

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Arts Academy At Benjamin Rush
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 11081 Knights Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Philadelphia State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19154-3516

County Philadelphia County

Telephone (215) 400-3030 Fax (215) 400-3031

Web site/URL https://rush.philasd.org E-mail labailey@philasd.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. William Hite Jr. E-mail Hite@philasd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name The School District of Philadelphia Tel. (215) 400-4000

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. Joyce Wilkerson
(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):
- 151 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 16 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 57 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 224 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	27	125	152
10	33	123	156
11	40	126	166
12 or higher	31	111	142
Total Students	131	485	616

*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
 - 7.9 % Asian
 - 19.4 % Black or African American
 - 17.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 50 % White
 - 5 % 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: ≤1%

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

n/a

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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	0
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Mandarin, Uzbek, Persian, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Russian, Ukrainian, and Tajik

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 616

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 9 %
56 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>7</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>1</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>20</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>24</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</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: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	29
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 21:1

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	98%	96%	96%	96%	94%
High school graduation rate	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%

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	161
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	78%
Enrolled in a community college	13%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
Other	2%

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.

Rush Arts is based on the belief that the arts provide an opportunity to develop intellectual growth and personal creativity as part of a rigorous academic curriculum. We emphasize the building of a reflective community of learners who are adaptive critical thinkers and creators while preparing our students for college and professional careers. Transdisciplinary teaching and learning are applied in every classroom. Rush Arts prepares students to become active members of a democratic society by fostering a culture of respect for the various views of our diverse student population and encouraging student voice in the pursuit of social justice.

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

<https://www.philasd.org/capitalprograms/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2017/07/1.-Anti-Discrimination-Policy-Universal.pdf>

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

1. Apply to the School District of Philadelphia High School Selection Process
2. Must submit an Arts Audition to the School (Prior to COVID it was an in-person audition. Since COVID it was virtual.
3. Students grades must be all A's, B's and one C. They must also have 95% attendance or better.
4. Students and families are then notified by the Office of Student Placement of their status to attend Rush Arts.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush High School is a public magnet school in the School District of Philadelphia. Rush presently serves 616 students in grades 9-12, representing 51 different zip codes, reflecting the rich diversity of our city. Many of our students come from low-income families and their goal is to become the first person to graduate college from their families and sometimes even their communities.

Rush Arts was started in 2008 and founded as a special admit high school in the Far Northeast to infuse the arts into the academic curriculum. In 2018, the creation of the new mission was inspired by students who were taught to advocate for themselves. Our students were thriving by connecting with the teachers and leaders of our building to fight injustices for all stakeholders in our community. At that time, we grew to adopt a more focused mission: Social Justice Through the Arts.

Today, we commit to supporting students in becoming change agents and active participants in their own artistic, academic, socio-emotional, and political world visions. Through student voice and ownership, and the development of collegiate academic and personal skills, we empower our students to become social justice and equity leaders, lifelong learners, and productive citizens. We have a track record of student success with our NHS, AP and Honors classes, Senior Year Only, and dual enrollment programs.

We believe in the symbiotic relationship between the arts and academics, contributing to Rush's uniqueness. For example, our students and staff participated in several focus groups with the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University to help create our District's Policy for Transgender and Gender Non-conforming Students. Also, we are the only school in the District that has achieved Level 3 honor roll status for the National Federation of High School Athletic Coaches. Another successful program we have instituted is Social Justice Day, an annual event where Rush students create artistic pieces in dance, visual art, instrumental music, vocal, and theatre around a particular social issue and present it to the entire school community.

Three key principles guide the success of the Rush Arts academic program: student advocacy, collaborative learning, and academic rigor, reflecting an authentic college and career preparatory learning experience. In addition to required art major classes all four years, we have incorporated six additional rigorous electives to our course load over the past three years, with plans to include an additional eight Honors classes and an AP class next year. Ninth-grade students can enter Rush and decide on taking an Honors/AP track to carry them through their remaining three years of high school.

