

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 Ms. Molly Roeske
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 3133 Pioneer Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Woodbury State MN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55125-9664

County Washington County

Telephone (651) 425-6400 Fax (651) 425-6428

Web site/URL https://lms.sowashco.org/ E-mail mroeske@sowashco.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* Ms. Julie Nielsen E-mail jnielsen@sowashco.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name South Washington County School District Tel. (651) 425-6300

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 Ms. Sharon Van Leer
(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):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 25 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	206	196	402
7	228	176	404
8	204	188	392
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	638	560	1198

*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):
- 0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 15.8 % Asian
 - 8.3 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 63.5 % White
 - 6.1 % 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:

The mobility rate is only 5.76% (6%) which is not above 15% for Lake Middle School.

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	51
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	67
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	1163
(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):
English, Chinese (Mandarin, Simplified), Chinese (Cantonese, Traditional) and Somali (Arabic).

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %

Total number students who qualify: 92

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 13 %
155 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>46</u> Autism | <u>26</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>7</u> Deafness | <u>5</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>41</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>52</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>16</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>7</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</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: 11
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	45
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.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 27:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	97%	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.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Lake Middle School provides a safe, student-centered environment inspiring Leadership, Academics, Kindness, and Excellence for everyone.

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

Lake Middle School is committed to inclusive education and providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. Our school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, or age in its programs and activities. The link to the policies are copied below:

Policy 102 Equal Educational Opportunity (at the following link) - <https://www.sowashco.org/about-us/school-board/school-board-policies/individual-policy/~board/policies/post/102-equal-educational-opportunity>

Policy 521 Student Disability Nondiscrimination (at the following link) - <https://www.sowashco.org/about-us/school-board/school-board-policies/individual-policy/~board/policies/post/521-student-disability-nondiscrimination>

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

Does not apply to Lake Middle School.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Lake Middle School is part of the South Washington County Schools, District 833. It was opened in 1995 as part of addressing and planning for the extensive community growth in the north end of the school district. South Washington County Schools (District 833) is a suburban district located southeast of St. Paul, Minnesota. The district includes all or parts of the communities of Cottage Grove, Newport, St. Paul Park, Woodbury, Afton, Denmark, and Grey Cloud Island Townships, which covers an area of 84 square miles. The population of the district is approximately 98,100 people, including the more than 18,400 students who attend district schools. Lake Middle School is one of four district middle schools and our enrollment is just shy of 1,200 students annually.

Woodbury's overall population ranks it as the 8th largest city in Minnesota. Woodbury is currently growing at a rate of 2.10% annually and its population has increased by 25.27% since the most recent census. Spanning over 36 miles, Woodbury has a population density of 2,224 people per square mile. The average household income in Woodbury is \$134,538 with a poverty rate of 3.16%. The median rental costs in recent years comes to \$1,525 per month, and the median house value is \$323,000. The median age in Woodbury is 37.1 years, 36 years for males, and 38.1 years for females.

The racial composition of the Woodbury community is: White: 79.55%, Asian: 9.76%, Black or African American: 6.10%, Two or more races: 3.55%, Other race: 0.70%, Native American: 0.28%, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.05%. 84.95% of Woodbury residents speak only English, while 15.05% speak other languages. The non-English language spoken by the largest group is Asian and Pacific Island languages, which is spoken by 5.41% of the population. 95.1% of the residents of Woodbury are United States citizens. The demographics of the community closely mirror the make-up of our student population and enrollment at Lake Middle School.

The mission of Lake Middle School is to “provide a safe, student-centered environment inspiring Leadership, Academics, Kindness, and Excellence for everyone.” At Lake Middle School we believe strongly in individualized personalized learning to ensure that each student's unique learning needs, talents, and interests are being supported in any way to ensure each student is reaching their full potential. The overall school community is very involved and interested in their children's educational experiences and our families have high expectations of academic rigor and student achievement and success both academically and socially. Academically, students are held to high expectations and standards of academic performance. However, Lake Middle School acknowledges that each student's social development needs to be supported in order for them to reach their academic best. Each school day students begin their day in their Homebase. This is 20 minutes that is spent with their Homebase teacher and classmates to encourage and support consistency in building and maintaining relationships and support systems, positive behavior and academic progress.

In addition to Homebase, the school day programming includes instruction in the four core content areas (math, english/language arts, science and social studies) with additional courses at each grade level as encore areas to explore during their middle school experience. Additionally, students participate in a music class of their choice (choir, band or orchestra) and physical education. The programming is geared to give students a balanced experience of coursework that supports and motivates them to be 21st-century learners.

Students are highly encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities of their choice and interest. Lake Middle School provides many opportunities for students to participate in a variety of activities. Some of the activities include a variety of sports, musical ensembles, theater, student council, Student Ambassadors, Robotics, Math League, Chess, Student Literacy, Gay/Straight Alliance and many clubs that are student-driven that include but are not limited to: ping pong, Nintendo, yoga, Dungeons and Dragons, Stranger Things, etc.

Lake Middle School staff members are very committed to their roles as educators. In their continued professional growth and learning, all staff participate in professional learning communities (PLCs) with their colleagues. Our professional learning communities are guided by the goal of having meaningful discussions

specific to student achievement, student progress, providing systems of support, and content/curriculum review. In addition to content driven professional learning communities, Lake Middle School has an internal leadership structure that involves many staff members that are committed to leading their colleagues for the betterment of our staff and school. These leadership venues include: Building Leadership Team, School Improvement Plan Team, Equity Leadership Team, and Grade Level Team Leads.

In addition to the building teams above, Lake Middle School also has an interdisciplinary student support team called Student Support Team (SST) where numerous staff members dedicate time and conversation to review student progress or lack of and consider interventions and strategies for students identified as experiencing concerns in the school setting. This team consists of school administration, school psychologist, counselors, social workers, health staff, student support staff, general education staff, etc. The intent of this team is to identify specific student needs or concerns, implement interventions and recommend strategies/best practices that would support students and their academic and social success.

Lake Middle School has many traditions and initiatives that enhance the educational experiences of our students. One of the most significant initiatives Lake Middle School has undertaken is to be involved in the “Top 20 Teens and Teachers” programming in order to be considered a “Top 20 School.” The vision of the Top 20 program is to encourage students and staff members to “become the best version of themselves.” The content and text utilized provides strategies for both students and staff to improve their thinking, learning, and communicating the school and community settings. This programming is school-wide and is utilized in developing social and emotional learning (SEL) in the form of school-wide messaging and common language related to our school culture and climate.

