

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Orchard Park High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4040 Baker Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Orchard Park State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 14127-2052

County New York

Telephone (716) 209-6242 Fax (716) 209-6451

Web site/URL https://www.opschools.org E-mail jwolf@opschools.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* Mr. David Lilleck E-mail dlilleck@opschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Orchard Park Central School District Tel. (716) 209-6280

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 Dr. Christine Gray Tinnesz
(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	165	200	365
10	166	184	350
11	160	167	327
12 or higher	175	169	344
Total Students	666	720	1386

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.3 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 2.3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % White
 - 1.3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 3%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	46
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	1398
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

French, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, Macedonian, Creoles & Pidgins, Punjabi

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %

Total number students who qualify: 178

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 20 %
277 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>10</u> Autism | <u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>14</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>76</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>155</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>4</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 14
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	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	119
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

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 12:1

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	97%	96%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	98%	98%	97%	97%	97%

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	366
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	74%
Enrolled in a community college	15%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	10%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
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. 2016

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

The Orchard Park Central School District, in partnership with families and community, will prepare our students to achieve their fullest potential Develop critical thinking, creativity, and character; become healthy, lifelong learners; and be responsible and contributing members of an ever-changing and global society. We will give our students the vision to reach for the stars, the skills and fortitude to climb the ladder, and the wisdom to appreciate the beauty of the journey.

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

<https://www.opschools.org/Page/251>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Orchard Park is an outer ring suburb 15 miles southeast of Buffalo, NY. With a population of approximately 30,000 residents, Orchard Park is one of the "Southtowns" of Erie County and is best known as the site of Highmark Stadium, home of the National Football League's Buffalo Bills. Founded by Quaker settlers in 1803, Orchard Park was a stop on the Underground Railroad, as fugitive slaves stopped over at Quaker-run homes on their way north to Black Rock in Buffalo and then on to Canada. The Orchard Park High School mascot "The Quaker" is derived from these early settlers.

Orchard Park High School serves approximately 1400 students in grades 9-12. The school, led by the high school principal, is organized into three houses of approximately 460 students in grades 9-12. Each house is headed by a house principal with two counselors, one social worker, one secretary, and approximately 43 teachers in the following content areas: House I: Art, Business, Music, Special Education, and Physical Education/Health; House II: Earth Science, Mathematics, Library, and Social Studies; House III: Biology, Chemistry, English, Physics, Languages Other Than English (LOTE), and Technology Education.

Somewhat unique to Orchard Park High School, the "House" system is designed to make a large school, from both a physical plant and a student population perspective, feel smaller and more personal. Each student is assigned a physical homeroom and homeroom teacher that remains the same for their entire high school career. This provides an opportunity for our students and families to have several consistent contacts in our building. Also, in the interest of consistency and familiarity, families remain in the same House as younger siblings enter our high school.

Orchard Park High School is a learning community committed to a strong tradition of academic excellence. OPHS has historically ranked in the top 10 schools for academic excellence, according to Buffalo's Business First publication, which annually ranks over 130 high schools in the 8 counties of Western New York, using the NYS Regents performance, AP scores, and graduation rates. Every day the principals, teachers, and staff believe that maintaining this excellence stems from the practice of educating the whole student. By emphasizing intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development, each child can achieve their fullest potential.

Since our previous Blue Ribbon school recognition, we have successfully implemented a districtwide 1:1 technology device initiative. Each student now has a district-provided Chromebook. With this shift, our teachers have increased technology integration in their daily lessons and created opportunities for students to engage with dynamic web-based tools. With this 1:1 device implementation, we were uniquely positioned to effectively respond to the challenges of the pandemic. Teachers were motivated to learn new technology tools and expand their understanding of highly effective instruction in hybrid and remote learning environments. This year, as we return to a more traditional academic model, everyone has embraced what they have learned during the pandemic and incorporated these new strategies into their instructional practices.

Critical to the success of Orchard Park High School is parent and community engagement. We are fortunate to have parents who seek participation in school shared decision making (SDM) bodies such as; Building Effectiveness Team (BET), Instructional Leaders Council (ILC), and our student governing body Students, Teachers, Administrators, and Parents Committee (STAP-Comm). This level of engagement allows parents and community members to provide input at the decision-making level, generating a true vested interest in our school. Our school is also fortunate to have an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The PTO has a long-established tradition of engaging families by providing volunteer support at many of our school social events and in-school activities. The Orchard Park Special Education Parent Teacher Student Association (OPSESPTA) is a parent-teacher organization that specializes in equity for students, more specifically those with special needs. One of the main goals of the association is to bring special education programming into OPHS, as opposed to outsourcing it. The Foundation for Academic Excellence, an outside group of community members who support public education, provides students with academic programming, field trips, and technology equipment.

