

***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      [X] Charter      [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

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

Official School Name Seven Hills Preparatory Academy  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8600 Bloomington Avenue South  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bloomington      State MN      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 55425-1920

County Hennepin County

Telephone (952) 426-6001      Fax (952) 426-6020

Web site/URL https://sevenhillspreparatoryacademy.org      E-mail bpeterson@shpamn.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.

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

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Carolyn Farrell      E-mail cfarrell@shpamn.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Seven Hills Preparatory Academy      Tel. (952) 426-6000

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.

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

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mrs. Lisa Barnidge  
(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.

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

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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 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	42	47	89
1	47	50	97
2	48	51	99
3	50	45	95
4	37	43	80
5	44	39	83
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	268	275	543

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 17.7 % Asian
  - 15.1 % Black or African American
  - 9.2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 51 % White
  - 6.8 % 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: 9%

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	23
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	48
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	543
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

Mandingo, Thai, Cambodian, Malayalam, Russian, Bulgarian, Vietnamese, Chinese Mandarin, Bengali, Urdu, Afaan Oromo, Amharic, Telugu, Filipino, Tibetan, Tamil, Somali, Spanish, Portuguese, Bosnian, Korean, Hindi, Arabic, ASL, Estonian, Kannada, Marathi, Czech

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 13 %  
70 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %

Total number students who qualify: 97

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 11 %  
61 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>11</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>5</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>5</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>24</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</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: 2
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.	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	19
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1

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	97%	97%	90%	96%	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.

Seven Hills Preparatory Academy engages students in a rigorous classical education designed to prepare each one for strong citizenship and lifelong learning.

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

SEVEN HILLS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

MANUAL OF SCHOOL POLICIES APPROVED BY THE BOARD

POLICY 102: EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that equal educational opportunity is provided for all students of the school.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. It is the school’s policy to provide equal educational opportunity for all students. The school does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), marital status, parental status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, genetic information, or age. The school also makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

B. The school prohibits the harassment of any individual for any of the categories listed above. For information about the types of conduct that constitute violation of the school’s policy on harassment and violence and the school’s procedures for addressing such complaints, refer to the school’s policy on

harassment and violence.

C. This policy applies to all areas of education including academics, coursework, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, or other rights or privileges of enrollment.

D. It is the responsibility of every school employee to comply with this policy conscientiously.

E. Any student, parent or guardian having any questions regarding this policy should discuss it with the appropriate school official as provided by policy. In the absence of a specific designee, an inquiry or a complaint should be referred to the executive director.

---

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD ON: September, 2006

REVISED BY THE BOARD ON: February, 2008; July 6, 2017; January 27, 2020

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

2022 - 2023 Enrollment Procedures

Seven Hills Preparatory Academy (SHPA) is a free, public charter school that does not require admission tests, no specific academic requirements for applying, and no tuition. Admission is open to all students who reside in Minnesota. SHPA accepts enrollment applications in all grades, however, not all grades may have openings. If applying to our elementary school grade levels, you can apply at both campuses.

SHPA has two campuses and offers the following grades:

Bloomington – Kindergarten through Fifth Grade

Richfield – Kindergarten through Fifth Grade and Sixth Grade through Eighth Grade

Students apply and are selected for enrollment based on lottery, to fill spaces as available. Priority is given to siblings of current students and children of faculty/staff.

Please see <https://sevenhillspreparatoryacademy.org/prospective-families/admissions/> for more details on our admissions procedures.

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

---

The very nature of Seven Hills’ learning model depends upon the cultivation of a community in which everyone feels they can contribute and belong. While students are preparing to become strong citizens and lifelong learners, their families embark with them on a joyful pursuit of a hard-earned wisdom, growing with them through the grammar stage by supporting and modeling responsible research, critical thinking, and robust debate. Parent and guardian involvement is critical to each student’s success, and educational opportunities are offered throughout the school year to encourage the participation of families in various activities and events. From classroom volunteers and field trip chaperones to mystery guest readers and PTA picnic goers to conference attendees and Fun Run cheerleaders, Seven Hills values the importance of family involvement in providing a holistic education for all of its scholars. Seven Hills was really excited to honor its 15th Anniversary this past school year, and was overjoyed at the turnout among past and present families and partners who have contributed to this milestone!