Student agency is explicitly taught and encouraged at Rush so they take ownership of their high school success and experience in selecting their path and course of action. As part of the emphasis on student voice and ownership, students create and lead their own student interest clubs. Students have several opportunities built within the school day, before and after school, for extended learning; this experience prepares students for student leadership, which connects our students to other stakeholders within our school community.

During the pandemic, our school community experienced many events that required flexibility and resilience. Initially, when the School District of Philadelphia was shut down, and there was a city-wide quarantine, the Rush staff implemented weekly virtual SEL check-ins with our students. Eventually, we independently created a schedule where each teacher met with their students three days a week. When the 2020-2021 school year began, Rush teachers and our principal designed a virtual daily schedule of asynchronous and synchronous learning. With student input and voice, teachers regularly adjusted their course expectations to meet the collective and individual needs of students navigating the emotional, physical, and mental challenges of the COVID pandemic.

To increase student success, Rush developed partnerships with several other local organizations, all of which have become vital stakeholders. Moore College of Art and Glen Foerd on the Delaware provide additional art-focused opportunities to the school. Holy Family University's Future Educators of Philadelphia has developed a unique program to assist Rush students who want to become educators. The Northeast Family YMCA is an avid partner who always provides job and even tutoring opportunities for our

students.

Rush is in the development phase of creating murals both inside and outside the building to capture the artistic joy of our students. Because we believe in equity, students will have a voice in the final outcome and in the unveiling of these murals, because they will serve as a central part of our school's visual commitment to our mission: Social Justice Through the Arts.

Rush Arts was founded on the principle of building academic rigor through long-lasting and supportive relationships. As we forge our future through commitment to service, social justice, and the healing power of the arts, our student voices will remain unwavering.

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:

The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush is based on the belief that the arts provide an opportunity to develop intellectual growth and personal creativity as part of a rigorous academic curriculum. We emphasize the building of a reflective community of learners who are adaptive critical thinkers and creators while preparing our students for college and professional careers. Transdisciplinary teaching and learning are applied in every classroom. Rush Arts prepares students to become active members of a democratic society by fostering a culture of respect for the various views of our diverse student population and encouraging student voice in the pursuit of social justice.

Rush Arts strives on a daily basis to provide high-quality education to every student. Each classroom creates an educational environment that allows students to develop their academic capacities to deal critically and creatively in participating in the positive transformation of the world around them. The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush is part of the vast School District of Philadelphia which supports both teachers and students through the Academic Framework. This framework is an all-inclusive resource that contains academic expectations and essential practices to support educators to make instructional decisions.

The instructional leaders at Rush Arts help teachers to make sure that all students are engaged and strengthen their skills to ensure success in college, work and career. At the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush in conjunction with the School District of Philadelphia it is important to provide for all students a curriculum that is standards aligned, culturally and linguistically inclusive, and has built in support for all students through an MTSS process. At Rush Arts all students are receiving an education that is equitable for them with support in place for students who are classified as EL or students who have IEPs.

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

The Rush Arts mission statement says that “Rush Arts prepares students to become active members of a democratic society by fostering a culture of respect for the various views of our diverse student population and encouraging student voice in the pursuit of social justice.” In accordance with this mission, English classes focus on social justice issues and encourage students to read texts, to read themselves, and to read the world around them through this lens. At this level of instruction, we strive to provide students with mechanisms through which they will develop literary strategies and cognitive tools that allow them to contextualize and evaluate complex reading material to determine its merit, implications, and relevance.

Six years ago the English department met to align our curriculums. Each teacher discussed the instructional and curriculum approaches and then worked closely with making sure each English year connected to the next.

Freshman year we focus on literature that observes student’s identities and thinking. They are taught the foundational skills in reading and comprehending literature, as well as the foundations of arguments including claims, reasoning, and evidence. Students explore themes, central ideas, and story elements to be able to develop critical thinking skills through thematic units such as love and relationships and identity and culture.

The sophomore curriculum in English 2 is designed to help us learn from each other, question the world around us, articulate our emerging beliefs and understandings, make sense of texts, and talk back to stereotypes and injustice as we challenge the “single story.” Throughout the year, we will utilize writing, research, argument, and discussion techniques. We will use these methods to investigate texts from a variety of places, times, genres, and mediums that both conform to and challenge the canon.

