

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

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

School Mailing Address 35 East Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Skaneateles State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 13152-9405

County Onondaga

Telephone (315) 291-2241 Fax (315) 291-2267

Web site/URL https://www.skanschools.org E-mail mcaraccio@skanschools.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. Eric Knuth E-mail eknuth@skanschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Skaneateles Central School District Tel. (315) 291-2221

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Ms. Danielle Fleckenstein
(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	55	49	104
7	47	52	99
8	47	50	97
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	149	151	300

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1.3 % Asian
 - 0.1 % Black or African American
 - 1.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 96.3 % White
 - 0.3 % 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: 7%

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	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	21
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	306
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

4 Total number ELL

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

Total number students who qualify: 39

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 8 %
24 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>3</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</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: 5
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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 15:1

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	95%	98%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

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

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

Yes No

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

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

To make the transition from childhood to adolescence a positive experience within a safe environment. Opportunities are provided for exploring and applying learning to develop a strong knowledge base where responsibility, respect, integrity, teamwork and work ethic are valued. In turn, students will demonstrate respect for themselves, others and their school, community and world environments. The development of these qualities is shared by the staff, students, parents and community. All of which is to set the foundation for students to have the best conditions for achieving our commencement expectations; effective communicators, quality producers, critical and creative thinkers, collaborative contributors and effective goal achievers.

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

<http://www.skanschools.org/districtpage.cfm?pageid=1574>

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

We are a suburban community nestled along the northern shore of Skaneateles lake. Our students and families live in and around our quaint village, on the waterfront of a pristine Finger Lake or a few miles outside the village on the rolling hills and farmlands surrounding the area. Our students and families enjoy being part of a small town. Our school is at the center of our community. We take pride in being Lakers, supporting one another in the classroom and on the stage, the court and the athletic fields.

Our families are partners with our faculty, administration and Board of Education in providing a robust academic program within a safe and supportive environment. Our students are kind, conscientious, honest, respectful and genuinely interested in each other's success. Whenever our students are out in the community, on a field trip or at an event, we routinely hear how polite and respectful our students are. One of our bus drivers had this to say: "With rare exception every middle school student says thank you every time they get off the bus. A small thing but it shows their character".

We stress learning and growing through our social interactions and by taking risks.. Mistakes become learning experiences instead of failures. Our teachers provide standards-based curricula and challenge their students with robust instruction. Teachers' expectations are clear and lesson plans are differentiated to meet the varied needs of their students. We have nationally normed diagnostic assessments to monitor student progress. We provide support in multiple formats. We have computer-based interventions, academic support programs and literacy and math labs.

In addition to our academic focus, we also are committed to the social-emotional well-being of our students. To that end we have our school counselor, school psychologist, social worker and a certified therapy dog. We also employ a coordinator of student support services and family engagement and use outside agencies such as Helio Health and Peaceful Schools to provide training and counseling. We have a mentoring program that pairs high school students with middle school students who need some academic support.

Our emphasis is on building relationships among staff, students, families and the community, and creating a positive connection between students and our school. We sponsor numerous clubs and events in which students interact with each other and their teachers. Most of our students are involved in many of the opportunities in afterschool clubs, athletics, fine arts and student government.

When Covid-19 closed our school in March of 2020 we made many adjustments and accommodations. Students took their 1:1 Chromebooks home. We provided internet hot spots to students without internet access. We developed a schedule for remote instruction and our teachers learned quickly how to adapt our PowerSchool platform for that purpose. We made Google Chat available to all and provided instruction and support for the use of Google Meet to facilitate online instruction. Significant technical support and training was provided to teachers to enable them to successfully teach remotely. A resource site for parents, students and teachers was created with video and written guides to the different applications that were being used. We created online platforms, and coordinated multiple virtual events to keep our students connected. We sent postcards to all of our students with personalized messages and created a middle school Instagram page. Our dedicated transportation department delivered meals throughout the district.

Over the summer of 2020 we prioritized students attending in-person as many days as our staffing and spacing would accommodate. Heading into the 2020-21 school year we overhauled our middle school schedule to be able to allow for all of our 6th and 7th graders to attend school everyday. We created two schedules that were integrated by a 3-day cycle. Our 6th and 7th graders were placed into cohorts and we instituted COVID safety protocols to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Our 8th graders were hybrid and attended school in-person two days per week for three-quarters of the year until we began to incrementally increase the number of students returning to 5-days per week of in-person learning. During the days our 8th graders were learning from home they had access to a live stream into their respective classrooms, to essentially keep our students receiving 5-days of new instruction every week throughout the pandemic.