Common language includes that of our four identified cornerstones at Lake Middle School which are: Help Others Succeed, Communicate “You Matter,” Honor the Absent, and See the Problem, Own the Problem. Our Homebase (advisory) content is developed from the Top 20 strategies. As a school community we have identified the following Top 20 strategies as our framework to be guided by each school year. They include; Celebrate Confusion, Live Above the Line, Eliminate Negativity (Tornadoes), Focus: Listen in the Zone, Instant Replay (Do-Over) and Continued Improvement and Success in (TLC), Thinking, Learning, and Communicating. These strategies are embedded with monthly school themes that support students and their social development.

We would be remiss to not mention the extreme support and involvement Lake Middle School’s parent community has in their children’s education. Parent involvement and interest is high in our school community as it relates to academic, extracurricular and social activities. Parents are considered to be an essential part of our work with students. Lake Middle School does have a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that arranges fundraising initiatives to enrich and provide additional student and parent events throughout the school year. Lake Middle School also has many parent representatives who volunteer their time to represent our school community at larger district committees and focus work groups.

As a school community we strongly emphasize current and relevant communication to our students and their families. Our school webpage, student information system, Schoology messaging, weekly school updates, school text messaging, daily student announcements, advertised slides on numerous monitors throughout the school, monthly homebase messages, and parent teacher conferences (both in-person and virtual) all contribute to keeping our school community well informed and connected in order to partner in the best interest of our students.

Lake Middle School is extremely honored to currently be nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Award as it is an indication of all of the hard work and dedication on behalf of our students, their families, our staff, and overall school community. However, despite our current accomplishments and strong efforts we also recognize the need to be lifelong learners. We are very aware of the constant need to be flexible, relevant and current in meeting the ever-changing needs of our students and their families.

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:

Lake Middle School operates under a six period day (approximately 52 minute class periods) which allows students to participate in all four core curriculum areas of mathematics, english/language arts, science, and social studies based on the K-12 Minnesota State Academic Standards. This schedule also allows students to experience encore areas that vary at each grade level to provide students an ability to explore a variety of elective areas that support and reinforce the core content as well as infuse fine arts, college and career readiness standards, technology, executive functioning, critical thinking, and personal health and well-being.

Our comprehensive middle school programming is geared to offer a wide range of courses, opportunities, and resources to assist all students through the transition from elementary school to middle school. The intent is to provide core and encore class content that exposes students to overall course work that is rigorous, relevant, and results-oriented. We want each student in our district to feel connected to their school community and have a successful middle school experience. Program planning is a team effort that involves parents/guardians, students, and staff. The academic program with encore, elective, and support classes is designed to prepare and support every student for their individual high school experiences and beyond.

Specifically, the language arts/literacy development builds on skills taught in a workshop format with an emphasis on writing, reading and exposure to a variety of literature. Within the math curriculum, students have the opportunity to build skills in pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry. Technology is integrated into the teaching and learning process through the use of digital resources. All students are provided with an individual Chromebook for their use and access to the student online learning management system called Schoology. With Schoology, teachers post classroom content, assignments, resources, course calendar, etc.

Our overarching approach is guided by our strategic objectives in the areas of personalization and school climate and culture. In regard to personalization our intent is to engage, motivate, and empower every student through personal instruction creating shared ownership of learning. Specific to school climate and culture we strive to ensure safe, inclusive environments, and encourage diverse perspectives through engagement, innovation and creativity.

Lake Middle School has made the transition Standards-based Instruction (SBI) across curricular areas. Through this experience of unpacking standards, each content area was involved in a thorough process of prioritizing standards into clearly defined expectations that students are expected to know and be able to do in each course. This included identifying specific learning targets that were incorporated in to their instructional practices. Grading for learning and standards based grading were two approaches that have been implemented to provide better detail and academic feedback to students (and their families) that reflect a more accurate, authentic, and meaningful grade and a more significantly accurate portrayal of student learning. This has assisted our teachers to more authentically and accurately communicate student achievement specific to individual course standards, student learning and progress.

All Middle School grades are composed of the formative and summative assessments for and of student learning. Assessments for learning are given during the process of instruction to help students and teachers understand students' current learning relative to the content standards. Some examples of formative assessments include homework, rough drafts and practices. Summative assessment of student learning is defined as “measures of student learning status at the end of a specific period of instruction.” Examples of summative assessments include: tests, projects, performances, written papers, research, etc.

It should also be noted that in each content area Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) strategies are incorporated into student classroom experiences. These strategies include that of Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading (WICOR) embedded throughout classroom instruction

and student experiences. Students are exposed to these strategies in classroom instruction as well as weekly in their Homebase classroom experiences.

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

LANGUAGE ARTS 6th Grade - The Language Arts curriculum encompasses all aspects of reading, writing, speaking, and listening through a gradual release and workshop model. Students will complete formal papers in narrative, informative (compare and contrast), and argumentative genres using the writing process. They engage in shared inquiry discussions, partake in differentiated literature circles, and explore the use of language for different effects in different contexts and for different purposes. Students will learn how to think critically and practice critical thinking on a daily basis through reading various texts and genres of fiction, nonfiction, narrative, poetry, and drama. Many interdisciplinary connections are made with other content areas.

LANGUAGE ARTS 7th Grade - The Language Arts curriculum encompasses all aspects of reading, writing, speaking, and listening through a gradual release and workshop model. Students will complete formal papers in narrative, informative (compare and contrast), and argumentative genres using the writing process. They engage in shared inquiry discussions, partake in differentiated literature circles, learn roots and affixes in our "Words Their Way" vocabulary program. Students' reading is monitored. Students learn how to think critically and practice critical thinking on a daily basis through reading various tests and genres of fiction, nonfiction, narrative, poetry, and drama. Many interdisciplinary connections are made with other content areas.

LANGUAGE ARTS 8th Grade - The Language Arts curriculum encompasses all aspects of reading, writing, speaking, and listening through a gradual release and workshop model. Students will complete formal papers in narrative, informative (compare and contrast), and argumentative genres using the writing process. Students engage in Shared Inquiry discussions, partake in differentiated literature circles, learn roots and affixes in our Words Their Way vocabulary program. Students' reading is monitored. Students learn how to think critically and practice critical thinking on a daily basis through reading various tests and genres of fiction, nonfiction, narrative, poetry and drama. Many interdisciplinary connections are made with other content areas.