Orchard Park High School administration, teachers, and staff believe we must prepare our students to become responsible contributing members of an ever-changing and global society. In doing so, building strong character in the school setting is paramount. OPHS was fortunate to be recognized as Blue Ribbon School in 2016. That distinction has been a point of pride for our school and our entire community. It serves as an affirmation of our collective efforts to provide our students with the best possible preparation for their future careers and endeavors. Being a 2016 Blue Ribbon School has also reinforced our school and community as a highly regarded “destination district” for families relocating to the Western New York region. Likewise, we continue to attract top candidates for our teaching vacancies. We are excited at the possibility of being named as an exemplary high-performing school again in 2022 and are honored by the invitation to complete the application process.

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:

Orchard Park High School is dedicated to effective teaching and successful learning for all students. We believe our curriculum encourages creativity, individuality, problem-solving, and confidence which enables people to think, speak and work together. Our curriculum is an evolving document. Our teachers have shown, as the New York State curricula are updated and we shift towards the Next Generation Learning Standards (NGLS), that they are willing and eager to adapt their instruction to meet the standards and the needs of our students.

Each core department at OPHS has developed formative and summative assessments that enable teachers to monitor students' progress towards learning goals and to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction. Teachers realize the value of formative assessments by reflecting on this data together, diagnosing problems, and adjusting teaching practices where gaps in learning have been identified. Results from summative assessments in the form of department-developed finals, NYS Regents exams, and Advanced Placement exams provide indicators of students' overall progress towards learning outcome standards and important data for evaluating the effectiveness of a program. As part of this reflection, teachers review historical data stored from previous administrations of an assessment to develop a broader perspective on the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction. Examining historical data enables faculty to determine trends in learning outcomes across time and, as a result, understand the significance of the current performance results in this broader context.

Orchard Park High School's program of studies is comprehensive in nature with extensive education facilities available to serve those programs. The academic courses cover a wide variety of offerings in advanced placement, college preparatory, preparatory courses for two-year and technical schools as well as small group remediation as needed. Our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are enhanced by a wide variety of one- and two-year courses at separate CTE centers serving juniors and seniors.

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

The English program aims, in its four-year sequence, to cultivate interest and competence in the language, literature, written communication, and oral communication. The program is intended to assure steady growth in the student's ability to write and speak with clarity; read with understanding, appreciation, and insight; and think critically. English 9,10,11 include frequent practice in writing and speaking, the attentive study of selected books, and close attention to problems in the nature and use of the language. Increased command of vocabulary, spelling, usage, and punctuation are a continuing concern in all English classes. The 12th-grade elective program, which is also available to 11th graders, is designed to meet student interests and needs at various levels. The English Department provides summer reading lists for all students, and every elective has a course-specific required reading assignment that must be completed before the class begins. The 9-12 program offers a wide range of required and optional texts at each grade level and for each course. This range of texts is designed to reflect the diverse interest and needs of our population. Texts are continually evaluated and adjustments are made annually to the resources used in our classes.

The English program is designed with integrated Tier I, II, and III interventions, as well as English Language Learner, supports to serve students of all ability levels. English department includes co-taught and self-contained classes throughout the four-year continuum at the Tier I level as well as grade-level ELA labs at the Tier II level. Small groups of students work on improving foundational skills in ELA Labs with established entrance and exit criteria developed for each student. Reading Lab and ELL services at the Tier III level allow for individualized education with student-specific goals and plans developed while students are still engaged in the standard four-year English program. Like ELA Labs entrance and exit criteria for Tier III interventions have been established and implemented with fidelity.