Perhaps no singular event is more representative of this than the school’s annual Civitas (“Community” in Latin) Fair, which features over 30 family cultural booths along with a school-wide science fair as well as math and literacy activities. For a school that celebrates its successful and intentional effort to diversify—growing from approximately 15% families of color to nearly 50% over the past several years—Seven Hills is grateful for the inclusive and enriching learning environment it has created in partnership with its families. Seven Hills families come from more than 30 cities, represent over 75 different zip codes, and speak nearly 30 languages. The unique and special character of Seven Hills’ is reflected in its broadly diverse demographic, which it continuously strives to build upon by engaging this rich community of families and learners through a range of multilingual communications and outreach efforts.

Seven Hills is proud of its academic accomplishments and the tireless efforts of its deeply caring, high-quality teachers to close opportunity and achievement gaps, while recognizing there is much progress yet to make. Seven Hills’ learning and instruction is largely based upon the renowned Core Knowledge Curriculum scope and sequence, which is augmented by the proven efficacy of the math in Focus Curriculum as well as the National Geographic Science Curriculum. Seven Hills offers a comprehensive character education program, promoting values such as respect, compassion, open-mindedness, and self-control and aspiring toward Classical virtues of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Daily morning meetings, which are patterned on Responsive Classroom practice and utilize the Second Step social-emotional curriculum, foster social-emotional growth and character development along with a student ambassador program and monthly student assemblies that celebrate positive student and classroom behaviors. It is worth noting that strong school leadership and board governance, prudent financial management, and high student and staff retention are further evidence of Seven Hills’ success. Seven Hills has been recognized multiple times as a celebration and reward school by the Minnesota Department of Education and earned its Finance Award for every year it has been offered.

Innovative programs that advance the above-mentioned strategies to challenge and support all students to reach their full academic potential derive from a strong data-driven teacher coaching program that models a growth mindset and the sharing of evidence-based practices among peers. Teach Like a Champion techniques are central to high-quality instruction and complimented by culturally-responsive approaches and Envoy classroom management methods. In addition, Seven Hills provides an expert Math and Literacy intervention program, a strong Special Education department, and an expanding EL program to meet an increase in identified students. Finally, Seven Hills continues to focus on educational equity, working with consultants and organizations, and supporting staff workshops and trainings over the past several years.

Most recently this vital equity work has focused upon race and ethnicity by better understanding Muslim students, utilizing trauma-informed teaching, and creating innocent classrooms. Seven Hills’ has deliberately connected its ongoing equity work with its Democratic Classicist model, which is best represented in the Socratic Seminar. In this model, the teacher is de-centered while the students sit in a circle and engage one another in deep, respectful, developmentally-based discussions around essential questions that reflect their learning and lived experience. Seven Hills received an Innovation Award from the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools for co-founding the first annual Minnesota Classical Education

Conference, which is teacher-led and features sessions in coaching, didactic, and seminar strategies.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Seven Hills prioritized the health and safety of students and staff while balancing the value of in-person learning and instruction. Awareness that opportunity and achievement gaps were compounded as a result of the pandemic and the disproportionate impacts upon student learning resulted in a renewed emphasis on educational technology and family communication in addition to essential food and transportation services.

## **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:**

At Seven Hills, we recognize that all students have a right to pursue academic and personal excellence. We challenge and support students by: providing a caring and structured small-school environment; maintaining high expectations of students, staff, and the community; inspiring critical thinking, creativity, and an appreciation for beauty through active implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum and study of the liberal arts; and promoting a strong value system that embraces cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control. Seven Hills offers a comprehensive character education program, promoting values such as respect, compassion, and self-control and aspiring toward Classical virtues of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Seven Hills is committed to educational equity and believes in the inherent value of an inclusive learning environment where students and staff from all backgrounds work hard to prepare for a diverse and democratic world in which they make lasting contributions. Seven Hills is proud of its academic accomplishments and the tireless efforts of its teachers to close opportunity and achievement gaps.

Seven Hills Preparatory Academy believes the best Classical teaching and learning fosters disciplined thinking, robust debate, and the joyful pursuit of a hard-earned wisdom. We believe civic-minded students help forge mutually-beneficial relationships between the school and the communities we serve. Providing a safe and accessible learning environments while supporting current needs and accommodating future growth is also important. Prudent stewardship of taxpayer funds and the judicious allocation of financial resources among all stakeholders to ensure the long-term viability and stability of the school is something we take seriously. Finally, we believe a vibrant Classical school culture compels strength of character, commitment to growth, and spirited cooperation among all community members, and recruiting, developing, and retaining exceptional administration and staff is essential for instilling a shared passion and vision for meaningful teaching and learning.