We provided our full menu of course options including our music ensembles. We also video recorded and posted our daily announcements on Instagram, provided Open House virtually with teacher videos posted to our website, and hosted virtual game nights and a virtual variety show via Zoom,. We recorded and posted music ensemble performances. Our counselors created a virtual counseling page full of resources to assist students and families during the difficult and challenging pandemic.

We survived with flying colors and are happy to be all back now in our Middle School home.

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:

Our curricula in all content areas are living documents. We are continually ensuring that we are aligned with our state standards and are making revisions with updates and improvements. We work to align our curriculum vertically and horizontally to ensure students in a specific content area of the same grade level are receiving the same content. Teachers have autonomy in decisions instructionally to reach the destination, while the destination in a particular lesson or unit is the same. From grade to grade, content is cohesive to ensure we are teaching to the standards at each grade level and preparing students well for the next grade level.

In our curriculum planning, our coordinators utilize a standards analysis template to guide and document our work. During release time, staff development days or summer curriculum days, our teachers list the skills, concepts and depth of knowledge associated with each standard. Learning intentions are spelled out for each lesson, relating them to a standard and corresponding success criteria. This guides teachers in helping students demonstrate their understanding of the intended learning objectives. Student performance relative to the success criteria is an initial formative assessment measure.

Our process for curriculum planning includes the prioritization of learning standards by analyzing a standard through the lenses of Readiness (Is the standard important for future learning?), Endurance (Is there value in this understanding beyond a student's school years?), Assessment (Will the standard be assessed?) and Leverage (Will understanding be useful across disciplines?). All aspects of our planning help our teachers to make thoughtful decisions on where to modify and differentiate to meet the needs of our students with disabilities, students who struggle and/or our students whose native language is not English. Knowing the content standards leads to more thoughtfully planned and effective lessons.

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

Wit & Wisdom is our comprehensive K–8 curriculum that holistically approaches English language arts instruction. Wit & Wisdom embodies the most current research on best practices for ELA instruction. Developed by expert teacher-writers, the curriculum features knowledge-building lessons and carefully curated art and literature that inspire students' passion for reading and writing. Students read complex, grade-level texts needed to build the advanced literacy skills that help ensure success for all students in college, career, and the civic arena.

The curriculum integrates teaching the skills in the major areas of ELA study instead of teaching each of those in isolation. With Wit & Wisdom, students practice reading, writing, speaking and listening, academic vocabulary, and style and conventions—all based on text. Each strand of the standards is integrated into daily lessons throughout each module and vertically throughout grade bands. Students write about what they are reading, and they take part in Socratic seminars and turn-and-talks relevant to the topic of study.

Vocabulary work is based in the text, and grammar work is taught through Style & Conventions. Examples are drawn directly from the texts in which the students are engaged—boosting reading comprehension and giving students authentic models for their writing.

Wit & Wisdom grounds its assessments in five main principles. Assessment can be a powerful tool to drive student learning. Assessments should form a coherent narrative reflecting the knowledge and skills students will build throughout a module. The most powerful type of assessment is the content-based performance task. Self-assessment empowers students to understand and improve their learning. Through integrated skills instruction and instructional routines used repeatedly with every text students encounter, they build transferable habits of mind to integrate their literacy skills in other contexts.

Students peer review their writing and engage in constructive feedback dialogues. They then utilize this information to make revisions and edits. Teachers assess student work and utilize rubrics to provide descriptive feedback to advance student learning. There are multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through Socratic seminars, journaling, written work, partner sharing, quick writes, brief checks for understanding, quizzes and tests. In each instance these are formative assessments allowing teachers to gauge student understanding and make adjustment and/or reteach concepts. Teachers work to scaffold instruction and utilize formative assessments to inform their instructional decisions. Students are able to build on prior learning, creating a staircase towards ensuring their own success.