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

The high school mathematics program will prepare students with varying needs and abilities to think and reason logically. The program will provide opportunities for students to continue their study of mathematics through all four years of high school. Students should develop an understanding of the real number system, improve and sharpen quantitative reasoning and computational skills, gain an understanding of the nature of mathematical proofs and techniques of critical thinking, and attain an appreciation of the role of mathematics in today's world. The mathematics program offers a comprehensive range of courses for students of all levels and abilities and can further a student's interests with elective course offerings. As mentioned in part 1a, the mathematics department uses a laser focus when it comes to data-driven instruction. Department members meet regularly by course to review student progress, share best practices, and develop additional assessments. Evaluating even the smallest lesson plan detail helps the department reflect on providing clear and concise instruction. This process has proven to be beneficial for both our students and our teachers. Our mathematics program also works in a cross-curricular fashion with our technology department offering several computer programming courses. These opportunities, along with various STEM activities and clubs pique the interests of students, especially those who are considering a career in a mathematical field. Members of the mathematics department have been very active in researching software programs to be used as additional resources for students, providing enhancements to the daily classroom instruction. Students have appreciated the additional reinforcement and practice that these software programs can provide in a tailor-made individualized manner. By continually using department meeting time to examine the current curriculum content and instructional methodology, the mathematics department is actively working on the shift into the Next Generation Learning Standards for mathematics. These mathematics standards are designed to support student access to the knowledge and understanding of the mathematical concepts that are necessary to function in a world dependent upon the application of mathematics. These standards reinforce the work that we have been undertaking for several years in providing real-world applications and encouraging creative problem-solving in the area of mathematics. We believe that it is our charge to instill in our students the understanding that solutions can be innovative and not merely lock step computations.

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

The science program has been designed to provide a variety of courses at various levels of difficulty in order to give all students the opportunity to increase their understanding and appreciation of the natural world. They will study the methods of scientific inquiry and learn the fundamental skills and attitudes which scientific study requires. All science courses include class discussion, demonstrations, and laboratory work. Depending on the course, the laboratory work could be a separate class or embedded into the class itself. The laboratory work reinforces the basic factual material discussed during class lecture periods and fosters the development of students' problem-solving skills. When the lab is a separate class, the Science department ensures that the classroom content and lab experiences align. This structure helps students maximize the connection of content and application during their lab experience. Students are also encouraged to explore their own science interests through individual and group studies, experimentation, reference, and conference work. The science department has worked closely with data experts from our district office on data analysis of local and NYS Regents assessments to interpret student results and adjust instructional practices accordingly. They work diligently on this self-reflection as a department at the mid-year and end-of-year marks, but many individuals have also evaluated locally developed assessments, such as unit tests, with similar scrutiny.

The range of courses offered in the science department addresses student needs from the self-contained level all the way through the AP level in each major content area (Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics). Furthermore, a wide range of half-year science electives is available for students, typically students in junior and senior years, in areas of specialization such as anatomy, ecology, genetics, astronomy, and natural disasters. The department has begun the transition to implementing the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). As part of this NGSS implementation, the department has been experimenting with opportunities where more project-based learning takes place inside the traditional "lecture" classroom in addition to the laboratory setting.

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

The Social Studies department of Orchard Park High School seeks to develop an awareness of individual worth and a spirit of cooperation within the larger society. The teaching of facts and skills are important, but far more so are the values learned from working with people, their monuments, ideas, mistakes, and successes. The social studies curriculum ties together all facets of learning by teaching the understanding of history as the collective memory of the human race. Social studies programs in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades give the students a foundation in geography, global history, and American studies. The 12th-grade program allows students to concentrate on government and economics. An important facet of our government courses is student participation. Students meet this requirement in several different ways including attending public meetings of local government agencies, participating in school and local government committees, volunteering at elected officials' offices, and other pre-approved activities. At each grade level, students develop their skills in analyzing information, leveraging prior learning, and developing a thoughtful position on a particular topic. The goal is to teach students to be active global citizens who think critically and act responsibly and with purpose. Teachers use a wide range of pedagogical and teaching tools including project and problem-based learning, differentiated instruction to meet the needs of each learner, cooperative learning, student choice, and performance-based assessment in addition to traditional formative assessments. Our teachers and students continue to use Google Classroom and other technology they became accustomed to during the pandemic in conjunction with more traditional instructional techniques. Teachers also assess in multiple ways and rely on students demonstrating what they know in many more ways than just traditional tests as well. In addition to the curriculum, the high school also encourages students to volunteer in the community. Students who volunteer and meet the criteria are eligible to receive the Humanitarian Distinction Award. Students also have the opportunity to become involved in clubs and organizations that are rooted in social studies, such as our student government, mock trial, and model united nations clubs to name a few.