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

Seven Hills Preparatory Academy curriculum is guided by the Common Core ELA and Minnesota ELA standards. We take a deep dive into curriculum to guarantee that we cover all standards and supplement in areas to enhance our curriculum to meet the standards. Seven Hills uses a Reading Powers curriculum that helps teach and practice the five reading powers: connect, question, visualize, infer and transform. Teachers use a variety of literature to guide natural lessons in all the five reading powers areas and teach students to think and understand the information they are reading. The younger learners at Seven Hills participate in letter and word family boot camps to build a strong letter identification and sound foundation that grows and develops our readers as they learn and develop as readers using Words Their Way, Guided Reading and Shurley Grammar.

Seven Hills engages the community through a mystery reader program, where guest readers are encouraged to share their love of reading with our first graders to help inspire and develop a lifelong love of reading. Our third graders recite and perform poems in a Poetry Slam for the community highlighting the concepts learned from our poetry units and giving them an opportunity to practice public speaking.

Seven Hills believes in lifelong learning for students and staff. We offer professional development in curriculum areas to continue to learn and develop a rigorous learning experience for the students. Training includes Shurley Grammar, Words Their Way, Reading Powers, Envoy, Teach Like a Champion/Uncommon Schools, and Classical Education. Staff attend training if not provided for all staff and will take leadership roles to share their learnings at Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with other staff.

Three to four times a year, students are assessed using Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessments in K-2

and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) in 3-5. The data collected guides the teachers to determine the students' independent and instructional reading levels. Teachers make reading groups based on the assessments and can support students at their independent level. This is a key for students to find success and support as they grow and develop their love of reading at Seven Hills. Teachers work with our literacy specialists to support students that show the need for extra support starting in kindergarten. The data allows teachers to target specific learning areas for all students in the classroom and is flexible and changes as the needs arise. The students also participate in Interim Assessments that are an all-encompassing conceptual assessment where students are assessed on all the standards for the year each time they are taken. Teachers use this data to determine the flexible reading groups on top of the other data collected in the classroom.

Seven Hills participates in a Battle of the Books competition each year. Students form teams that are led by a teacher coach. The teams read books to learn facts about the books and engage in a reading comprehension competition against each other. Seven Hills' teams may also compete against teams from other schools.

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

Seven Hills Preparatory Academy follows the Singapore Math in Focus philosophy, focusing on mastery, which is achieved through intentional sequencing of concepts. This curriculum teaches students how to mathematically think so that they can rely on the theory and build on concepts. This program uses a three-step learning model, moving from concrete (using manipulatives) to pictorial (creating visual representation on paper) to abstract (solving problems). Students learn through this “CPA” progression, number bonds, bar modeling and mental math. All teachers at SHPA use flexible grouping to ensure students are being taught at their current level of performance and understanding. Our school offers a gifted and talented program for our high achieving students and a Tier program for our students who are not currently at grade level. Teachers at SHPA use differentiation methods for teaching all facets of our math curriculum. The variety of methods allows learning to happen for all types of learners. Differentiated instruction provides students with multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge, progress and mastery of the concepts. Kindergarten through second grade celebrates 100 days and counting to 100 by creating a unique way to celebrate and display a collection of 100 items.

Seven Hills Preparatory Academy enriches students' math skills through cross curricular engagement connecting mathematics with music, movement, and record keeping. In music students utilize math skills to write music and calculate rhythms. In Physical Education students engage their math knowledge to measure distance, count laps and record attempts using graphs.

SHPA enriches student's math study through a Sumdog challenge. Over winter and summer breaks students are encouraged to participate in grade level math challenges to compile points to compete against one another. Throughout the school students are motivated to practice math activities at home using the IXL program to enhance their mathematical prowess.

Each trimester, Seven Hills Preparatory Academy evaluates our progress of mastery of the standards by administering an interim assessment. The interim assessments are an all-encompassing conceptual assessment where students are assessed on all the standards for the year each time they are taken. The assessments are designed to be rigorous and provide comprehensive data on each student. Succeeding the interim assessments, teachers review the data and make instructional decisions based on the information. In addition to the interim assessment, students at SHPA also take universal benchmark assessments, chapter assessments and weekly fact fluency tests. Grades 3-5 at Seven Hills Preparatory Academy administer the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) in mathematics, this assessment is used to meet federal and state legislative requirements.

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

Seven Hills teaches our scientists by using Core Knowledge and National Geographic Learning curriculum that align and support the Common Core and Minnesota State standards. Students receive a high quality curriculum that connects science and literacy skills naturally in the daily lessons. Students develop strong academic skills, creating deep and critical thinkers and developing a lifelong love for learning science with

hands-on activities and lessons.