During the pandemic students were able to complete activities and assessments electronically via teacher learning platforms. Students would be able to take photos of their work and submit them. Assessments were timed and available remotely. Students utilized WeVideo technology to create video recorded book reviews they posted to their teachers.

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

We adopted our 6-8 math program, Connected Math, for the 2014-15 school year; the year following Investigations implementation in grades K-5. Though written by different authorship teams, these programs are often adopted together because they have the same guiding goal and the same funding/support from the same National Science Foundation grant.

One of the things we liked most about Connected Math was how every lesson is built on the foundation of the Standards for Mathematical Practice (CCSS). The program does not just help students develop fluency with mathematical procedures; it also helps students understand the procedures and the underlying concepts. We want students to view mathematics as a subject that makes sense, not a subject of rote procedures. Mathematics is a collection of concepts and universal laws to be understood, not a set of rules to be followed.

We also liked that the program had a daily focus on Application, Connections, and Extensions. This helps students develop fluency and see how mathematics is inter-connected and how one concept can be extended to figure out others. These concepts can then be applied to other contexts.

Lessons are problem-based, with instruction being largely discussion-based. The Hattie effect size for Classroom Discussion (a method for determining the effectiveness of a given instructional strategy) is 0.82, more than twice the average effect size. This is the greatest effect size of any instructional strategy.

The program is aligned to the CCSS and our NYS math standards. It includes daily assessments throughout each unit and a summative, end-of-unit assessment. At Skaneateles, we have adapted their end-of-unit assessments in order to increase rigor. We also do a yearly data analysis of how our students compare to students in the other schools in our region, to identify relative weaknesses. That analysis is used to inform curriculum revisions every summer in our data-driven cycle of ongoing improvement.

During the pandemic, our teachers used technology to supplement instruction and/or make it more accessible to students to review outside of formal class time. However, our belief (based on a review of research) is that students learn and retain more from in-person instruction; so we are very thoughtful about when and how best to use technology. Our hybrid learning environment allowed us to be intentional about which lessons were best for in person learning or review, and which could be adapted to a virtual setting.

Perhaps of special interest is the creative ways our teachers have extended mathematics learning beyond the traditional classroom. For example, when learning about coordinate graphing, our sixth graders do a project with high school students enrolled in an engineering class. The sixth graders create a design on a coordinate grid and the engineering students program that design into routers and make yo-yo's out of wood with the design engraved. Our seventh grade teacher has his own YouTube channel where he posts adapted versions of popular songs (usually older songs) with re-written lyrics to support learning of particular math topics.

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

We adopted our 6-8 science program, Amplify Science, to support implementation of the national Next Generation Science Standards. Amplify Science remains the only program rated by Ed Reports to receive the highest possible rating of all-green. This speaks to the program's alignment to the standards, its rigor, and our commitment to using data to inform our decisions in the best interests of student learning. The program was written by the Lawrence School of Science at UC Berkeley, an authorship team whose credibility is unrivaled.

Amplify Science is a literacy-rich science curriculum with a lot of interactive digital tools to empower students to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers. The instructional materials support three-dimensional, phenomena-based learning and pose questions that are interesting and relevant to both students and adults.

Since adopting this program, we have been working to increase the amount of hands-on lab time within our overall science curriculum, which was the only aspect of the program we wanted to improve. One of the greatest strengths of our program is the rich discussions our students have about science ideas and content, using evidence to support their claims both in discussions and in their writing.

The program includes daily formative assessment check-ups that students respond to digitally which inform instructional next-steps. It also includes more formal check-ups throughout each unit and end-of-unit assessments.

Our teachers were creative with laboratory activities during the pandemic. Some of our teachers mixed the lab partners based on the hybrid schedule. While the students learning in person conducted the physical aspects of the lab, students learning remotely would be responsible for calculations and both would share in the written portions.

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

In Social Studies, teachers have used curriculum planning time to ensure that all units incorporate six key Social Studies practices: gathering, interpreting and using evidence; chronological reasoning and causation; comparison and contextualization; geographic reasoning; economics and economic systems; and civic participation. In the course of daily instruction, lessons engage and challenge students to raise questions, read critically, consider many perspectives, and gather evidence in support of their interpretations. The resulting curriculum asks students to “think like historians” as they unpack the forces and events that have shaped life for them as members of multiple, overlapping communities: their homes, the community of Skaneateles, the Central New York Region, the State of New York, the United States, and the larger international community.