1f. For secondary schools:

Orchard Park High School offers numerous Advanced/Honors courses. These courses provide students with a more rigorous curriculum. Students must maintain an average that reflects their ability, a strong work ethic, and a desire to learn. Advanced Placement courses are approved by the College Entrance Examination Board. Advanced Placement courses are for the superior college-bound student. Teachers follow the advanced placement syllabus. Many colleges grant credit as a result of success on the AP examination. OPHS also has articulation agreements with SUNY Erie that allows for our students to receive college credit for completing several of our courses. The following courses may receive college credit: Algebraic Techniques and Statistical Modeling, Accounting Principles I, Banking and Credit with Personal Finance, Calculus, Computer-Aided Drawing (CAD), College Success Skills, College Statistics, Construction Technology, iComp II, Photography I combined with Digital Imagery, Pre-Calculus, Technical Drawing combined with Civil Engineering and Architecture.

Students may also choose to attend one of several regional Career and Technical Education (CTE) vocational schools for part of their academic day to gain additional training in over 40 different occupations. OPHS has a rich tradition of students accessing these programs and preparing themselves to enter the world of work immediately following graduation.

In addition to coursework, Orchard Park High School prepares students for their future through internships. The Career Exploration Internship Program (CEIP) offers high school students valuable career experience as they work directly in the profession of their choice. The internship doesn't stop at just applying classroom skills in a work environment. It also exposes the student to a broad view of work experiences and situations, which could be expected if the student were to pursue a career in that field. The student is also exposed to a broad array of soft, workplace skills: critical thinking, teamwork, decorum, ethics, creativity, time management, ingenuity, honesty, problem-solving, comportment, and a solid understanding of the importance of excellent written and oral communications skills. This combination of benefits provides a valuable foundation for any career the student chooses to pursue in the future.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Access to the courses and programs in each of the areas detailed in this section is available to all students in grades 9-12. These classes meet daily for either 1 semester or for the full year depending on the course.

Visual Arts & Music

Visual images saturate contemporary society and influence the way you think and feel. The art department trains students to see beyond the images that bombard your consciousness every day. In this way, students can nurture their imagination and creativity while developing critical thinking skills that allow them to make sensitive and informed decisions about their life. Each course includes an exploration of aesthetics, history, and criticism that illustrate and clarify what you are creating. Our music program provides the opportunity for students to acquire knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the artistic, cultural and intellectual accomplishments of civilization. Students have opportunities to develop skills that will allow them to express personal and artistic talents. In addition to the band, orchestra, and chorus performance courses, OPHS is proud to offer numerous theory-based and music appreciation courses from introductory through the Advanced Placement level. There is a long tradition of our music students enrolling in music education programs and pursuing careers in teaching music.

PE and Health

The mission of the OPHS Physical and Health Education program is to provide all students with the knowledge, skills, and desire to maintain a healthy, active lifestyle. Our curriculum follows required physical education mandates for 9-12, including skill-based activities as well as emotional, mental, and nutritional health, CPR/First Aid for students, and an American Red Cross certified Lifeguarding course. This course trains and certifies students to work as lifeguards at pools and waterparks.

World Languages

The world languages program is designed to aid the student in developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the target language in order to express oneself adequately in the foreign language and understand the language when it is spoken or written. We offer a diverse program including Advanced Placement level courses through cultural immersion level. All modern language courses include intense practice in listening, pronunciation as it affects meaning, vocabulary development, accurate use of linguistic structures and forms, and exercises in reading and writing. The long-range objectives of the program are to broaden the student's outlook on life, society, and the humanities, and to equip the student with skills that can be used in business, higher education, and the diplomatic and military fields.

STEM & Technology

The STEM curriculum is a collaborative effort created by the Science, Technology Education, and Mathematics departments, and is supported by practicing professionals in the field. Courses in these subject areas have been designed specifically in order to advance the study of engineering. The technology education curriculum makes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) relevant for students by engaging in hands-on activities, and real-world projects. Students understand how the skills they are learning in the classroom can be applied in everyday life. Project-based instructional strategies encourage teamwork, logical thinking, leadership, problem-solving, time management, data collection, research, multimedia communication, and public speaking. This style of learning engages students and adds relevance and rigor to the learning process. The culmination of these experiences informs our students about college and career decisions. To help with career decisions and planning, courses are offered in a variety of areas including materials processing, energy and transportation, engineering, communications, and computers.

Business/Marketing & National Academy of Finance Program

The Business/Marketing Department offers students the opportunity to explore and prepare for business-related careers. Whether they are interested in an entry-level job or planning to attend college, the courses we offer lay the foundation. Several courses may allow you to earn college credit. Students also have the opportunity to participate in the nationally renowned Academy of Finance. Students enrolled in this program will acquire the business skills, concepts, and knowledge that are needed in the world of business. Students participate in a variety of hands-on learning activities such as operating a student-run credit union branch, field trips, classroom speakers, paid internships, and college credit courses.