CONTENT AREA READING STRATEGIES (CARS) - This 6th grade course is designed to teach students to read and comprehend complex informational text independently and proficiently through inquiry-based learning. Students will increase their reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge through the use of rigorous non-fiction real world text. Students practice close interactive reading with the goal of successfully mastering comprehension of key ideas and details, recognizing how various authors' writing is structured, and integrating knowledge and details using critical reading strategies.

CRITICAL THINKING - This 7th grade course is a challenge-based learning course where students collaboratively explore research to identify a problem or challenge that is important or of interest to them. A problem or challenge can be service-oriented, direct, indirect, advocacy- or design-orientated with the goal of creating a better version of a product or designing a new product to address the identified challenge. Students are challenged to develop 21st century skills in the areas of collaboration, communication and problem solving using critical thinking and creativity.

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

Our building's Math Pathway guides how our students are placed in a math course according to several subjective and objective measures. (This pathway is not "grade-dependent.") Multiple pathways are provided at each grade level to ensure students receive the appropriate math placement through their middle school experience. The courses below are listed in the order of the current pathway and each student's individual path is determined based on the course that they are prepared to begin as they enter middle school.

MATH 6 - Develops mastery of the concepts in each of the four Minnesota math curriculum strands:

Algebra, Number Sense, Geometry and Measurement, Data and Probability. The intentions of this course is to build a solid foundation, enhance math skills and create success. There is an emphasis of skills in numeral operations, measurement, patterns, simple functions, geometry and concepts of data analysis, including statistics and probability.

PRE-ALGEBRA - Develops mastery of the concepts in each of the four Minnesota math curriculum strands: Algebra, Number Sense, Geometry and Measurement, Data and Probability. Special focus is placed on the foundations for algebra. Students are introduced to integers and continue to develop master of beginning algebra concepts. There is a strong focus on proportions and ratios, evaluation, algebraic graphs and solving equations graphically and numerically, interpreting solutions in their original context.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ALGEBRA - Designed to give students the requisite skills that provide a foundation for all future mathematics courses with an emphasis on linear relationships. Students will deepen their understanding of the real number system, justify steps in generating equivalent expressions, distinguish between linear and nonlinear functions and translate linear functions from one representation to another, solve and interpret equations and inequalities symbolically and graphically, display, interpret, and draw conclusions about data using scatter-plots, and express linear equations in various forms and convert between these forms. Throughout the course, mathematical concepts will be taught with an emphasis on real world application.

ALGEBRA WITH STATISTICS - Includes an in-depth study of the algebra of lines and expands number concepts to the real number system. Specific concepts in algebra include: understanding functions (both linear and nonlinear) in arithmetic and geometric sequences, graphing linear functions, slopes of parallel and perpendicular lines, solving systems of linear equations graphically and algebraically. Students work with the Pythagorean Theorem and its converse and solve problems by using a line of best fit to make predictions. Functions will be represented with symbols, verbal descriptions, graphs and tables. Students will model real-world situations using functions and solve problems arising from these situations. Students will also study probability and analysis.

GEOMETRY - This course includes the study of plane and solid geometric figures and their measurements. Students will apply properties of geometric figures and utilize the concepts of congruence, similarity, parallelism and rules of angle measurement. It includes deeper development of concepts studied in earlier grades such as: area, surface area, volume, scale factors, Pythagorean Theorem and angle relationships and expands understanding of trigonometry, circle properties, train properties and proof. Students use tools of geometry to visualize geometric concepts.

ALGEBRA II - This course reviews Intermediate Algebra content and further extends student knowledge of algebra concepts. Topics include: equations, linear relations, systems of equations, parabolas, quadratic equations, powers and roots, exponents and logarithms, trigonometry and polynomials, data displays, standard deviation and normal distribution, and probability.

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

Science content at Lake Middle School currently includes Physical Science, Life Science and Earth Science content based on the K-12 Minnesota State Academic Standards.

PHYSICAL SCIENCE 6th Grade - Physical science serves as an introduction to chemistry and physics. This class explores the concepts of matter, motion, and energy through the context of engineering and technology. Students will engage in inquiry investigations throughout the year and will complete a project that investigates the impact engineering design has had on society. Topics include: scientific world view, the particle model of matter, changes in matter, forms of energy, energy conversions, force, and motion.

GRADE LIFE SCIENCE 7th Grade - Life science explores the concepts of structure and function in living systems, interdependence among living systems, and evolution in living systems, and human interactions with living systems. Through inquiry activities, students will learn how empirical criteria, logical argument, and skeptical review are critical to understanding the natural world. Topics include: nature of science, cells,

heredity, evolution, simple life, human body systems, infectious disease, animals, plants, and ecology.

EARTH SCIENCE 8th Grade - Earth Science focuses on the structures and processes of the Earth, such as rocks, plate tectonics, meteorology, human interactions with Earth's systems, as well as astronomy focused on the solar system. Earth and space science explore the concepts of geology (earth structure and process), meteorology (interdependence within the earth system), astronomy (the universe), and human use of natural resources.

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

Social Studies is offered at all three grade levels but involves Minnesota History, United States History and Global Studies.

MINNESOTA STUDIES 6th Grade - Students study Minnesota history and its government, citizens, economics, and geography; placing the state and its people within the context of national history. They engage in historical inquiry and study events, issues and individuals significant to Minnesota history, beginning with the early indigenous people of the upper Mississippi River region to the present day. Interpretation of graphs, tables and maps will assist students in developing content knowledge skills.

UNITED STATES STUDIES 7th Grade - This course provides continued development of understanding and skills in the social studies disciplines: history, geography, civics, government and economics. Students learn about people, issues and events of significance to this nation's history from 1800 to the current era of globalization. They examine the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and Supreme Court decisions for their lasting impact on the American people, economy and governance structure.

GLOBAL STUDIES 8th Grade - This course provides continued development of understanding and skills in the social studies disciplines: history, geography, civics and government, and economics. At this grade level, students focus on the world and its unique people and places through a world-regional approach to studying the planet and focus on five essential questions. How do geographers interpret and show information on maps? How do people interact with their environment? How did history affect these regions today? How do economies affect life in regions today? How do people preserve their traditional culture while adapting to modern life?