Kindergarten students learn about taking care of the earth and take a walking field trip to a local park to clean up on Earth Day, making connections to activities that our students can continue to do in and out of school starting at a young age. Many students share the next day that they replicated their learning experience with families and friends at their neighborhood park. In addition, 1st grade students get hands-on with different rocks and learn ways to identify and look at rocks like a scientist. The 4th grade scientists get deep into investigating the digestion of an owl by dissecting an owl pellet. In the spring you will find students actively participating as a team to dissect a sheep's heart, learning about the four chambers of the heart and making connections to a human heart, learning how the heart pumps blood through the body of all mammals.

The skills that students develop during science are connected to all academic areas and build a meaningful learning opportunity to develop reading and math skills. Building the curiosity and wonder of the world in the classroom starts in kindergarten. Teachers create an environment that encourages our students to develop and grow as a scientist as they participate in hands-on learning and experiments. This inquiry culminates with students submitting a project to be presented and judged at the annual Science Fair.

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

Seven Hills uses the Core Knowledge Curriculum Series to teach social studies, history, civic learning and engagement. The Core Knowledge Curriculum offers comprehensive, content-rich learning constructed on the Core Knowledge Sequence that aligns and supports the Common Core and Minnesota State standards. Students develop strong academic skills as the curriculum spirals naturally as students' academic knowledge progresses. This curriculum fosters project-based opportunities including: family holidays from around the world in connection with learning about the continents in kindergarten; in 2nd grade students study ancient Greece and create a three-dimensional model of the Parthenon for Ancient Greece day; and 4th grade students study medieval Europe and create a castle project.

The Core Knowledge curriculum connects to visual art, music, and Latin at all grade levels. In visual art, students learn about works of art from different cultures and countries from Core Knowledge units, for example Hokusai's "Great Wave Off Kanagawa." It helps students' learning when they enter art class with prior knowledge from their classrooms. Projects are created through this cross-curricular learning model. For example, in 3rd grade students learn about Native American artwork and art from Ancient Rome. In 4th grade, the students learn about art from Ancient China and create clay terra cotta soldiers that are placed in a school wide display. They learn about art from the Middle Ages and portraits from the American Revolution in fourth grade as well. In 5th grade students learn about art from the Renaissance, works of art from Japan, and photography from the Civil War.

In addition, when preparing for the school wide concert, our music teacher makes specific selections of songs from the Core Knowledge curriculum for the concert program. In Latin class, students learn about Ancient Greek and Ancient Roman culture and create projects that tie into these units.

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

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

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

Students attend the following specialist classes daily for 45 minutes on a four day rotation and attend PE class every other day for 45 minutes.

The art curriculum follows the Core Knowledge curriculum and state standards for Visual Art. Students learn basic skills in kindergarten through 2nd grade and learn about famous artists, works of art, and the art elements: color, shape, line, texture, form, space, and value. 3rd – 5th grade students learn cross-curricular connections with science, core knowledge, and Latin. Students learn about Ancient Greek and Roman Architecture, Native American artwork, European artwork, and artwork from around the world. Shared artwork, class critiques, and gallery walks allow students to view and respond to their classmates' artwork. Student artwork is displayed throughout the school. A school wide art mural or project is made at our annual Civitas Fair.

The music curriculum makes many cross-curricular connections to math, core knowledge, and visual art and meets all state standards. Students learn rhythmic development, the notes on the scale, and music literacy. Students work on their singing, vocal development, and instrument skills with a recorder. A school wide music concert takes place twice a year. Choir and band programs are offered to students with choir club performances offered in the community, including at assisted living facilities.

The PE program in Grades K-5 reflects National Standards for growth and development in areas including physical fitness and nutrition, social and emotional health, and motor skill acquisition. PE follows the Core Knowledge Curriculum by reinforcing the concepts and vocabulary covered in core subject areas. Students are assessed in regular and adaptive PE classes through fitness testing, with the year-long goal being in the healthy fitness zone. PE cultivates a growth mindset and lifelong learning, and all units involve cooperation and team building with our school's CARES values in mind. Before school athletic club is offered twice a week throughout the year to encourage more physical movement and play for our students.

Students attend media and library class as well. Computer skills students learn include typing, mouse skills, internet research and safety, coding, and using Google suite programs on the computer. Cross-curricular computer activities encourage practice with math facts, reading, and writing skills in class. The annual Book Fair is a great opportunity for students to purchase new reading materials.