Library

The library program supports the curriculum and prepares students by encouraging critical thinking, creative expression, and independent investigation. In our library, students are able to access information easily and in a variety of formats. OPHS has a Library Home Page from which students can search for books, access online databases, and other helpful research links. School librarians are ready to assist students and staff in locating resources, provide materials for research projects, and teach information literacy skills.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

We believe that students can achieve high standards if they understand what is expected and have the tools, resources, and support to meet them. On a daily basis, our teachers use a balance of best practices along with innovative, responsive instructional methods. Meeting the needs of diverse learners, including English Language Learners (ELL) and socio-economically disadvantaged, may require adjusting the expectations. Through Differentiated Instruction, teachers can change the mode, product, or process of learning to meet the needs of individual learners. This instructional method is closely related to the multiple intelligence theory, which understands that not all learners learn in the same amount of time or in the same way. The global pandemic enhanced the need for teachers to become increasingly innovative in their instructional delivery through remote and hybrid learning. With the transition to full-time in-person learning for this year, many of those new methods have remained common for our students. Understanding that in-person learning with a teacher is the most beneficial model, the use of one-to-one devices and software has been embraced as a valuable tool. Undeniably, the pandemic has caused students to develop learning gaps. Our teaching staff is keenly aware of diagnosing and remediating the various gaps that individual students may need to overcome. These gaps are assessed and addressed on a daily basis.

Literacy interventions are available for students in grades 9-12. ELA and Reading labs are for students experiencing difficulty with reading and writing skills. The goals of the lab are to enhance writing flexibility and to help the student meet the requirements of the English language arts standards, as well as the reading and writing expectations of content area classes. Generating topics, interpreting essay assignments, drafting, revising, conferencing, and editing for spelling, structural accuracy, and grammatical accuracy are stressed. Reading Lab is for students experiencing difficulty with reading. The primary goal is to raise students' reading competency to a level that will enable them to experience success in their academic subjects and fulfill the requirements. Remedial instruction is provided in the areas of listening and reading to acquire information and reading to interpret, analyze and critique the text. Word-attack skills, vocabulary knowledge, and study strategies are also stressed.

Numeracy interventions include AIS for algebra and geometry for students experiencing difficulty with math skills. The goal of AIS is to hone in on the foundational skills needed to be successful on the algebra and geometry NYS standards. Although the AIS course does not follow along with the specific algebra or geometry curriculum, the AIS teacher and classroom teachers communicate to ensure students' skill deficits are addressed throughout the course of the year.

In addition to the aforementioned academic interventions, OPHS has several support labs for struggling students. Loosely based on numeracy and literacy difficulty, these structured labs are used to help focus students on course-specific needs. Staff meets with students daily, or every other day, for a period to provide

clarification, reteach topics, and provide organizational support. Similarly, we provide general student support labs that focus on organizational skills, schoolwork support, and effective test-taking strategies. This year we instituted a special targeted program for students facing extreme challenges with academic motivation coupled with a problematic home life. We provide intense daily academic, time management, and social work support for two periods daily for this small group of students. A goal of this program is to foster a sense of belonging, support academic success and make healthy choices.

Other areas of support include National Honor Society tutoring and after-school support. Our National Honor Society offers a peer-to-peer tutoring program. Students are paired based on grade level and content area needs. This tutoring can take place during the school day or after school. Students also have access to their teachers after school every day for content-specific remediation. Additionally, teachers organize study sessions and test preparation on weekends and evenings prior to AP and NYS Regents exams in an effort best prepare students.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