In English 3, juniors are introduced to the college-level concept of Critical Literary Theory, a collection of academic frameworks for thinking critically about and analyzing literature and the world around us. Students engage in a critical analysis of social justice issues including racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, examining how systems of oppression are manifested and perpetuated through ideology, social and cultural norms and biases, and the political and social structures that underpin society.

In 12th grade, seniors focus on the question, “How can we use literature as a source for inspiration and action.” Students begin the year reflecting on what they have learned in high school to help them make decisions about post-high school life. They immediately put this reflection to work by working together through the college application process. Using information from college research, inspiration from literature and art, students write a series of personal narratives, imagining themselves in college, and then complete applications for the colleges and programs of their choice. Running in parallel to the college application process, seniors use literature to investigate what it would mean for them to live a happy and fulfilled life while pursuing social justice.

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

The mathematics curriculum at Rush is centered around giving students multiple opportunities to explore different types of higher-level mathematics. All students take the district-required Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 courses. After that, students can choose to take Pre-Calculus (as an 11th or 12th grader), Statistics (as a 12th grader), or AP Calculus (as a 12th grader). Our school offers multiple pathways to give students an opportunity to challenge themselves with AP Calculus, including by starting in Geometry as a 9th grader (for those students who pass the Algebra Keystone test at their middle school) or by doubling up in Geometry and Algebra 2 as a 10th grader (for students who display an interest in challenging mathematics during their 9th grade year).

Throughout all math classes at Rush, students are given multiple tools to be able to master the content. These include numerous technology tools (such as Khan Academy, Desmos, Geogebra, Formative, EdPuzzle, MathXL, etc.) that allow students to get individualized, differentiated support, explore concepts more in-depth, and work collaboratively with their classmates through technology. Gamification is used to keep students engaged in the content during instruction and review. Collaboration through group projects and activities is also an important component of the instructional practices in each math course at Rush. All classes incorporate a mix of direct, teacher-led instruction and student-led mathematical discourse. This discourse is implemented through opening routines that allow students to explore new mathematical concepts and discuss their observations and wonderings, as well as through problem-based activities that students work on, both individually and in groups. In addition, math teachers incorporate interactive activities to allow students to analyze and discuss their peers' work, which allows them to explore different approaches for solving problems.

Our math classes also implement multiple types of formative and summative assessments - both traditional and non-traditional types - including group projects, technology-based activities, teacher-created assessments, and standardized assessments. Our use of frequent online assessments through MathXL, Google Forms, and Achieve 3000 gives students immediate feedback and allows us to quickly identify our students' weaknesses and assign remediation. Our teachers also acknowledge that students come to our school with unique sets of skills and ability levels, and vary the types of assessments that are used to allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the content standards in different ways. Some examples of these modifications include choice boards, presentations, comic strips, gallery walks, creative projects, and real-world applications. In addition, all math classes have implemented the district-mandated STAR and Achieve 3000 tests for student progress monitoring and intervention. We utilize data from all of our various assessments to inform and adjust the instruction and planning practices for our courses. We also collaborate with teachers who teach the same courses, and across our department, to maintain rigor and share instructional and assessment strategies that have been effective in our classes.

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

The science curriculum at the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush strives for every graduate to be ready to pursue science in college and career, and to participate in society as a scientifically literate citizen. Each science course that is offered follows a scope and sequence designed by the School District of Philadelphia which is grounded in the Next Generation Science standards. In Biology the students focus on a variety of life processes and how organisms thrive in different environments. Chemistry students study the states of matter, physical and chemical changes as well as reaction types. In Physics, the students explore complex concepts and make real-world connections. As electives students have the opportunity to study Forensics and Anatomy and Physiology.

Across all science classrooms standards drive the development of lessons and are enhanced through the use of: labs (both hands-on and virtual), manipulatives, demonstration, student-led discussion (both group and full class), class readings and videos. Also, as student-led discussion is a focus, so is developing student engagement and participation, so that all student voices are heard. Each of these allow students multiple opportunities to engage in the course materials and address varied styles of student learning.