1f. For secondary schools:

Lake Middle School has been very intentional in our focus of embedding College and Career Readiness (CCR) into our course work. We value the importance of guiding and preparing our students with the knowledge, skills and competencies to successfully pursue a degree, diploma, certificate or industry-recognized credential and employment. College and Career readiness plays a central role in the experience of all middle school students. Ramp Up to Readiness is a curriculum created by the University of Minnesota, and was used in the creation of the encore courses at each grade level, which include: the 6th grade course: Middle School Success; the 7th grade course: Computer Applications; and the 8th grade course: College and Career Readiness courses.

Ramp-Up to Readiness programming is guided by five individual pillars, each of which must be solidly in place for a student to succeed in a high-quality post-secondary program. Those pillars are: 1) Academic Readiness: the ability to succeed in first-year, credit bearing courses at a technical college, a community college or a four-year college or university; 2) Admissions Readiness: the ability to meet admissions requirements at a range of postsecondary institutions; 3) Career Readiness: the ability to identify careers that match personal, financial, and other goals and an understanding of the skills, credentials, and experiences required to succeed in those careers; 4) Financial Readiness: the ability to cover the cost of education at a postsecondary institution through savings, loans, and financial aid; and 5) Personal and Social Readiness: the ability to set educational goals, make and monitor progress toward them, and create relationships with peers and adults that support academic success.

Another class in support of college and career readiness of our students is an application-based program called Advancement Via Individual Determination Elective (AVID) which is designed to increase school-wide learning and performance by ensuring that all students will succeed in a rigorous curriculum, enter mainstream activities of the school, increase their enrollment in four year colleges, and become educated and responsible participants and leaders in society. This elective class provides a curriculum that focuses on strong reading and writing skills, organization, study strategies for success, and research on colleges and careers. AVID students also participate in Socratic-style tutorials two days per week. This program targets students in the academic middle who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard. AVID places academically average students in advanced classes and provides them with an elective class that prepares them to succeed in rigorous curricula, enter mainstream activities in school, and increase their opportunities to enroll in four-year colleges.

Trained AVID Tutors lead tutorial sessions twice each week in AVID Elective classes. Tutors are excellent role models of motivated, organized, and successful people. During each tutorial session, students come prepared with questions that they need assistance answering. In a small group setting, the tutor's role is to guide the students as they assist one another. Tutorials help students who are enrolled in rigorous coursework keep up and succeed in their college prep classes.

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

This section does not apply to Lake Middle School.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

PHYSICAL EDUCATION - Physical Education courses are based on the acquisition of knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for sport, a physically active lifestyle, and social development through physical activity. Activities typically include those that increase strength, endurance and flexibility; reinforce safe technique; teach the rules and conventions of games and sports; and explore the relationships between physical activity and health, following the Minnesota State Academic Standards for Physical Education. Students in 6th and 7th grade have physical education every other school day, and 8th grade students can choose to have physical education every day, every other day or not at all.

HEALTH - This course emphasizes the knowledge and skills that promote sound bodies and minds, prevent disease and dysfunction, and reduce risk. Students will focus on a variety of topics including mental and emotional health, diseases and disorders, chemical use/abuse (tobacco, alcohol, drugs), CPR/First Aid, physical fitness, stress management and human growth, development and sexuality. Our Health course content standards are delivered to students in 8th grade in a trimester class.

ART- The class focuses on the foundations of art elements, principles, aesthetics, and art history. Students will create 2-D and 3-D media including, but not limited to: drawing, painting, sculpture, pastels and mixed media. This studio class will provide hands-on experiences. Unit of studies include but not limited to: still-life, landscape, pottery, sculpture, cartooning and animals. Students will develop production skills to express individual ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Students are involved in Art classes during their 6th and 8th grade years.

BAND - This course helps students develop techniques for playing brass, woodwind, and percussion and their ability to perform a variety of concert band literature styles. Band is for students who play an instrument and will work to develop rehearsal, performance and music reading skills and fundamentals necessary to attain a high level of musicianship and confidence. Students will explore a variety of musical styles. There will be several opportunities for performances each year, including field trips and small ensembles. Band is offered at all three grade levels.

CHOIR - This course helps develop students' vocal skills within the context of a large choral ensemble in which they perform a variety of styles of repertoire. Choir is an ensemble-based course in which students work together as a team to develop their vocal skills. Choir members work on proper vocal technique, rehearsal skills and learn a well-rounded background in music fundamentals. Each student develops

independent singing and reading skills to attain a high level of musicianship and confidence. Students will explore a variety of styles of music, including world music, art songs, contemporary music, and pop music. Choir is offered at all three grade levels.

ORCHESTRA - This course helps develop students' technique for playing strings along with woodwind, brass, and percussion. This course emphasizes collaboration through rehearsal and performance experiences in creating and responding to music. Orchestra is offered at all three grade levels.

College and Career Readiness (CCR) - CCR has been developed to prepare students with the knowledge, skills and competencies to successfully pursue a degree, diploma, certificate or industry-recognized credential, and employment. College and Career readiness plays a central role in the experience of all middle school students. Ramp Up to Readiness is a curriculum created by the University of Minnesota, and is used in the 6th grade course: Middle School Success, 7th grade course: Computer Applications, and the 8th grade course: College and Career Readiness. Ramp-Up to Readiness programming is guided by five individual pillars, each of which must be solidly in place for a student to succeed in a high-quality post-secondary program. Those pillars are: Academic Readiness, Admissions Readiness, Career Readiness, Financial Readiness and Personal and Social Readiness. This specific college and career readiness class is delivered to students in 8th grade in a trimester class.

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS - Students examine the use of computers, software, and the Internet as a career tool. While students are enhancing their keyboarding skills in this course, they will study Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, Web Design, Google, and Publisher. Computer Applications is a 7th grade course that supports college and career content standards through numerous projects using technology and software programs. This specific college and career readiness class is delivered to students in 7th grade in a trimester class.

STEM: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH - This course integrates technology-oriented applications of mathematics and science into pre-engineering activities for students. STEM education engages students in activities, projects, and problem-based learning, which provides hands-on classroom experiences through the use of technology. Students create, design, build, discover, collaborate and solve problems while applying what they learn in math and science. STEM classes are offered in grades 7th and 8th.

SPANISH I - Designed to introduce students to Spanish language and culture, courses in this classification prepare students to communicate authentically in Spanish by interpreting (reading, listening, viewing), exchanging (speaking and listening; reading and writing), and presenting (speaking, writing). Students will explore a variety of cultural themes through language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world, stressing the ability to ask for and give information and to describe situations in Spanish. They develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in Spanish, and increase awareness of Hispanic culture. Spanish includes World Cultures which explores several cultures using vocabulary and language skills through a variety of interactive activities, games, songs and technology. This is a high school credit-bearing course and is offered only to 8th graders.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At Lake Middle School we intentionally create students' course schedules as a leadership team to ensure the needs of each child are being met academically and socially based on their coursework and academic needs are fully supported.