As a high school, we generally do not identify students as being “above grade level” as a designation. Our philosophy is to promote access for all students to the extensive Honors/Advanced/Advanced Placement course that we offer. These courses are available at every grade level in each of the core academic areas and in many of the elective areas. Students are encouraged to enroll in these courses if they wish to push themselves beyond the curriculum taught at the NYS Regents level. Students schedule their course load based on their academic focus. For example, many students choose to explore the humanities at a deeper level through English and Social Studies courses. Others may choose STEM-related courses as their focus. Students' ability to explore a variety of courses in high school is important developmentally as this provides them an essential tool in identifying what they might study in college or what career field they want to work towards. Many of these courses provide applied learning experiences for students that enable students to see the application of the learning objectives in a real-world setting. Importantly, in all subject areas, teachers' practice focuses on mastery learning through guided practice and high expectations. Focusing on mastery learning through both teaching practice and rigorous formative and summative assessments helps to ensure that students graduate with the necessary skills to be successful in a college or career setting. Colleges and businesses expect students to have strong critical thinking, problem-solving, reading, writing, and technical literacy skills upon their enrollment or hire. The breadth of our curriculum, along with the focus on mastery learning and high expectations, helps to ensure our students are prepared to realize their college and career goals. Thoughtfully designed to complement our academic curriculum, our extracurricular clubs are an extension of the learning at OPHS. Each of our clubs seeks to bring real-world applications and experiences to our students through guest speakers, field trip experiences, and competitions. One example of many is our Medical Interest club. Students in this club explore different careers in the medical field while visiting local hospitals and doctors. These activities are vital to developing the whole student and seeing firsthand how the knowledge and skills learned in class come to life in our community and world.

3c. Special education:

Our philosophy of Special Education embraces a multi-disciplinary approach in which the student's cognitive, social/emotional, physical, and management needs are addressed through parent-professional partnerships. We initiate ongoing, collaborative communication between family and the educational community to ensure students are provided with appropriate programming to meet their needs in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The district's multidisciplinary teams consist of Committees on Special Education (CSE), Instructional Support Team (IST), and Special Education Leadership Council, and include administrators, teachers, health professionals, related service providers, and parents as appropriate. Through the multidisciplinary approach, an individualized education plan (IEP) is written based on a student's needs. A program based on the IEP is developed, implemented, and supported collaboratively. Our special education students receive a varied level of service designed to meet their daily learning and or physical challenges. OPHS has an extensive list of co-taught classes that allow for special education students to receive their instruction in a mainstream setting. For students requiring a more intensive program, we offer smaller special class programs in the core academic areas. All of the students in these programs are diploma access students. We provide additional modifications, and academic and management supports, as

appropriate, to help facilitate student success. Many of our special education students work toward Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) certification by embarking on specific coursework and completing vocational work experiences to enhance their post-graduation employability. OPHS has a staff member whose time is dedicated to serving as the Transition Specialist. This person facilitates all of the CDOS programming and has developed connections with local employers in obtaining job shadows, internships, and employment opportunities for our students.

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

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

OPHS prides itself in the opportunities it provides students in and out of the classroom.

During COVID, engagement was definitely a concern, but OP High School provided many opportunities to make sure that our students were able to stay engaged in school and their classes. While in remote instruction, teachers and staff delivered supplies and Chromebooks to all of our students. We supplied hot spots to families that lacked internet connectivity. Our Technology department created tech support and resources for teachers to aid in online learning. They also had a student and parent tech support hotline so families could get any issue fixed as quickly as possible. Our district, as a whole, knew that the device was our lifeline to our students and placed a priority on keeping our families connected through technology.

Outside the classroom, we have opportunities for students in over 50 clubs and activities including our student government. Our clubs are well attended by students and offer a variety of interests. Many of our clubs also participate in service activities to help our local and global communities. Some of our clubs include Model UN, OP Educational Outreach (service club), Masterminds, Cancer Awareness, Gay-Straight Alliance, DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America), Art Club, Math/Physics Club, National Honor Society, International Club, Quaker Marching Band and OP IMPACT (school culture club).

We also provide a variety of intramural and competitive athletic opportunities. Our athletic program focuses on the whole student providing opportunities and experience to not only become a better athlete but also a more rounded individual and leader on and off the field. Our teams have had great success over the years and have earned many local, regional, and NYS championships. Our goal is to provide an experience that enhances and promotes a healthy and active lifestyle for the future.

In addition to athletics, Orchard Park has a long tradition of providing excellent performances in our Drama and Musical programs. Our students are always excited to be a part of the performances and we never seem to lack talent on stage and off stage with our behind-the-scenes Stage Crew. Our performances always include live music from our orchestra and band students which always adds a more personal touch to the show while providing an opportunity for more students to get involved.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Orchard Park High School is committed to continuing positive relationships with our students, their families, and the community that we serve. We recognize that we need to include more than just our teachers and staff to support and develop the youth in our schools and that we need a working partnership with our families and community members.