Student data is the cornerstone of decision making to help monitor student progress to determine engagement and to initiate interventions for students who are in need of support. Data is analyzed multiple times each quarter to monitor student progress and initiate interventions for students who are in need of support. Biology Benchmark data is analyzed to determine topics which require reinforcement prior to the Biology Keystone Exams.

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

Each course in the social studies sequence uses an approach in which we provide students with information and encourage our students to think critically about events in history. African American History students engage in analysis of inclusive histories, students in US History complete a civil war project driven by student interests. Students also participate in a variety of role-play and simulation activities, including a simulation of Congress as students work together to work on legislation. In social science, students culminate their study of American democracy with civic engagement projects through the arts, providing a natural bridge between social justice and the arts, which are both integral to the mission of our school.

Additionally, all teachers use a variety of instructional practices, including lecture, note-taking, and conversations. Technology is embedded daily, but also used to support differentiation by providing audio and video to support students, especially students who may struggle with reading and/or prefer alternative means of accessing content. Assessment is critical to the success of our students and guides our teaching to ensure that students meet our expectations. We use the data from assessments to plan instruction to analyze and improve student and school performance.

Our school addresses current events very intentionally. We have developed a protocol to be used when global, national, or local events occur. The purpose of this protocol is to provide every Rush staff member with a tool to respond (in their classrooms) to an event. An administrator or leadership team member provides guidance about when this protocol should be used. Part of our mission at Rush is to prepare “students to become active members of a democratic society by fostering a culture of respect for the various views of our diverse student population and encouraging student voice in the pursuit of social justice.”

1f. For secondary schools:

At the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush, college and career readiness is at the forefront of every planning conversation. Our goal is to ensure that all of our students are provided and taught the fundamentals to be successful in a college environment or a career setting. This happens through increased rigor in classes, and course options including honors, advanced placement and college level courses.

In all of our English 3 and 4 classes, our students get personalized contact with the counselor to begin planning for their post secondary success. College and career programs visits are set up for students to meet with representatives to discuss options and offerings. Students and families are also provided support for FAFSA completion and scholarship opportunities through the school. At Rush Arts, students also have a

chance to access college level courses through dual enrollment with local universities as well as being a high school senior and taking a full college roster through the Senior Year Only Program. All students are given the opportunity to create a post secondary plan, create a college essay, and apply to community college through their English classes.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As an audition-based arts school, much of our roster is centered around ensuring that our students have ample access to learn and share their crafts. We offer a four year curriculum in dance, instrumental music, vocal music, theatre, and visual arts (fine arts, graphic arts, media arts). Every student enrolled in our school takes a major art course every year, but as upperclassmen they may add additional arts electives. The content of these courses may differ by discipline, but all of our arts curricula are purposefully spiraled, giving students opportunities to work towards mastery of skills and the development of their personal voice and style as they work on deeper and more complex work. These courses are designed to be hands-on, participation based, and project based. Students learn about art by making art and seeing how their work is in conversation with artists who have come before them. Our arts departments diligently showcase the work of our students with a full schedule of public performances and exhibitions. Students are also given the chance to work with partner organizations, teaching artists, and showcase their work in competitions at the district, city, and state levels.

In general, ninth and tenth grade students take Spanish 1 and Spanish 2 respectively. Advanced Spanish, scheduled as Spanish 3/4, is offered to juniors and seniors, but the grades of the students can vary from year to year depending on demand for the class. For example, this year only seniors are enrolled, but in past years we have enrolled younger students, even ninth and tenth graders if their skills were sufficiently advanced. Each year, the world language department participates in the district-wide Seal of Biliteracy program, which certifies students as proficient in English and at least one other language.

During their 11th grade year, students are rostered to both Health and Physical Education. Students take an active role in the direction of their learning through a mix of in person and online activities in conjunction with student-selected, independent projects. The course is purposefully designed to provide opportunity for students to develop and grow skills related to self-reflection and evaluation, decision-making, and advocacy to inform healthier personal choices. Some content central to their considerations: identity, stress management, influences of personal decisions, and healthy relationships.