The Latin curriculum makes many cross-curricular connections to Core Knowledge, science, and reading. Our Latin teacher speaks fluent Latin in class for a nearly-full immersion learning experience. Kindergarten through 2nd grade students learn basic grammar and progressive vocabulary. 3rd - 5th grade students learn about the Roman Empire, maps, how to write a book in Latin, prepositions, and how the Latin language extends into modern day. We also host an annual Latin Bee.

There is also a full time counselor at our school who meets with students individually and in groups, and also teaches guidance lessons in classrooms. Our counselor is a part of our student support team along with our behavioral specialist.

### **3. Academic Supports**

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

At the start of the school year, students are assessed and identified for remedial support services using a variety of assessment data. Data from the previous year's interim assessments and MCAs is analyzed and partnered with new data from the fall collected from curriculum assessments including Fontas and Pinnell Benchmark and Qualitative Reading Inventory-QRI, and Singapore or other math pretests. Students are then supported through the trimester as formal and informal data continues to be collected. After administration of the first interim assessments, remedial student groupings and targeted instruction are reviewed during grading and analysis meetings. As these student groupings are intentionally designed to be fluid and flexible, remedial supports may shift throughout the year. Targeted RTI supports are provided in both Reading and Math by content area specialists in addition to EL teachers and Special Education staff as necessary.

Instructional strategies include but are not limited to: grouping students through regular assessments, providing layered support in reading and math with additional minutes of instruction to support remediation and enrichment students, parent/guardian communication of goals, progress checks and assignments for skill practice, and additional support in study hall or after school. Use of more formalized RTI and CEIS models

in a strong enrichment program with content specialists, combined with EL and Special Education assessments and supports, ensures Literacy and Math interventions are consistent, coherent, and effective.

Seven Hills expanded its existing summer program to include more students and staff as well as increase program length and offerings. Seven Hills' summer program provides free transportation and snacks to participating students. The program ran five weeks in length and offered social emotional and physical education sessions in addition to Math and Reading. The program also offered a special art therapy bus experience in collaboration with a local graduate school of counseling.

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

Seven Hills' enrichment program in grades K-5 is designed to accommodate both above grade level and gifted and talented needs. For grades 3-5, Seven Hills uses a variety of assessments to determine if students are above grade level, including CogAT, Fontas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment in K-2, and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). The data collected is complemented by teacher observations and recommendations, and used to determine and guide flexible and differentiated groupings. Collectively, this information and data is increasingly analyzed and assessed to ensure the gifted-talented program is equitable and representative of our student population.

Students in grades K-2 are placed in reading and math groups based on their current skills and their individualized learning targets. This allows teachers to plan for and effectively concentrate on meeting the needs and leveraging the assets of small group of students at a time or across a narrower spectrum of skills. These groups remain flexible and responsive to the growth and development of students as they progress, with ongoing data-driven analysis at the individual and group level, allowing for adjustments to be made to curriculum, instruction, and pacing as necessary.

Near the end of 2nd grade, all students at Seven Hills take the CogAT assessment to determine possible placement in our gifted-talented program. The gifted-talented program seeks to identify learners who need even more specialized or accelerated instruction than the differentiated groups provide. These students meet 2-3 times a week in guided literature circles and every day for their accelerated Math group. This program allows students to explore literature and math ideas in greater depths and enables the teacher in cooperation with the student to isolate topics and aspects of heightened interest for expanded learning and exploration.

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

The Special Education department at Seven Hills implements Individualized Education Plans that have been developed to assist scholars who are eligible for special education services according to Minnesota eligibility criteria. The team includes a Special Education Director and Coordinator, Licensed Teachers, various Therapists, a Psychologist, School Nurse, DAPE teacher, Due Process Clerk, and Educational Assistants (EAs). The IEP team works collaboratively with students, classroom teachers, and families to ensure each student is making adequate yearly progress with their individual goals and objectives. The IEP team meets at least once a year to share progress and update the student's learning goals and objectives. Progress is also shared with families through progress reporting at grading time and informally at school conferences. This team currently services the needs of 63 students which represents 11% of our current student population.

Unique to this department are the comprehensive services and accommodations that are provided to our students to meet student needs identified in their comprehensive evaluations. Educational assistants work the full educational day, providing time before school to collaborate with case managers, prep and modify student assignments and materials, and to participate in professional development opportunities. Special Education teachers collaborate daily with EAs, teachers and families to adjust and accommodate student's needs. The team also works collaboratively with the school's behavior interventionist and participates in training to develop strategies to help students regulate their social emotional needs.