For students with special needs we are focused on creating and implementing a variety of classroom settings for students to receive different levels of support. These classrooms range from general education classes being co-taught and/or supported by paraprofessionals or classes within the special education classrooms for resource or essential classes in the core curricular areas. We also provide a strategies course that is instrumental in providing direct instruction and support of students in all academic areas who have been

placed on an individualized education plan (IEP).

For students who have qualified for English Language (EL) Services we have a licensed teacher who in collaboration with general education content area teachers, promote grade-appropriate learning in all academic coursework while developing students' English language proficiency. EL students are monitored and assessed to observe their progress in English language speaking, listening, reading and writing. This information, along with consultation from a student's teachers and parents, helps determine the necessity and level of EL support.

With students who have been identified as gifted learners we rely on providing individualized and small group coaching sessions instructed by our Talent and Development Coordinator to those students who although have ultimate potential may need additional guidance and skills taught in executive functioning, work completion, time and stress management, study strategies, etc.

Lake Middle School also provides intervention course sections at all three grade levels in reading and math. These courses provide research-based curriculum and interventions in a smaller class size with additional direct instruction and assessment opportunities to frequently monitor their progress.

Homebase teachers in each students Homebase classroom are also considered their direct contact to identify and support their academic needs and assist in identifying resources and assistance from other staff members during Homebase support sessions and/or communicate before and after school opportunities to assist students with any challenges they may have in individual courses as well. There is an opportunity for students to move to different Homebase classrooms twice per week to work directly in a class where support is needed.

Although Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) elective classes are application-based for students who are considered to be in the "academic middle," this elective course focuses on the academic skills and support that students need to prepare for their future college experience and entrance in to the workforce. This elective course is supportive in that it focuses on writing, inquiry, collaboration and reading. Although the elective course is only offered to approximately 120 students annually, many of the course's strategies are incorporated and instructed in each Homebase classroom twice per week as supplemental instruction, support and time for reading are initiated.

In addition to our focus on the above, Lake Middle School staff members use a variety of best instructional strategies and practices and culturally responsive approaches to their classroom instruction. A great deal of work has been done in that staff members identified power standards in their content area in order to communicate and support specific learning targets for their students. Staff members utilize formative opportunities within the classroom setting to monitor student progress and mastery of course content. Analyzing student data is an important component in strategizing for accurately programming and scheduling our students. Staff members assess and identify student needs which guides them in planning for interventions and/or enrichment opportunities.

Lake Middle School provides a comprehensive program for students with unique learning needs and who may be performing below grade level. We offer a continuum of services to address student needs in the areas of: academics, social and emotional wellbeing, behavior, health services, communication, and assistive technology.

Lake Middle School has the capacity to provide specialized education and related services for all of the 13 disability categories. We offer a wide range of service delivery models that includes a wide variety of school-based services for middle level students. At the middle level we begin to incorporate transition services in a variety of strategies to begin preparation for post-secondary education, independent living skills, and employment opportunities as students begin to prepare the beginning stages of transition to life as a young adult.

The English Language Learner (ELL) program at Lake Middle School follows governmental and professional guidelines to support students who are learning English as a Second Language. The program

provides the assistance students need for success in school. Licensed ESL teachers and support staff, in collaboration with classroom and content area teachers, promote grade-appropriate learning in all academic coursework while developing students' English language proficiency. EL students are monitored and assessed to observe their progress in English language speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This information, along with consultation from a student's teachers and parents, helps determine the necessity and level of EL support.

Summer School is available to give students opportunity to choose their own summer adventure by selecting a summer course that interests them. These options benefit our students who are performing below grade level by providing additional academic support, socialization and structure. The opportunities to support core content is provided in high student interest areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), Nutrition and Fitness, The Arts and The Great Outdoors.

In the STEM opportunities students helps the Mars One organization engineer develop support for living on Mars. Students will do this by designing an obstacle course to simulate robots working together to build a turbine that collects wind energy and design a way for plants to grow during the journey to the red planet.

The Nutrition and Fitness option provides opportunities for students to make a lasting impact on their community by helping pack meals for families in need. Students also learn how to make healthy foods more accessible in our community, how to grow our own food, and learn how to make healthy choices for themselves.

The Arts opportunities allow students to recreate famous works of art, create an art installation for the local community and make a T-shirt with geometric designs. Students are exposed to a variety of mediums such as fabric, wood, string and even milk while making their creations.

The Great Outdoors program gives students the opportunities to learn more about our state bird, the loon, this summer from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Students then design and build a nesting platform for that bird that would be used on a lake. There is also a community service component that encourages students to make an impact on our community by helping to clean up a nearby park.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Lake Middle School considers advanced learners who are students with outstanding abilities and capable of higher performance when compared to others of similar age, experience and environment. Our gifted students are clustered in their core content classes: language arts, social studies, science, and math with teachers who have been identified and receive ongoing professional development to meet the needs of a gifted young adolescent. The rest of the cluster classroom is composed of students of varying abilities.

Our school screens and identifies students annually for talent development and academic achievement services. In formally identifying students who are advanced learners the following multiple measures of assessment and criteria are utilized. For ability, the Cognitive Abilities Test Form 8 (CogAT8), which measures academic ability, is administered to students to learn more about students' academic reasoning abilities in verbal, quantitative and nonverbal areas. The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment that is given to all students annually in the areas of reading and math provides additional data regarding student achievement.

However, students do not need to be identified as an advanced learner to participate in enrichment opportunities and to receive differentiated instruction for their advanced learning needs. Advanced Academic services are provided based on formative and ongoing assessment of student needs in the classroom based on the content and standards being presented at that time through enrichments, enhancements and extensions in the classroom.

Through Talent Development and Advanced Academics (TDAA) content, we believe in equitable access in developing talents in students from all races, ethnicities, languages and socioeconomic circumstances. We recognize the biases inherent in gifted education and are committed to eliminating those biases and barriers

for students. We believe that all students of all ages have relative talent strengths, and schools should help them identify and develop their own special abilities.