Physical Education programming provides varied activities that promote the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction. Our focus is on personal growth and attainment of goals to improve, achieve, maintain or exceed personal bests and healthy fitness levels. We utilize individual baseline testing and nationwide research data, examine and apply key concepts in creating, implementing and revising personalized fitness plan and provide a variety of activities that help the students meet their goals. Additionally, the 11th grade students facilitate inclusive exercise and sports clubs and provide peer tutoring to the 9th graders around hands-only CPR and AED. This programming ensures that 100% of the student body are informed of emergency response protocols for cardiac emergencies.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush strives to provide support for the educational needs of all students regardless of their performance level. It is important when our students come to high school that we get an accurate picture of what their current levels are and what are the areas that need the most support. The School District of Philadelphia provides a universal screener for all students in reading and math. Once our students have taken the screener we are able to see who is falling below grade level and set academic goals

for these students.

The students who are falling below grade level in reading, math or both are given an individualized intervention program that will provide support in the specific areas where they are the weakest. The Achieve 3000 program provides support in both reading and math tailored specifically to the weaknesses of the student at their present grade level. Throughout the school year the students are working through the intervention and retesting with the universal screener quarterly to look for and track growth.

In some cases the testing will not show the whole picture of which students are falling behind. The teachers at the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush meet monthly to implement the MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) process for students who are struggling across content areas. Teachers review the Grades Monitoring Tool to provide students with a mentor and a plan to help them get back on track academically. Students are supported through many avenues such as peer tutoring, advisory teacher meetings, and Check and Reflects which give students an up to date account of their grades, attendance, and behavior.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush provides instruction that meets the educational strengths and needs of all students regardless of their gifted abilities in its regular education program. Student outcomes are used in modifying classroom instruction, assignments and assessments for all students. The school program meets the learning needs of students identified as gifted by providing advanced levels of instruction available to all students as part of the regular education program. The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush has honors classes and Advanced Placement classes. Many of Rush's regular education classes offer special assignments and choice options for students to choose their individual level of challenge and rigor.

Data is reviewed quarterly to monitor that gifted students are maintaining a level of achievement appropriate to their abilities. Parents are encouraged to inform the Gifted Coordinator if their child demonstrates the need for an instructional program that is not part of our regular education program. If this is the case, specially designed instruction will be offered and outlined in a Gifted Individualized Education Plan.

For example, when a student and their family requests for an instructional program the Gifted Coordinator will meet with the student to discuss what academic(s) classes they would like to have their specialized education program. At the high school level it is important for Rush students to choose their own path in their gifted education program. Once the student identifies the academic class, the Gifted Coordinator will meet with the academic teacher to discuss the areas of strength and the areas of challenge needed for the student, then the Gifted Individualized Education Plan is put into place. Then the student is conferenced with each term/quarter. Every year the Gifted Individualized Plan is revised to meet the needs of the student.

3c. Special education:

At the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush our special education teachers work in conjunction with all the teachers at the school as well as families and outside agencies to ensure that the education program is supporting our students with disabilities. All teachers in conjunction with the special education teachers plan for the students' learning and well-being by taking into consideration their individual needs.

Rush Arts is criteria-based admission school so our special education population, is less than 10% of the total population but it is growing in the upcoming year. The model that we use to support our students is built around the special education teachers pushing-in to their regular education classes to provide support parallel to the regular education teacher. Our special education students also have a separate course on their roster where they receive support instruction around their IEP goals with the special education teacher in a small group setting. In this course they work on prioritizing assignments and individualized support for particular classes.

Our students' goals are regularly monitored by the special education teacher with input from the regular education teacher. Our school psychologist collaborates with the special education team to provide reevaluations to make sure that goals are always reflecting the instructional needs of the student. At the Arts

Academy at Benjamin Rush ,our special education teachers make sure that all our students are getting the accommodations that they need, such as adapting curriculum tasks, scaffold supports, flexible grouping, and providing positive and constructive feedback to the students.