Our teachers create activities that bring history to life. They have created videos using the locations they are learning about in history. In some instances they are the actual locations from the teacher’s travels now incorporated into lessons. Teachers utilize virtual reality goggles to transport students to the front lines of World Wars. They have created crime scene investigative (CSI) simulations. In one case they modeled the CSI television show to study the Boston Massacre.

There are projects at each level for students to demonstrate their learning as they work individually or in groups. During the pandemic students were able to complete activities and assessments online. They were able to take photos of their work and submit their completed assignments to teachers through their PowerSchool online learning platform. Lessons, activities and materials were all available entirely online allowing students to engage in learning and review previous lessons remotely.

1f. For secondary schools:

We believe that our efforts at the middle school level are essential in preparing students to make choices about their future course and career options. The more real-world experiences they have, and the more

opportunities they have to master skills and attitudes necessary for future education and employment, the better prepared they will be. Therefore, all our teachers strive to reinforce our Commencement Expectations (Effective Communicator, Quality Producer, Critical and Creative Thinker, Collaborative Contributor and Effective Goal Achiever) in their lesson planning.

Across content areas our teachers work to incorporate real world context into their specific content. For instance, students study robotics in the technology classes. Students explore careers digitally and in person through the Family and Consumer class. In many courses students work on collaborative projects and present to their classmates as they would in a career or college setting. Emphasis is placed on supporting arguments with evidence, analysis of complex problems, and persevering toward finding solutions. Up-to-date technology is used in instruction and in student projects. .

Our Humanities and STEM courses are aligned with Common Core state standards and the College and Career Readiness anchor standards which delineate the growth students should make each year. We have curriculum coordinators who work with our teachers to ensure the articulation of curriculum horizontally and vertically. Our teachers deliver scaffolded and cohesive instruction that ensure students master critical skills and knowledge on schedule. For students with an exceptional interest or mastery, we offer the accelerated courses of Regents Algebra 1 and Regents Earth Science to students in grade 8. Most of our students also earn a high school credit for World Language at the end of eighth grade, positioning them well for a successful high school experience.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts (visual and/or performing):

All students participate in art class 50 class periods each year. Curriculum includes art appreciation and history, and application in multiple media. Students learn gross and fine motor skills, risk-taking, decision-making and inventiveness.

All students also participate in general music class 50 class periods each year. Curriculum includes music history and appreciation, composition, and performance on African drums, guitar, and keyboards. Students develop teamwork, reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Band, Chorus and Orchestra meet every other day all year, with instrument lessons once a week. There are at least two public performances. Last year, due to COVID restrictions, the spring musical was recorded, edited and put online for on-demand streaming.

Physical Education/Health/Nutrition:

Students participate in physical education class every other day for 40 minutes, all year. The curriculum includes team sports, Project Adventure, yoga, dance and weight training. The goal is for students to have a positive experience with physical activity and sports so they will choose to stay active throughout their lives.

Students in 7th and 8th grade participate in health class every day for ten weeks. Students learn about decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication, conflict resolution, physical, emotional/mental and social health, stress management, substance use/abuse, maintaining a healthy body, body systems, nutrition and exercise. With parent permission, students participate in a unit on human sexuality.

Foreign language(s):

The World Languages program begins in grade 6 with all students participating in an exploratory course which provides an overview of Latin, Spanish, French and American Sign Language. Students then select

Latin, Spanish or French to study in grades 7 and 8. All classes are every day for 40 weeks. At the end of Latin 1, Spanish 1 or French 1 students earn one credit toward their high school diploma. Through coursework, students are exposed to other cultures and opportunities for global careers. They examine products, perspectives and practice in the language and culture. They learn to appreciate and respect diversity.

Technology/library/media:

The Middle School Library Media Center is the heart of the school where creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking is fostered and flexible access is encouraged. Students in grades six through eight are provided resources and services that support a technology enriched learning environment. Our school librarian works with teachers to integrate information and digital literacy skills into instructional activities that engage students and encourage lifelong learning.