Our Occupational Therapist coordinates daily movement and sensory breaks for students that need breaks for self-regulation, as well as offers a morning SMART program to focus on the maturation of foundational

skills that may have been missed in early developmental stages. These activities provide neurological stimulation to increase learning readiness, as students who have not fully developed learning readiness often struggle with academics or behavior.

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

At Seven Hills, we have students and families that speak over 30 different languages. Over the past few years we have had our ELL program grow from around 30 students to over 100 students. We have two English Language Learner teachers to support our students and one Educational Assistant who supports students for a portion of their day as well.

The program is a mix of sheltered instruction and co-teaching depending on the student needs and the schedule limitations. Teachers use past ACCESS data from state testing or screening data from intake of new students to help create the individualized program. ELL teachers work closely with classroom teachers to best plan and prepare for where the language instruction should focus.

The ELL teachers create strong relationships with students, getting to know them and their unique contributions to our school community to ensure they are comfortable at school. ELL teachers lead presentations at PLCs to give tips to classroom teachers on how to best support ELL students in their classes. Emphasis is placed on visuals and limited text and extra support when needed especially for written summative assessments. They have also emphasized the importance of providing lots of opportunities for students to speak to and with each other and listen and respond to each other. This coincides with providing a content rich print and visual environment with word walls, easy reader texts, and reference posters.

ELLs will benefit from increased exposure to print and language. At Seven Hills we provide a print-rich environment that includes access to books and materials, labels and posters. Word walls are also a great support for ELLs, and may be organized around a number of concepts, including: the alphabet and phonetic sounds, new vocabulary words, sight words, grammar rules and writing structures.

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

Seven Hills has a designated homeless liaison to support students and families who are homeless or highly mobile. This representative attends trainings offered by the Minnesota Department of Education to ensure the school is identifying and providing all of the resources and supports necessary to support these students and families. This includes the migrant education program and any connections with English Learner programming, including interpretation and translation services. This also involves related family engagement initiatives and high school preparation efforts.

State funding is set aside each year to make sure the school is ready and prepared to assist with meeting the needs of students and families. Resources range from basic food and transportation services, to various academic and programmatic supports, to clothing, hygiene, and technology. Counseling supports also help to facilitate connections with social service agencies that is critical to educational stability, which, in turn, is vital to social-emotional wellness and educational growth and success.

Seven Hills will also conduct outreach to students and families who are experiencing challenges with attendance and access to school resources to do what it can to remove and overcome any barriers to education. School representatives may also collaborate on support planning and involve the county as a constructive partner to the extent that is necessary or helpful in connecting the student and family with additional services.

It is very important to Seven Hills that all students and families are able to contribute and belong to its learning community. Proactive and response efforts are made to ensure students and families experiencing homelessness are fully included in all school programs, activities, and events. From field trips and school fairs to conferences and summer programming, equity and inclusion remain central to the school's support.

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

---

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

At Seven Hills, we use a wide variety of academic and social emotional programming to engage and motivate students, staff, and families in an effort to create a cohesive and well-knit community. This begins with our core values or CARES (Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control). Students have weekly lessons from our school counselor on these core values and how they are manifested at school. This helps new students acclimate to our learning community and showcases the leadership of our older students who help model the values. Classroom teachers, especially with new or younger students, reinforce these understandings and practices each and every day in the classroom setting.

The school day begins with a morning meeting and positive greeting and connection. Staff use a positive behavioral intervention system to reinforce those behaviors that align with our core values. Students earn Eagle Bucks daily for showcasing these practices. Each month we host a VIP Celebration where teachers select students from each class to honor based on their display of a designated core value. Students receive a certificate and a backpack tag as a visual representation of their exemplification of a core value. These gatherings are usually in-person, but during the pandemic were temporarily moved to online to video celebrations.

Each classroom is named for a college or university and this moniker is used to create a classroom identity and added community belonging. Students have rotating responsibilities in every classroom and can include helping to setup for breakfast and clean up after lunches in the cafeteria.

In the 3rd-5th grades, teachers select scholars who are good role models for our core values, either in their academics or in their social practices, to be student ambassadors. Student ambassadors showcase our core values at our VIP celebrations either with a skit or a demonstration, and also assist in other leadership roles throughout the year.

We also ask for leadership out of our 4th and 5th graders on the bus. We select bus captains with the help of our bus drivers to assist with reminding students of the bus expectations and be the model on the bus.

Beyond this, we survey students each year about their sense of belonging and contributing. We want to know how they view their teachers and classrooms, what they love about our community, and what suggestions they have to make it even better.