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

The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush does not have a full time ELL Program. Presently, Rush has less than one percent of an ELL population, although it is increasing each year. Rush has, what the School District of Philadelphia calls, an EL Point Person and an EL Itinerant Teacher. These are the roles assigned to schools with a low population of EL students. The EL Point Person orders materials for testing and makes sure the school remains in compliance with testing, oversees reclassification processes, monitors students ensuring language is not a barrier to their academic success, and collaborates with the EL Itinerant. The EL Itinerant teacher serves as a language support and consultant for staff once a week. This includes modifications, assessments, translation services, and other language services. The EL Itinerant meets with students once a week and follows students in their academic classes. All the ELL students are exposed to inclusive grade level content alongside their English speaking peers and the core curriculum. Grades are based on the students' proficiency in the domains of Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking according to their ACCESS Level.

For example, there is one Beginner level and one dual-identified student. They each receive periods of small group and individual instruction based on their language and academic needs. Examples of modifications and alternate assessments include illustrations with labels, verbal assessments, word banks, word-to-word content area glossaries, student created videos, posters, and comic books. The approved translation service for the School District of Philadelphia is Language Line. All of the staff at Rush has been trained and provided with information on how to access the service by phone and how to use the service with in-person or video conferencing meetings with parents and guardians.

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

The Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush has a population of students that qualify for a 504 plan. These students make up 5% of the total population. In the area of education, a student who has physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities would qualify for a 504 plan. The existence of the physical or mental impairment does not automatically qualify the student for the plan, but the determination is made by the school team, which consists of counselor, nurse, teacher input and administration.

Once the determination has been made by the team that the students need the 504 plan the team will meet to compose a list of accommodations that will help the student to feel successful and productive in the school environment. The accommodations are specific to each student and their needs, but the most common are tutoring, extended time for tests and assignments, preferential seating, and counselor monitoring academic progress. As with any educational plan they are updated to make sure that it is accurately supporting the needs of the student in all classes and activities.

The general education teacher plays a major role in supporting students who have a 504 plan. Teachers at the Arts Academy of Benjamin Rush have access to the 504 plans for the students they are teaching. They make sure that the accommodations are being followed as well as having active communication with the student and parent. The teacher can provide valuable information regarding the student's ability to participate equitably with peers. As the content expert for the particular subject area, the teacher's contributions are invaluable in ensuring that the student has equal opportunity to access the general education curriculum.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Over the past year the climate and culture of the Arts Academy at Benjamin has improved in so many ways. During the pandemic the schools administration and teaching community rallied together to establish a plan of action to support all of our students. The trends at the time showed that students were having difficulty concentrating, communicating, making decisions, worrying excessively, sleeping, and several other factors that often increased levels of anxiety, depression, and self-harm. These factors clearly contributed to the decline in students attendance, virtual class participation, completion of assignments, and emotional well-being. In order to support the student community, the team at Rush worked together to establish programs to address the social and emotional needs of each and every student. Members of the climate staff and teaching community conducted daily check-in's and virtual community building activities to promote the development of basic communication and socialization skills. Our efforts revealed that students were highly receptive towards the strategies of 1-1 virtual meetings, modification of assignments, and home visits.

As virtual learning continued, several teachers collaborated and decided to provide students with a weekly meeting time titled "Safe Space", which provided inclusivity to those that needed to be heard without judgment. Providing students with a "Safe Space" allowed them to speak openly and feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm. "Safe Spaces" continues to be used within our school community and has been a major contributor to the development of schools' usage of Restorative Practices, Restorative Justice, and Relationships First.

This school year, the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush has adopted the mindset and philosophy of Restorative Practices. Evidence suggests that these practices can reduce future delinquent behaviors and support the schools effort to develop a positive school climate and culture. In order to maintain a safe community, the Rush Arts community has provided several resources to establish the mindset and mission of creating social justice through the arts. Members of the teaching and student community have actively participated and committed to the work of becoming Relationship First Coaches. Relationships First is a restorative justice-practices philosophy that emphasizes the importance of positive, authentic human connection and its link to both academic success and social-emotional learning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush has been a beacon of innovation and strong connections within the arts community and in the local community. The efforts of the school have not gone unnoticed. Through the combined efforts of the staff, the principal, the parents and the students, they have taken the strides towards building a strong foundation for current and future students to thrive and care about their fellow associates.