Prior to the first day of school, Orchard Park High school offers a new student orientation for any 9th grader or transfer student. The students and their families have an opportunity to meet some of our staff, walk their daily schedule, get a tour of the school and see what types of clubs and activities we have to offer during an activity fair. Parents/guardians will attend our “Keeping Kids Safe” presentation in regards to alcohol and drug awareness. We also have an opportunity on two separate occasions for parents/guardians to attend an “Open House” to meet each of their child’s teachers. In addition to those opportunities, this year our District has coordinated an online “Parent Information Series”. This annual offering includes speakers, documentaries, and workshops to help equip our parents with more knowledge, tools, and resources to navigate the challenges of raising children today. The topics from this series range from mental health, to digital citizenship, to the legalization of marijuana.

Orchard Park High School also has a great relationship with its community, businesses, and business leaders. Our school has a partnership with the Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce which provides scholarship opportunities, internships, and participates in our Advisory Board for our Academy of Finance. With this partnership, we have created over 150 relationships with different businesses in our community

that have provided internships for our students over the past years. These local businesses and business leaders have come into our school to present to our students, run workshops, and have been assigned students to mentor. We also have a student-run Credit union located in our school called the Quaker Vault which is affiliated with one of our local credit unions. Each year, 70-80 of our students are provided internships by our local businesses.

In addition to internships, Orchard Park High School students, through a concurrent enrollment agreement with local colleges, are able to gain college credit through courses taken in our school in our Business and Math departments.

There are also multiple parent-run organizations that have been established to support Orchard Park High School and our students. These groups include our Alumni Association, Athletics Boosters, Quaker Marching Band Boosters, the PTO, Orchard Park Special Education Parent Teacher Students Association (OPSEPTSA), and the Orchard Park Foundation for Academic Excellence. Our families are committed to helping their children in all aspects of high school even beyond academics.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Orchard Park High School promotes a positive professional culture through our practice of listening to our faculty and staff and providing appropriate staff development based on their voiced requests. We also provide staff development that is consistent with our Mission and strategic plan.

During our transition to remote and hybrid learning, a positive professional culture was critical to creating a positive learning experience for our students. This was done through a variety of means, most centered on technology. Our technology coaches created “Tech Flix” which was a series of videos that provided our teachers with detailed instructions on the nuances of multiple platforms. These videos helped provide teachers with the tools to 1) Engage and communicate with students and their families, 2) Optimize the capabilities of online meetings, and 3) Learn and utilize different educational platforms to enhance the learning experience. There were no restrictions put on the staff as to how many in-service hours they could accumulate to make everyone feel best prepared for the changes.

Our Administration stayed in close contact with our building and department leaders. In turn, these leaders kept in close contact with their “pods” and departments. Department leaders met frequently with their departments to push out information, make connections, and do check-ins when necessary. Union leadership created “pods” of teachers for cross-curricular connections. Because of its success, the “pod” concept has continued and is planned to continue as we move out of the pandemic.

A vital component of the Orchard Park Professional Development Plan remains to be the well-established Mentoring Program. The goal of the mentoring program in the district is to improve the quality of education through the collegial interaction of the entire staff – administrators, instructional leaders, classroom teachers, counselors, and support staff. Mentoring in our school district encourages excellence in the instructional program through good teaching, effective administrative leadership, and supervision and support of students through school-related personnel.

4. School Leadership:

Orchard Park High School prides itself on our leadership model which is somewhat unique to the WNY area and has proven to be very effective for many years. There are different levels and facets to our overall leadership model that fosters productive collaboration between administration and teachers. The leadership team at Orchard Park High School consists of the Principal, three House Principals, 13 teacher Instructional Leaders, a support staff representative, a community business representative, and two-parent representatives. These teacher leaders are viewed as curricular specialists and receive targeted staff development in their curricular areas of expertise.

Each of the three floors at OPHS is considered a “House” and each house office has a House Principal, two counselors, a social worker, and a House secretary. Teachers (departments) and students are divided into

each house and the House Principal supervises those teachers and students. The House Principal works closely with their house Instructional Leaders on curriculum changes, master schedule recommendations, and budgeting for their departments. Collectively, the principal and the house principals work collaboratively on major tasks in the building such as the master schedule, exam schedule, and the building budget. The goal of this leadership structure is to build and maintain a team that is effective and efficient in order to maintain high levels of consistency in managing all aspects of our building.