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

Families are essential to the success of our students. As a public charter school, families are empowered to freely choose our school. This cultivates a culture of families who believe in our mission and vision. We then develop family participation through a variety of volunteer and engagement opportunities during the year. These include regularly assisting in classrooms, helping teachers with organizational tasks so that they can better focus on high quality lessons, in addition to supporting the planning and facilitation of special activities and events.

We offer several opportunities for families to get involved at school to foster connection and participation in our learning community. Back to school events in the fall include an open house, information booths, and grade-level assessments. Monthly VIP celebrations recognize students excelling in our core values. Families are invited to these celebrations unbeknownst to their children, who are delighted by the surprise of their presence! Our signature event, the Civitas (Latin for “Community”) Fair, is a highly-attended cultural celebration that includes academic activities as well. We also invite parents and guardians to cheer on their children at our Fun Run, which raises important school funds in partnership with the PTA. We also encourage all families to attend fall and spring conferences to discuss the growth and progress of their children.

As our community has diversified, we have learned to develop a diverse approach to communication and engagement as well. Reaching out through weekly classroom newsletter or school-wide publications met the needs of many, but often times phone calls and text messages work better to relay messages home or request in-person meetings when needed. During the pandemic we included video conferences as another way to connect with families, and make translations and interpretations readily available. Each Fall and Spring, we host School Board Town Halls to engage families with school leadership. Recent topics have included pandemic health and safety, curriculum development, and racial equity. We now enable our families to join these sessions online and/or in person, to improve attendance and involvement.

Lastly, we have formed many important partnerships ranging from cooperative sports agreements with district public high schools and student mental health supports from a graduate school of counseling, to childcare programming with local churches and equity training from expert trainers. We have also benefitted from resources through various affiliations such as the chamber of commerce, department of education, and association of charter schools.

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

Our core values guide not only our student culture, but our adult culture as well. Each month our VIP celebration includes a recognition for a staff member showcasing their CARES. Staff nominate each other as a way to call attention to the appreciation of the supportive culture.

Our core values are one part of the professional culture, but another huge factor is modeling our mission. We are inspiring the next generation of curiosity and wonder, creating life-long learners. Our staff model this through an embedded coaching and development program referred to as Q Comp, which serves as the primary way our staff connect, reflect, and share targeted strategies to best support our teachers and thus also our students. All licensed teachers participate in weekly or biweekly coaching sessions, focused on observations and feedback or professional review and dialogue.

Teachers also meet in a variety of ways to continue their professional learning. They have weekly grade level or team meetings during their common planning time, monthly PLCs to focus on student data, or monthly Choice Seminars where staff members present on an area of expertise or new learning from an outside conference to bring increased knowledge to the rest of the staff.

Building administrators also rotate with peer coaches to conduct short walk-through observations to provide in the moment feedback and celebrations. They also conduct formal observations in the spring and ask staff to share what has been the primary focus for them and their coach this year. This closes the loop and ties together the professional learning and growth.

We use Google Chat for staff to quickly request support in a variety of situations. When students are dysregulated and need assistance from a school counselor, need help refocusing with our behavioral specialist, or need intervention from an administrator, we utilize a school-wide chat group to connect. We create other groups for teachers to request quick breaks when needed or to ask questions of their colleagues. These communication add-ons have helped to bolster further the strong professional culture.

The pandemic shifted the needs for professional learning. We tailored workshops to meet these needs, from additional technology training, to wellness activities, to calendar changes. We shifted learning models several times as the viral activity in our local community spiked and subsided. During each shift, we provided planning days for staff to prepare for the next phase as well as they could.

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

At Seven Hills the leadership, including the school board, the executive director, the school principals and assistant principals have all sought to cultivate our own brand of a democratic classicist school model. We are all citizens of a wider community that have come together in this micro community to learn, grow, explore, create, and inspire. We each have unique and important roles to play in that community to make it highly successful and high functioning. To that end, innovation and adaptation are critical, especially the last

two years, and equally essential is a capacity to see and develop the leadership potential in others.

Students are welcomed each morning at the doors by teachers, educational assistants, or school administrators. We laugh and smile and take in the new beauty of the day. We inquire about our students and model for them kind and honorable ways to share in the joy of human interactions. Teachers are asked to start the day with a morning meeting to build on the connections and citizenship of the classroom. And when the challenges of being a strong citizen become too much for a student the Principal, Assistant Principal, and School Counselors are there to respond through the Student Support Team (SST) chat.