In the wake of the pandemic and the struggles of connections in a new virtual landscape, the community has come together to address the concerns that matter to them and have taken their own innovations to make a difference. That being said, open communication is key to what runs this school. With town halls, constant email communication, a devoted SAC and Home and School Association, and the firm guidance of the Principal, the willingness to help the school has doubled.

Students have led the charge in addressing issues facing the community, including homelessness and social - emotional health in teens and have combined their efforts with Youth Emergency Service (YES). The issue was brought up by a student who was passionate about the topic as it affects many teens throughout the city of Philadelphia. This, coupled with the innovative Relationships First Program that the Benjamin Rush Community has implemented for the school, has provided a positive landscape for human connections and growth.

In addition to social and emotional communication, the school has also focused on providing better academic support for families' future endeavors by providing college fairs and FAFSA events with the partnerships they have garnered with schools like Drexel University, particularly the Department of Creative

Arts Therapies, Moore College of Art, and University of Pennsylvania to name a few. They will only continue to grow and develop in the future as a beacon of artistic power, hope and change.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush all members of the community, especially teachers and staff feel valued and supported through constant collaboration with administration who operate with an open door policy. The administration has a pulse on the feelings of the teachers and staff by meetings with the leadership team and building committee, who are in constant contact with the staff.

When the school was required to shift to distance learning the school schedule was adjusted so that teachers could have planning meetings. These planning meetings were focused around student and adult needs. The teachers and administration would conduct department meetings for co-planning and task alignment and MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports) meetings to ensure that all students were staying on track both academically and socially.

A huge focus at the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush is equity and culturally responsive teaching. When schools were forced to transition to online learning the teachers in conjunction with administration began book studies that focused on understanding race and equity in school. School staff took part in whole and small group discussion as well as active journaling.

As school returned to in person learning administration made sure to continue to carve out this sacred meeting time for teacher collaboration, equity focused book studies, and grade group meetings around students. Administrators saw how the meeting time when school was virtual was valuable to all staff members and wanted to prioritize it when reentering the building. These meetings and check-ins helped the whole school community stay connected during the pandemic and administration was able to show support and promote collaboration. Back inside the school, the staff bonded by helping our students reestablish a community that is focused around high expectations and emotional well-being.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership philosophy is one of total collaboration between both the administrative and leadership teams in all facets of school level decisions. Students, families, and other community and partnership stakeholders are also an integral part of the decision-making at Rush, because we all understand our role in systemically guiding our school through the change process to further impact our overall artistic development and academic performance. To ensure a positive work environment where we foster growth among all staff, the principal and assistant principal do the following:

- * Give monthly shout-outs to teachers referencing attendance awards for attendance of the month.
- * Meet with the co-building chairs (lead teachers chosen by colleagues) every week to ensure we're all on the same page
- * Instruct teachers how to analyze their own data for Grade Impact Report where teachers have to reflect upon equitable grading practices.
- * Instituted Staff Appreciation every Friday where staff receive fresh donuts and brewed coffee in our kitchenette. They pick up their coffee and donut on the prep/lunch.
- * Invite student representatives from the (UMC - United Minorities Council students) and the Spirit Council to leadership team meetings and attend their meetings to discuss issues and concerns from the student point of view, which fosters an environment where student advocacy is paramount.
- * Elected student ambassadors to check social media for any biased, racist, homophobic or any other comments that do not align with the schools mission and vision.

* Created the Vision and Tagline: Social Justice Through the Arts so all visitors and incoming students know we operate under the collective mission of working towards social justice through the arts. In an effort to enact this brand, we now have brand ambassadors called The Rush Arts Social Media Influencers. These are students who publish good news about what's happening in and around Rush Arts.

To ensure there is always transparency between the school and families, connecting home to school, our parents and other stakeholders receive weekly emails (and text messages when appropriate) through our information system of news pertaining to students and the safety of all who work or visit our building.