The priorities within providing the Talent Development and Advanced Academics programming include: finding and developing the strengths and unique abilities of all students; providing opportunities for all children to develop critical thinking and advanced learning behaviors; honoring student experiential knowledge and giving students opportunities to play an active role in their own learning; increasing the complexity and depth of content to fit students' learning needs; identifying advanced learners to provide them appropriately challenging instruction and programming which meets these students' unique academic and social/emotional needs through enrichments and extensions not offered in core academic programming; and supporting students in achieving academic success and believing they are capable of realizing their dreams.

Lake Middle School has a gifted and talented teacher/coach dedicated to supporting gifted students and their families throughout the year. Each coach has extensive training and expertise on the unique needs of high ability and gifted students.

3c. Special education:

Lake Middle School provides specially designed instruction and services provided to meet students' individual special education needs. Students with hearing, vision, speech, physical mobility, behavior, or learning disabilities may qualify for special education services. To receive services, students must be evaluated to determine their eligibility and need based on the criteria for having a disability as defined by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Students who qualify for services will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed that specifies their individual goals and accommodations/modifications to the regular curriculum necessary to meet their individual needs. Courses offered to students who qualify for special education are determined by their case-manager and school counselor.

Our philosophy is to provide a continuum of services and to support students in their neighborhood school to the greatest extent possible so that they are being served with their home community and neighborhoods. We are proud of our continuous improvement and progressive program development to meet the changing needs of students with specific needs.

The setting of a resource room is a special education service that supports a student with a learning difference with specialized supplementary instruction in a small group setting for a portion of the school day. Resource room programs are for the purpose of supplementing the general education or special education classroom instruction. Special education teachers may provide direct, indirect, team teaching or resource support depending on each individual's need.

Center based programs consist of students with learning differences who have been grouped together because of similarity of individual needs for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a self-contained setting. Students in a center based program are receiving their primary instruction separate from their non-disabled peers. Center based programs provide services for students with autism spectrum disorders, developmental cognitive delay, emotional behavior disorders and other health disabilities.

Related services include speech and language, physical therapy, occupational therapy, developmental adapted physical education, deaf/hard of hearing, vision services, or health services. Based on the needs of the student, related services can be provided in a group or individually, in the classroom or in an alternative location.

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

English Language Learning (ELL) staff, in collaboration with classroom and content area teachers, promote grade-appropriate learning in all academic coursework while developing students' English language proficiency. Students are monitored and assessed to observe their progress in English language speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This information, along with consultation from a student's teachers and

parents, helps determine the necessity and level of support for each individual student.

Teachers carefully track the academic performance and language proficiency of students. The main indicators used are the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Model, the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS), and ongoing assessment and progress monitoring by the English Language Learner teacher, and classroom/content area teachers.

The initial assessment utilized to determine qualification is that of the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) model which is geared to measure developing English language. This placement test is given to measure language development of each student and help determine whether a student qualifies for EL instructional services.

All EL students participate in an annual assessment known as Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS). This yearly assessment provides a detailed picture of a student's English language development in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The results of this assessment helps teachers to prepare appropriate instruction for students.

In addition to the assessments listed above, our staff continually monitors the progress of their students through daily interaction and class time. Our teacher regularly consults with students' general education classroom teachers to target any problem areas where a student may need additional instruction or support. In addition they also track student overall performance on standardized district and state tests.

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

Lake Middle School offers programming called Advancement Via Individual Determination: (AVID) to students who are considered to perform in the "academic middle." Students who qualify for this application-based programming have untapped potential to experience success, may be part of a historically underserved student population, may have special circumstances that warrant additional academic and social support, may be the first generation in their family who will attend post-secondary, and with additional programming and their own individual determination can experience greater personal academic success in preparation of college. Our AVID mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. AVID equips students with what they need to succeed on a path to college and career success. AVID strategies are embedded in classes and students selected for the AVID program have the opportunity to take the AVID elective course.

AVID is a program targeted for students in the academic middle, designed to give them a push to reach their full potential. AVID is a year long college and career readiness elective class that insists on rigor, breaks down barriers, aligns the work, and advocates for students. AVID teaches student skills and behaviors needed for academic success. Students are taught success strategies and are supported through weekly tutorials that are facilitate by college students and college-experienced students. Students are introduced to many career fields through guest speakers who walk them through the aspects of his/her own career journey. Students also have the opportunity to visit colleges and universities to visualize their futures.

Middle School AVID elective class expectations include: maintaining an organized and resourceful binder, develop time management skills, complete all assignments and maintain high grades, study regularly for all courses and support one another as classmates in the academic and social settings.

Lake Middle School also provides health services to students and their families as needed. The primary goal of health services is to eliminate/minimize health related barriers to learning. To accomplish this, health services staff, as part of the school team, strives to: protect students' well-being; enhance healthy behaviors; encourage self-care; assess and communicate student health concerns through referral to parents/guardians; care for students with illness, injuries and chronic health conditions; medication administration; immunization review and compliance monitoring; health appraisals and review of findings; implementation of health accommodations; creation and implementation of individualized health plans and emergency care plans; care coordination with parents and health care providers; and vision and hearing screening.

In addition to physical health, Lake Middle School provides counseling support to its student body. School counselors work to provide a comprehensive developmental school counseling program focused on academic, personal, social and career development for all students, which fosters lifelong learners who are college, career and community ready. Our counselors help students with academic planning and support, career and college planning, decision making and conflict resolution, individual/group counseling, difficult family situations, friendship concerns/issues, bullying concerns, personal/social skills, self-awareness and study skills, and learning styles. In addition to working directly with students, our counselors help families with academic planning information, assessment results interpretation, community resources, consultation, navigating education systems, parent information/conferences, and clothing and food resources.

Throughout the school days our counselors also guide our instructional staff with academic and behavioral interventions, consultation, crisis prevention planning, crisis intervention and management, data analysis, reducing behavior problems, addressing bullying behavior, school-wide needs assessment, understanding student needs, and student advocacy.