The Principal and Assistant Principal run the VIPs that reinforce the positive behavior systems in place and recognize students for their role in continuing to build our culture. Both of these school leaders can also be found in the classroom when building subs are hard to come by, guiding students through new questions and new discoveries, and modeling what it means to be a lifelong learner. In a Democratic Classicist education model, relationships are central and everyone is expected to participate fully and joyfully and in the learning process.

These building leaders also regularly join grade level team, Q Comp leadership team, or Staff Council meetings to stay abreast of the challenges or successes of the respective groups. Through these meetings, they can help ensure that coaching sessions remain productive, that PLCs remain data focused, the data analysis meetings can be reflective and targeted, and that professional development remains meaningful and relevant. The Q Comp Coordinator(s) meets with school leadership each summer as part of the comprehensive needs assessment to ensure school-wide student goals and professional development targets are reflective of the school needs and program initiatives.

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

Much of our practice and reflection on culturally responsive teaching has come from the driving force of our Equity Team, which was created following a year-long professional development initiative working with equity consultants several years ago. The Equity Team has since taken a lead role in facilitating reflective conversations and training via bimonthly sessions at our all staff meetings and as part of fall workshops. The topics have ranged from race and gender, to implicit bias and white privilege, to religion and culture, and how to integrate approaches and methods into culturally-responsive teaching and learning.

For example, the Equity Team led a name activity with staff that asked everyone to share about where their name comes from, what significance does it have, and what if anything is the cultural significance with your family. The activity was so well received that all classrooms continue to use it every year now as a back to school name activity.

Reflection from these conversations have led teachers to request funds to add new literature to their classroom libraries. They have been looking for texts that are more representative of our classroom cultures. This includes adding picture books and beginning chapter books with main characters from a variety of cultures.

During the racial uprising in our local community after George Floyd's death, we engaged our students in open and voluntary conversations. Some students engaged or reiterated what the conversations were like in their home, others were processing the trauma at deeply personal levels, and still others were so far removed as to not have much context.

Following these events, we sought out more reflection regarding our policies, practices, and programs with racial equity in mind. We subsequently sought out another year-long partnership with Minnesota Education Equity Partnership to help us engage in that work over the past year. They have led sessions with the Equity Team, the staff, the school board, and administrators. We continue to build on this process to infuse our programs and our instruction with equity in mind.

We also continue to engage with our families on racial equity, hosting information and school board sessions that create safe, brave occasions for listening and conversation. In connection with our Democratic NBRS 2022

Classicist model, we presented on the progress of our equity work to families and followed this with a Socratic seminar where community members were invited to participate in structured reflection and deeper discussion.

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

---

At Seven Hills, our Quality Compensation Program (Q-Comp) provides instructional coaching, professional development, leadership opportunities, and quality support for our teaching staff. This program has been vital to our school's success. Our Q Comp team is led by coordinators and licensed teaching staff who are instructional coaches. Teachers apply to be instructional coaches, are interviewed, and selected by a committee of coaches from the program, receiving a stipend for their efforts.

Instructional coaches are paired with teaching staff in the building and coach them throughout the year. Teachers are placed in new or veteran staff categories and are provided an adequate amount of support and coaching as needed. Informal and formal observations in classrooms take place with high frequency, especially for new staff. Action steps are reviewed with coaches before observations take place and feedback sessions occur afterwards. CEU credits are earned for attending and participating in PLC meetings, and teachers receive performance pay for meeting all program goals and requirements.

Our school sets a school-wide academic goal with the Minnesota Department of Education for reading or math in the beginning of the year that is directly tied to our MCA results in the spring. Professional development and curriculum support is embedded into our PLC meetings throughout the year to help us reach our school wide goal. Teachers also set individual classroom goals to be met by the end of the school year. This goal is worked on with their instructional coach throughout the year and specific action steps are written to help the teacher attain their goal.

PLCs take place school wide twice a month and include: choice seminar offerings that are teacher-led; Interim Assessment prediction and analysis meetings; data collection and deep dive sessions; and preparation for MCA assessments. The Q Comp team organizes and plans all PLC sessions. All staff, including our Educational Assistants attend PLC meetings. Licensed teachers are encouraged to attend conferences and other professional development outside of school and lead presentations on their topics when they return.

Our Q Comp program has been especially valuable for new staff to the building. Veteran instructional coaches are paired with new staff to help acclimate them to building-wide language and teaching strategies such as Teach Like a Champion strategies, ENVoY strategies, and our common language with using CARES. The relationship between the instructional coach and teacher is integral to our school wide mindset of being lifelong learners.