We have an exemplary technology/engineering program. Students balance hands-on materials work (e.g., manufacturing projects) with more technology-based units (e.g., robotics). For example, students build and program robots to sumo wrestle other teams and they design and 3D print ergonomic pens.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is a program which promotes school safety and good behavior. Trained teachers meet monthly and have reviewed our code of conduct, described and charted the behavior we expect to see in our building, tracked discipline data, and coordinated events, assemblies and recognition celebrations. Students are recognized for specific behaviors that tie back to the traits of Generosity, Responsibility, Integrity and Trust (GRIT). We typically have several students from each grade level recognized every month. The behavior that resulted in their nomination is shared over the morning announcements and during assemblies, reinforcing the behaviors we expect to see in our middle school.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

We implement the Response to Intervention model to support students who are performing below grade level. These students are first provided support in tier 1 classroom instruction by their classroom teachers. This could look like offering worked-examples, additional scaffolds, or just carefully directing certain questions to each student to assess or extend their learning, wherever they are at.

For students who need a little more small-group instruction and support to keep up with classroom instruction, we offer them tier 2 push-in support. A support teacher or assistant would work beside a given student in the classroom to reinforce the lessons or explain a concept in an alternate way.

For students whose gaps or needs exceed what can be addressed within the classroom and instructional time, we offer tier 3 research-based interventions that are scheduled outside of the instructional time with specialists in the content area. Students receiving these targeted interventions are progress-monitored at least bi-weekly. Data is reviewed by individual teachers, intervention specialists, and school level intervention teams to monitor student growth and progress towards achieving individual and grade level targets.

Students identified as needing additional support may be assigned, depending on the needs identified, literacy lab, math lab, an academic support period (a structured study hall with a teaching assistant providing targeted support with course work), a plan for meeting with teachers each day after school during our daily 30 minute activity period or other forms of support and monitoring of progress.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students performing above grade level have options for acceleration in math and science. These are offered in grade 8 when students can enroll in Regents Algebra 1 and/or Regents Earth Science. There are technology-based online courses available with the option to earn high school credit.

We also have academic clubs including Math Olympiad and Odyssey of the Mind, both of which ask students to apply and extend their learning to solve unique problems. Math Olympiad meets weekly as an enrichment opportunity, but it is open to all students. Student teams have the opportunity to compete regionally in the yearly Odyssey of the Mind competition. Teams select one out of the five presented problems to solve using creativity, teamwork, research skills, and their content knowledge.

Our teachers provide students in their classes with enrichment activities as well. They plan differentiated lessons, activities and materials to meet the varied needs of our students including those performing above grade level. When group work is assigned, students may be given different roles in the group that best utilize each student's interests and skill level. Since standards are prioritized, there are standards teachers may address with students as stretch areas for those students who would benefit from and enjoy more challenges.

3c. Special education:

We believe that the best learning for students with disabilities occurs in our family-like environment in regular classrooms assisted by caring, knowledgeable teachers and staff and accepting peers. Therefore, most Skaneateles Middle School students with disabilities participate in general education instruction. Varied levels of support are provided to allow students to successfully access the grade level curriculum and participate with their non-disabled peers. Students with the most severe disabilities are served by the Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Special Education Department on their campus where they work on life skills and therapies.

Students receive supplemental instruction in their areas of deficit and in support of grade level content areas by co-teaching arrangements in the classroom, dedicated classroom aides or teacher assistants, or a special education teacher who pushes in or pulls out a given student for alternate instruction. Accommodations are provided to support access to grade level content and standards. Specific content and standards are prioritized, when needed, to allow access and participation in general education.

Accommodations on tests/assessments are provided to reduce barriers to success based on a student's disability. A student may use an alternate method of demonstrating achievements and understandings, use time extensions, or use assistive technology adaptations.

Explicit, systematic instruction in reading is provided to students with reading deficits to target their specific deficit areas. Math support is also provided to supplement instruction and provide strategies and supports to improve skills. Interventions and supports are determined on an individual basis through initial assessments and annual reviews, and are documented on the student's Individual Education Plan which includes measures and data points to assess progress and the possible need for additional support.

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

The Skaneateles Middle School is committed to meeting the needs of our growing English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners (ELL/MLL) population so they can attain the highest level of academic success and language proficiency in an atmosphere of educational equity and excellence. Based on the principles outlined in the "Blueprint for MLL Success," the Skaneateles Middle School provides comprehensive and holistic support to our MLL population.