Individual counseling is available to support students in the areas of academic, personal/social, and college/career topics. Students are welcome to drop in or fill out a school counselor appointment request form. Counseling groups are also run periodically during the school year. Examples of these groups include New Student Groups, Grief Group, Self-Esteem Building Group and many others as needed. Students can contact their counselor if they are interested in joining a group or counselors may recommend students to a group. Counselors periodically visit classrooms to lead various guidance lessons and registration processes. Topics may include character development, study skills, college & career, or preparing students to register and transition to the high school setting. School Counselors incorporate technology into career and post-secondary exploration. Students identify interests, explore career ideas, education and training options, and may build their own portfolio. These resources are also used in the College & Career Readiness (CCR) course.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Two initiatives we have relied upon in our work to ensure a positive environment, supportive school culture and increased level of student engagement are the framework outlined in “This We Believe in Action: Implementing Successful Middle Level Schools” provided by the Association of Middle Level Education (AMLE) and the “Top 20” programming Lake Middle School has committed to. Through our work, we have focused on “human being precedes human doing” when interacting with and teaching our students. We believe that if students are not socially and emotionally aware and supported, it is difficult for them to engage in their academic work and responsibilities.

Our continued belief that all teens have the potential to develop their own “success” is at the forefront of our work and actions at Lake Middle School. We continue to encourage and build meaningful relationships and reinforce numerous strategies throughout the school days in many settings and courses so that students develop strong connections to their peers and school staff. Student engagement will increase while we think, learn, and communicate successfully with each other. Through our professional learning as a staff we have been hyper-focused on providing each of our students developmentally responsive, empowering, culturally relevant, and equitable support throughout their school days. We believe that the “whole child” balanced approach to academics and social emotional learning impacts student engagement. This work has provided a platform to ensure that we are recognizing that rigorous and relevant curriculum coupled with social and emotional learning and support increases student engagement and overall student achievement.

Lake Middle School has also supported personalized student engagement through technology and preparing students for careers that don't even exist yet. We believe that this has also increased student engagement and personal commitment to their own learning. Our goal has been to enhance technology and provide access to digital resources for every student. This includes but is not limited to reliable WiFi to classroom technology and numerous technology systems and initiatives. Every student has access to a mobile device in the form of a Chromebook. Through the use of personal devices, teachers can personalize their instruction, help students access information and allow for instant collaboration between students and teachers across the district.

As technology is continually evolving in student learning, the time students spend interacting with technology is generally an enriching experience. However, to ensure our students are participating in a positive culture around media and technology, Lake Middle School does incorporate digital citizenship education as part of our curricula. Students are growing up with the power of digital media and technology to explore, connect, create, and learn in new ways. With this power, young people have great opportunities, but they also face challenges and dilemmas. We believe that digital citizenship is the responsible use of technology to learn, create, and participate. As a school we utilize a digital citizenship curriculum entitled “Common Sense’s Digital Citizenship Curriculum” to address critical issues facing children in a fast-changing world of media and technology. The innovative, research-based, lessons teach students to think critically and develop the habits of mind to navigate digital dilemmas in their everyday lives. The digital citizenship curriculum addresses six major tenets that we believe are important to expose our students to in their use of technology: We find balance in our digital lives; We care about everyone’s privacy; We define who we are; We know the power of words and actions; We are kind and courageous; and We are critical thinkers and creators.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

As a staff we know that our families are essential to our student achievement and success. Lake Middle School is committed to working in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure the academic success of each student. Our goal is to provide research and evidence-based practices that lead to the implementation of successful programs that meet the educational needs of students and engages our families in their children’s education. A primary focus has been to collaborate on efforts to close the achievement gap and promote equity and inclusion within our school. Family engagement creates partnerships between parents, students

and educators to further students' academic success. Our staff have been actively involved in continued professional development specific to effective communications and cross-cultural understanding to build trust between and among parents and educators. We utilize numerous communication venues to correspond in a timely and effective manner to inform our students and their families of student progress, school information, events and opportunities. These communication venues include a weekly school online update, use of phone and text messaging, monthly emails from Homebase teachers, parent surveys, and individual messaging through our platform called Blackboard.

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled three times throughout the school year (once each trimester). They are offered in both in person and virtual settings. Although these conferences are formal approaches to communication we often advertise our staff directory and encourage families to reach out to our school staff at any time throughout the school year. We are open and available to meet with parents who request additional support and/or information for any reason. In addition to parent-teacher conferences, families are encouraged and invited to school events. We begin each school year with an Open House and a grade level Parent Night to welcome families into our school. Throughout the school year there are many opportunities for parents to join their children on-site for a variety of activities and events.

Lake Middle School has its own Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which is developed to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children, to assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children, and to encourage parent and public involvement in our school. This parent group promotes the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, to raise the standards of home life, to bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth, and to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental and social education. Our Parent Teacher Association has been instrumental in connecting our larger community to our work at the school. Numerous community agencies and organizations have contributed in a variety of ways in support of our school. We have experienced business partnerships, funding, donations, volunteers, guest speakers, community service opportunities, presentations, etc. as community outreach and connection throughout the years.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

We truly believe that as a staff we can best solve our most complex and/or challenging problems when we are collaborating and learning together. The staff recognizes and believes that they function more efficiently and effectively when working together in grade level team meetings, professional learning communities, interdisciplinary content areas, building leadership settings and extra-curricular settings (both academic and social) that support our students.

Lake Middle School staff members participate in the district's Alternative Teacher Performance Pay System (ATPPS). This system is based on additional time and attention for all staff members to work individually and as teams in regard to their own individualized professional growth plans and flexible learning plans. Staff members set site student achievement goals and a collegial professional development plan. Throughout the school year, site leadership teams support teachers and their development throughout the school improvement process. Time is set aside to review and discuss each of the school improvement plan goals and action steps, individual roles in achieving those site goals, determine and discuss structures, components and rubrics that are in place to support student achievement goals and review school and classroom data. Peer classroom observations and feedback are part of the programming that is under the guidance of colleagues coaching each other rather than a formal evaluation provided by school administration. The peer-to-peer initiative has proven to be valuable in exposing staff members to their colleagues' strategies and best classroom instructional practices.

Lake Middle School staff feel valued and supported through the many professional learning opportunities offered throughout the school year including: Professional Learning Communities (PLC), scheduled professional development days, 1:1 instructional coaching conversations, and peer coaching conversations. Professional development days are designed based on the feedback from our teachers and staff. Data is

collected through surveys and from building leadership team meetings in order to offer professional development that is relevant and of interest. During the shift to distance learning and hybrid models, training was provided for staff on digital live teaching, online platforms, how to best organize and assign work via the student learning platform of Schoology, asynchronous and synchronous best practices, and a variety of online tools and strategies to enhance student engagement during this new experience.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of school leadership at Lake Middle School is that of collaboration. We view school administration as members of the team and that they partner in all ways possible to ensure that every student's needs are being met and resourced to achieve his/her maximum potential. Shared leadership fosters accountability and responsibilities on behalf of all stakeholders in increasing student learning. Although Lake Middle School has one lead principal and two assistant principals on staff which may be viewed as formal leadership, informal leadership is offered amongst all stakeholders in order to involve others in leadership opportunities in order to collectively collaborate and ensure that all voices are being heard.