Coupled with the building administration and instructional leaders we have other shared decision-making teams (SDMT) that include leadership from our community, parents, and students. STAP Comm is an SDMT that includes all of our student government, teachers, administration, and parents where students run a monthly formal meeting (using Robert's Rules of Order). This meeting allows for information sharing and also provides an opportunity for administrators, teachers, parents, and students to bring up issues that, many times, will be added to future agenda items to be addressed and decided on collectively. There is also a Building Effectiveness team (BET) that includes the Principal, House Principals, elected members of the Teacher Association, elected members of the School-Related Professional Staff Association, parents, and a business community member. BET meets in regards to any contractual issues or potential issues to ensure the smooth operation of our building and facilities.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Orchard Park High School and the District as a whole have begun incorporating the DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) tenets into all of our buildings. DEI is a central component of our district's strategic plan and we are committed to ensuring a safe and positive learning environment for all of our students.

Our administrative team meets with student leadership on a monthly basis to talk about current and relevant issues in our school that will be addressed at the monthly STAP Comm (Student, Teachers, Administration, and Parents Committee) meeting. Students are provided a voice at these meetings and are able to present any of their concerns. Depending on the concerns, we have coordinated "Town Hall" style meetings with students to gain student perspective, and also develop ideas for changes/fixes for the concern. OPHS has multiple opportunities and modalities for students to be heard. For example, there is an online anonymous drop box for students to report bullying or other "see something, say something" incidents. We address all of the reports appropriately in our building.

In the past couple of years, we have created numerous gender-neutral bathrooms to provide a safe space for all of our students to feel comfortable. Some of the changes we have made with our gender-neutral bathrooms have come from student input in our STAP Comm meetings, general concerns from our student leadership meetings, and from our Gay-Straight Alliance Club. Based on students' concerns and suggestions, we have added lockers to one of our gender-neutral bathrooms by our gymnasium to provide a locker room space for all students to feel comfortable.

Moving forward with DEI, we will be using our data from our marginalized populations and determine gaps in equity and from that data, develop a plan to decrease any gaps that we are observing. We are currently working with experts in our area to enhance our training about DEI and how best to further incorporate it into our daily practices throughout all of the experiences and activities we offer at our school.

Orchard Park Central School District has long been committed to bullying prevention by training district staff in the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This program is a research-based, schoolwide "systems change" program that has been used successfully in schools nationally and internationally. A major component of the Olweus program is the monthly class meetings which allow our students and teachers to communicate about character education issues in an effort to create a culture of acceptance and tolerance of others. OPHS has served as a model for other high schools adopting Olweus. This program includes monthly meetings with students in an extended homeroom period where topics like acceptance, mindfulness, social connections, kindness, and gratitude are addressed.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Technology is an integral part of Orchard Park High School. Since our last Blue Ribbon School application, we have moved to 1:1 devices, with each student receiving a Chromebook in grade 9. Each student is able to keep that device, without interruption until they graduate. This practice has become essential over the past two years in both our remote and hybrid learning environments. We also provide graphing calculators to all the students that will need them for their math classes. Similar to Chromebooks, students are able to keep the calculators until they complete their math sequence.

In some of our more specialized courses, we have higher levels of technology as well. Our award-winning technology department, art department, business, and music departments each utilize technology in different ways that help develop our students in those areas. Some of the equipment students have available to them are laser cutters, three-dimensional printers, and vinyl cutting machines. Some of the other units of study include aeronautics, where students build and fly model airplanes, microcontroller projects, and building information modeling (BIM) for our engineers, architecture, and construction students. Our vast selection of course offerings has made it enjoyable for both the teachers and students and keeps students engaged in their coursework.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic we have noticed that many students need to have more opportunities to interact with each other. We recognize that we still have a need for our library media center and traditional resources such as desktop computers, books, and other media for research. We have also created a Maker's Space where teachers can utilize different modes of technology to meet the educational and social-emotional needs of our students. The space has flexible seating for project-based learning and can act as an area where students are able to interact with each other and work together in a more creative capacity.

Lastly, our technology coaches developed a series of professional development videos for teachers called "Tech Flix," which enabled teachers to learn about our student management system and new applications, websites, and resources. We also saw a need for our students and families to learn new software so we created a webpage full of videos and short "how-to" video clips to help families troubleshoot anything from Google Classroom to Chromebook issues. Realizing the need for policy and guidelines, we developed a "proper use of technology tool" based on student age and grade level. We want to ensure students are minimizing screen time, while maximizing their learning through creating, rather than just using the computer in place of more traditional paper and pencil activities. Over the next several years OPHS is continuing to shift its thinking to include even more STEM-based curricular options.