The day a new student registers is the beginning of a long-term relationship with the students and their families to ensure that each student is on their individual pathway to success and obtaining the future they desire. Our English as a Second Language (ESOL) teacher nurtures and maintains those relationships from day one to beyond graduation. Our ESOL teacher reaches out to the family to set up a welcome visit and consultation, which includes an overall needs assessment. There is ongoing communication that helps to inform instruction, empower families, and create a trusting partnership. There is regular collaboration with multiple agencies (Skaneateles Outreach Program, Cortland Migrant Education Program, Skaneateles Education Foundation, and the ELL support network created by the ESOL teacher) to meet the needs of our students.

A special program called the “Buddy Group” was created to support the social-emotional well-being of our multilingual students. English Language Learners and a group of high school students meet once a week during activity period for activities to develop relationships and to simply have fun. The Skaneateles Education Foundation funds special outings for our Buddy Group with transportation provided by the district.

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

Skaneateles Middle School is committed to removing barriers and providing authentic opportunities for migrant students to learn and grow. Currently there are three migrant students in the Middle School, supported by the Migrant Educator and the ESOL teacher. In addition to language issues, migrant students also have to navigate obstacles from existing in two very different cultures.

We offer a special program for newcomers, tailored to the student’s/ personal history and academic needs. This can be half a day or all day and can last from two weeks to six weeks, depending on the specific needs and circumstances. Students develop English language skills and receive sheltered instruction for content areas. The entire staff at Skaneateles Middle School works with migrant students and their families to identify and leverage the resources available to them. Assistance with concerns with housing, social situations, immigration issues, and learning and language barriers are all provided.

Opportunities to socialize with peers outside of school can be the difference between “surviving and getting by” and being able to participate in the community, make connections and establish relationships with people who can help them access employment and higher learning activities during/after high school. Therefore the Middle School offers special programs for migrant students with specific needs. We collaborate with the Cortland Migrant Education Outreach (CMEO) program to offer two after school conferences a year with migrant students from other districts visiting our campus. The CMEO provides the speakers and activities. We offer a two-week summer program with instruction in the morning. All students receive transportation to camp, so they can build relationships and language skills in an atmosphere of recreation and joy. For students identified with interrupted formal education (SIFE), we dedicate a class specifically designed to fill their educational gaps. We utilize the NYS Bridges program for curricula, resources and training.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Engagement in the school experience and in learning is extremely important for us and for our students. Emphasis is placed on the role each individual student plays in the school-wide community and that each student has something unique to contribute. Our goal is to make sure our students feel secure and comfortable within our school setting. We strive to provide the caring and comfortable environment students need to develop intellectually and emotionally over the course of their time here.

Our teachers and staff are always positive and encouraging, allowing students to talk and connect. Taken from a survey of the teachers and staff, the following responses illustrate both the strategies they use to promote student engagement as well as the genuine caring and commitment they feel toward the students.

“I try to greet students in a positive way every day, and ask how they are doing in other things besides my class (sports/drama, etc. or any hobbies they might like). I try to remind students of their past successes and keep their confidence levels up by citing the positive things they are doing, or for their positive and/or caring behavior.”

“I treat my students like I do my own kids, with lots of love and encouragement while also holding them to a high level of expectation. In doing so, they typically will give it their best effort. I have found that a nurturing and positive environment helps them feel more comfortable to ask questions and readily receive the help that I offer. We also celebrate even the smallest victories! They know I care about them as people first, then as students.”

“I like to create activities that are as hands-on as possible, targeting as many "senses" as I can so kids absorb content in meaningful ways. For example, we just completed a lesson on the Boston Massacre. It would have been way easier to show a video, discuss what happened and move on. However, that's not engaging or memorable. I created Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) Boston and the kids spent two days investigating what happened. We will have a class discussion about their findings and their theories. I provide an environment that is challenging, fun, exciting and safe for all students to succeed in class.”

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our families and community are some of the greatest resources the Skaneateles

Middle School has in fulfilling its mission, and we go to great lengths to inform and engage them. The district website and Facebook page are used extensively by the Middle School and by individual teams, departments and teachers to convey information and ask for input. There are numerous events for families and community members, including orientations to various programs, information about district and building priorities, and information on topics like social media and drug awareness. Families have individual meetings, either in person or remotely, with the counselors, administrators and teachers on a regular basis to review the student's academic progress and mental and social-emotional wellness during this unusually stressful pandemic and post-pandemic period.