The view of building leadership at Lake Middle School is that all voices are represented: student voice through Homebase, student council and the student ambassador programming; parent voice through open communication, and our Parent Teacher Association (PTA); and staff voice through our building meeting framework and committees that partner to make strong decisions for the betterment of all students and their learning.

Staff members are highly encouraged to take on building leadership roles through the many opportunities offered in the building's leadership framework. Currently staff members are involved as grade level team leaders, equity team members, building leadership team members, school improvement team members, and a variety of other short-term initiatives that occur throughout our experiences.

Student voice is very important in guiding leadership and building decisions. The Student Ambassador Committee at Lake Middle School is made up of ten students from each grade level for a total of 30 students. We believe that student voice is needed as an integral feedback loop that is part of the school improvement plan process. Our student ambassadors are representatives of the overall student body. The student ambassadors advise and partner with school leadership on "how do building decisions impact students" and provide additional information from the student perspective in relation to overall school experiences and guidance for continued school improvement.

Our students, their families, staff, and administrative team continue to strive for educational excellence and collaborate together in order to make student-centered decisions that support each of our students and overall school community.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Lake staff members participate in continuous professional development opportunities specific to culturally responsive pedagogy and practices. Professional learning includes but is not limited to critical self-reflection on racial socialization, implicit biases and microaggressions, book talks, facilitated professional conversations in PLCs, and examining quantitative and qualitative data on the impact of culturally responsive practices. Staff members are exposed to researching culturally relevant classroom materials and culturally relevant materials for school use. Our instructional coach, cultural liaisons and equity teacher leader in partnership with building and district administration and various consultants help facilitate professional learning at the building level.

Our goal in this area is to make sure our staff's professional development related to culturally responsive teaching and learning is job-embedded, collaborative, resourceful and on-going. Our work in recent years has focused around culturally responsive classroom strategies to validate, affirm, and build bridges with our students of all backgrounds and diverse experiences. Regular equity team meetings, binder study with a focus on learning about culturally responsive teaching, and learning protocols that can be infused into any lessons have been geared to result in greater student engagement and participation.

Lake Middle School has two Cultural Liaisons to work and connect with students, their families, and our community. They are advocates for equity and inclusion, empowering and supporting families to promote student academic success. Cultural Liaisons assist and support students and families with cultural adjustment, social-emotional development, achieving academic success, developing leadership skills, and career and college readiness. Liaisons work in collaboration with school staff, families and the community through the district's Office of Achievement and Integration.

The Cultural Liaisons work collaboratively with the District's Director of Achievement and Integration to support the academic and social-emotional needs of students while engaging with the families to develop and maintain positive relationships with the school community. Liaisons are members of cultural communities with skills necessary to bridge the cultural needs of many of the diverse communities served by our school and district. They serve all students directly and provide training to families on school engagement and academic support for their students. Liaisons also provide professional development to our staff. They provide consistent support to promote success of students, focusing on protected student populations but working with all students. The liaisons use the Dual Capacity-Building Framework to guide our work. We use this as a compass, laying out the goals and conditions necessary to chart a path toward providing a welcoming and inclusive school and effective family engagement efforts that are linked to instructional practices that lead to student achievement and school improvement for all student groups.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Lake Middle School we have guided our work through the lens of personalized learning and support for each of our students. As we transitioned from a junior high school to a middle school program we relied upon framing a successful middle school program based on “This We Believe in Action” guided by the national Association of Middle Level Education (AMLE). As we created and defined who we wanted to be as Lake Middle School we actively worked within what AMLE identified as the 16 Characteristics of Successful Middle Level Schools: Valuing Young Adults, Active Learning, Challenging Curriculum, Multiple Learning Approaches, Varied Assessments, Shared Vision, Committed Leaders, Courageous and Collaborative Leadership, Professional Development, Organizational Structure, School Environment, Adult Advocates, Guidance Services, Health and Wellness, Family Involvement and Community, and Business Partners.

Through our professional learning in recent years, the “Top 20” programming has been the most influential training we have had as a staff to support our students first socially which then prepared them to be open to academic learning. It has reminded us that academics are very important for all of our students but that we need to continue to look at the whole child and ensure that their emotional well-being and socialization is supported and cared for. Top 20 programming has guided our work that “human being precedes human doing.” Our emphasis is that we are meeting the basic and relational needs of students to ensure they are ready and able to learn. We take great pride in making connections with our students as our intent is that each student in our building minimally has one adult they are connected to and supported by.

Developmentally our students are experiencing inconsistent surges of physical and emotional growth which greatly impacts their school experiences and at times their individual commitment and/or engagement in their own learning and personal growth. Students are at different stages and maturity levels which our staff are aware of and accommodate as they differentiate their instruction and communication. Our Top 20 initiatives have been woven into our Homebase student experiences, both in strategy implementation but also through connection to a consistent Homebase teacher and Homebase class or students for their entire school year. We want to ensure that although Lake Middle School is a rather large school, each student minimally has one adult that they have the opportunity to build and maintain a trusting, consistent and supportive relationship with so they can access that adult in times of challenges or celebration. Homebase teachers are also the main point of contact for our parents.

In addition to Homebase and school-wide intentions with Top 20 strategies, our Top 20 initiative has also been instrumental in the creation of a 6th grade trimester course entitled “Middle School Success.” This transition class was designed to give our incoming 6th grade students a class in which students explore and engage in strategies, empowering them to reach their full potential in school and life. Students set, reach, and reflect on goals, choosing from a repertoire of strategies developed in this class through the Top 20 curriculum and text. Included is a focus on the development and maintenance of executive functioning skills which include time management, problem solving skills, identification of learning styles, and prioritization strategies. Students are provided opportunities to develop and strengthen their organizational skills, study skills, and test taking strategies which will increase success in their secondary classroom experiences. This introductory course has supported students with their transition to middle school and resources them for academic and social success during their middle school experience.

Again the phrase of “human being precedes human doing” has been our informal staff “mantra” to be intentional in our work in taking the time to connect with students daily prior to instruction and academic learning. We believe that this daily “pause” has an immediate impact on student motivation, relationships, learning and willingness to be vulnerable to take risks in their learning throughout each of their school days.