and incorporate signature instructional strategies. Teachers practice unity when they are asked to assess student learning by using benchmarks, monthly Golden Question quizzes, and quarterly exams. Teachers practice unity when staying after school to hold students accountable for attending mandatory tutoring. They practice unity when they are asked to create a slideshow presentation for a faculty meeting. Teachers practice unity when asked to provide digital learning practices across the board for students who are quarantined.

Teachers and parents practice unity by meeting together when a student has a behavior or academic concern that is interfering with his/her success. Teachers and community members practice unity by donating money and gifts to dozens of families in need during the holidays. Teachers and community members practice unity when a family's house burns down and within less than 12 hours dozens of staff, teachers, and community members have raised thousands of dollars and searched for a new place for the family to stay. Teachers and staff practice unity by visiting the funeral home, providing encouragement and support, and prayer when a student loses a parent due to a sickness or an accident.

TMS teachers never ask the question, "Whose job is this?" or "Why are we doing this?" They join together and they meet the needs of their students and families on a daily basis. Serving this community is never a chore for any of them. They treat it rather as an honor and a privilege.

Trion Middle School is a model school where students experience high levels of academic achievement because the teachers, administrators, staff members, families, and community unite together to put students first. They unite in a selfless manner to ensure that our students' social, economic, and academic needs are met on a daily basis no matter what the cost may be.