We have formed relationships with many individuals, organizations and businesses in the community who partner with us in our mission. We partner with our local credit union for instruction on finances in our Family and Consumer Sciences course. Working with our local YMCA, we have offered activities during the months when students are not able to participate in school athletics. Our collaboration with Target each holiday season provides clothes, toys and necessities to twelve local organizations for distribution to those in need.

Our partnership with Promise Zone, a program through the Onondaga County Department of Children and Family Services, gave us a Student Engagement Specialist who works with students on proactive approaches to conflict avoidance and resolution.

We partner with ACCESS of Central New York for help for youth with emotional and behavioral challenges, and their families. We have an assigned “ACCESS Team” member who has access to systems that serve youth, including Mental Health, Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Family Care Planners.

We partner with Helio Health to offer outpatient behavioral health services on-site with licensed mental health clinicians. The clinicians see students who need additional support with behavioral health.

We collaborate with Peaceful Schools to provide social-emotional skills training to support students in building and maintaining healthy relationships with peers. We have created the Circle Keepers Training Program to plan and facilitate Community-Building Restorative Circles.

Many of these opportunities have been funded by our ongoing partnership with the Skaneateles Education Foundation, a non-profit foundation which partners with the community to award grants to enrich all student learning, enhance instructional programs and learning tools, encourage professional development and promote the standard of excellence in our school district.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our leadership team recognizes and appreciates the hard work and effort of our teachers and staff. Their input is valuable as we work together to make the best decisions for our students. Various professional development opportunities exist for our faculty, staff and administration to learn and use best practices. Our teachers and coordinators are all active learners and in turn bring their expertise to their peers. Many opportunities are available to collaborate with colleagues through team meetings, department meetings and professional development days. As an organization we emphasize continuous improvement, a growth mindset and being a lifelong learner.

Our community has a foundation that provides opportunities for teachers to explore interests that will help enhance their instruction. The Skaneateles Education Foundation provides grants for teachers to delve into specific interests that inspire, educate and benefit our students. Through these grants teachers have gone to Scotland, Portugal, Guatemala, New York City, Virginia and more. These experiences have enriched instructions through actual videos, artifacts and first-hand reporting by the teachers.

There are monthly professional development options available to our staff offered by our local Board of Cooperative Educational Services. They provide a menu of options for our staff to grow professionally and continue learning. The District provides opportunities for staff development through Superintendent Conference Days (four per year), release time for selected groups of teachers, department meetings, many summer staff development days, and staff attendance at workshops and conferences. The Middle School takes full advantage of these opportunities.

Our grade levels meet as teams with the Principal monthly to discuss student needs, share instructional practices that are working well with students, express any needs and share concerns. Solutions are discussed and arrived at collaboratively. Grade-level teams also have two periods per day of common planning time during which they can meet to share and discuss strategies for supporting students, develop interdisciplinary lessons, coordinate assessment times, review student data to inform instructional decisions and more.

Additionally our K-12 Humanities and STEM coordinators, whose responsibilities include working with teachers on standards, assessments, high-quality impactful instruction and best practices for working with different student populations, offer professional development within their monthly department meetings. Our humanities coordinator is regularly meeting with our teams to reflect, learn and collaborate on literacy, specifically, the science of reading.. With changes to state standards our Science resources have been upgraded and specific training has been provided by our STEM coordinator.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at the Middle School consists of the principal, school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist and the administrative assistants. This team meets every week to review the status of the school and make recommendations for any adjustments that should be made. Our team was critical in making the adaptations that were needed to address the COVID-19 protocols.

Our team believes that relationships are the most important foundation upon which all our work is built. We work hard to create a sense of family in which we all pull together to provide a safe and comfortable environment. We understand that our work is a collaboration. Our positive culture and our focus on providing an exceptional experience academically, socially and emotionally for our students is the result of this collaboration.

We have the following agreed-upon operating standards that guide our work and interactions: (1) maintain confidentiality; (2) listen first, seek to understand and then to be understood; (3) share your wisdom, take advantage of talents; (4) disagree respectfully; and (5) commit to achieving outcomes. We emphasize learning and growing ourselves as key principles for our continuous improvement. The best ideas win regardless of where they originate. Appreciation for constructive criticism is genuinely expressed.

It is our collective goal that our students are able to freely express their authentic selves here at school and that they feel a trusting, positive connection here. When discipline is necessary, the goal is for it to be a positive learning experience. Getting to know our students and building meaningful relationships with them is the best way to prevent misbehavior in the first place.

Cultivating a family environment for our staff is just as important. We are social creatures and all of us need that sense of connection and belonging. We want our workplace to be one where we look forward to arriving every day. When we feel this way we are happier, more productive and more effective at teaching and creating the atmosphere we want for our students.

Structure, predictability and consistency are critical for our entire school community to be able to walk through our doors without being distracted by uncertainty or unpredictability. Visibility, communication, consistency and fairness are essential for cultivating a welcoming and fear-free atmosphere. It is through our actions that we teach respect, responsibility, integrity and trust.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

At this time in our country, it may seem that this is a divisive topic. However, for us in the Skaneateles Middle School, this is our overall mission of developing a strong knowledge base where responsibility, respect, and integrity are valued. We want our students to demonstrate respect for themselves and others, their school, their community and the world environment. Our teachers and staff model this respect. They talk about what respect is and why it is important.

In maintaining high expectations and rigorous instruction, the Middle School puts into action its values that all students can learn given the instruction and support they require. Teachers routinely adjust their instructional practices to address the differing learning styles and cultural needs of the students. They present opportunities for managed discussions of sensitive or controversial topics. They respect the varied cultural backgrounds of our students. They translate instructional materials into the native language of students. They offer many options for special support to help students with different needs reach their full potential.

An inclusive curriculum and assessment philosophy gives teachers freedom to choose materials and assessments that work for the students in their class. A music teacher purposely chooses different styles of music for the students to play, representing different time periods and cultures. They also make sure to include composers who are minorities. An English teacher says that by using the literature they read, students have opportunities to discuss world events and understand others by “walking a mile in their shoes”. A Social Studies teacher says that it is important to tie lessons from the curriculum to the world outside the classroom and to encourage students with different backgrounds to open up and share about their culture as it relates to our curriculum.

Our teachers and staff are continuously learning how to understand and better prepare our students for a culturally diverse world. Although we appear to be a fairly homogenous community, we realize that even here there are many different backgrounds, viewpoints and abilities. We know that our students will experience much more diversity once they leave us, and we are in the best position to provide them with the skills, attitudes and desire to make a positive impact on that greater community. By teaching cultural awareness and sensitivity students can better understand how to approach others and how to better understand how we are all connected.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The key to the success of Skaneateles Middle School is everyone's laser focus on each student's learning and well-being. This is at the heart of everything we believe. Every member of our organization works to have meaningful relationships with our students. We work hard to get to know our students on a personal level. We know where they are academically, socially and emotionally. Having those genuine connections allows our students to be comfortable expressing themselves, taking risks, and reaching out for help.

Developing these connections among ourselves as well as our students develops a family-like atmosphere. Consequently, we all are more caring and empathetic toward one another. We are kinder and more understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses. We are free to try new things, risk failure and try again, reach out for help and to help others, bring new ideas to the table, work through differences with respect, and contribute to the academic success of the Middle School experience.

These relationships extend to the families of our students and the community at large too. We get to know them well, and we communicate regularly. They are essential partners upon whom we rely for support, information, and help in many forms. These relationships bond us all in the common goal of ensuring our students have an exceptional experience here in our Middle School. We firmly believe in the adage that it takes the whole village to raise its children.

Within that safe and caring environment our teachers and staff present our students with challenging content, engage them in creative ways to explore that content, provide support when needed, and use data to drive decisions. As educators they are committed to making good on their promise to the students, their parents/guardians and the community of at least a year's worth of academic, emotional and social growth. Our relationships create a safe environment for students to learn. This family atmosphere allows us to really focus on the whole student to help make them the best world citizens they can ultimately be.

We have been entrusted with our community's most treasured members, and given the responsibility to care for them and teach them. We are humbled and honored to have their faith and trust, and we work hard to earn it every single day.