Our students and teachers need to feel like they have a voice and autonomy in the most important decisions that impact their lives as members of the Rush family. Because student ownership and advocacy is an important tenet of Rush school culture, at least twice each month, during Common Planning Time and Grade Group meetings, teachers meet to discuss and track their conversations about students' needs for interventions on a tracker. It gives teachers a chance to centralize their conversations about students, follow up with a conversation with said students, and then note their progress. They also discuss commonalities among students who are struggling and need support/interventions in specific areas. Teachers also assign themselves as mentors to the student based on their relationships with them. They also help/coach students on ways to better advocate for themselves. In this manner, students, teachers, counselors, administrators, and parents form a unit to support all students throughout their learning all year long. These are just a few examples of how Rush has been able to ensure student success and institute the love and support our children deserve.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

In 2017, a teacher leader attended a summer program to address race and culture in the classroom with teachers and staff. Each Professional Development session focused around race and culture from that point forward. Rush had the United States Department of Justice come in to train teachers on bias and microaggressions. From this we also began reading the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo as a whole school read and group discussion. Then our next book was *Courageous Conversations about Race* by Glenn E. Singleton. Last year, we studied both *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad and *Culturally Responsive Teaching* by Zaretta Hammond. This year we are reading *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Johnson.

Teachers have moved from reading, learning, and educating themselves about culturally responsive teaching to application in the classroom and reflection in order to grow and change. Teachers recreated real classroom situations and worked together to come up with strategies and ways to address the uncomfortableness they faced alongside the students. One of our norms for this work is to expect and accept non-closure, meaning this work is never unfinished.

During the pandemic and virtual learning, our country was struggling and our students were in silos at home with little to no adult guidance. Rush implemented Third Space. Third Space was a place for students to have a sense of community around social justice topics. It was a place to unwind, discuss, and talk about social issues that mattered to students. Rush wanted students to be able to have their voices heard and to be among people with similar interests. Students came before school started into a safe Zoom space to get things off their chest and hang out with people before starting their school day. Meetings occurred regularly every Monday. In addition we created a Global/National/Local Event Response Protocol to respond to events that were happening on a regular basis and to provide every staff member with a tool to respond (in their classrooms) to a major global, national, and/or local event. This protocol connected to our mission statement, "Students to become active members of a democratic society by fostering a culture of respect for the various views of our diverse student population and encouraging student voice in the pursuit of social justice." Rush realized we must be committed to having explicit-- and perhaps sometimes uncomfortable-- conversations.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Rush struggled in the area of mental health issues and with students feeling comfortable creating relationships with their teachers and peers. Rush worked hard to add a Climate Manager to the school who works to keep a stable climate by supporting social and emotional learning and facilitating difficult conversations. He brought a program with him called Relationships First, which is SDP's restorative justice framework created by the Office of Climate & Culture. RF is a human-centered philosophy and prevention/intervention strategy aligned to the MTSS framework aimed at (1) building strong, safe, loving relationships, disrupting and dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline, and increasing positive academic outcomes through community-building, healing, and restoration.

The first part of the process was to introduce the concept to the staff and to create buy-in. A few teachers had already implemented strategies that were similar to the Relationships First model. When the school went virtual during the pandemic, we could no longer implement Relationships First, because the model needed to be done in-person. During our virtual education time, our Climate Manager met with students and a few teachers who were interested in leading this community building work to teach and talk about various elements of Tier 1 within Relationships First.

At Rush, RF implementation began with the District assigning a Relationships First coach to our school. The coach met with staff, visited classrooms, talked to students, and assisted with discipline matters involving students. Then the Relationships First coach began training a group of 35 students on Tier 1, Community Building Circles. This core group of 35 RF youth leaders were recruited by their teachers and school administrators and trained by their RF coach in circle-work. During their development as youth coaches, students started to create community and relationships that supported each other's needs. Once these students were trained, Rush implemented a full day of Relationships First Social-Emotional Learning during advisory. The students at Rush led circle work and Social emotional learning activities. Since taking over leading circle work on campus, RF has expanded to 60 youth leaders across all four grade levels. There is also a cohort of teachers and administrators who co-lead the work with the youth. The goal is that next year our Student Relationships First Coaches will lead this work in all of our advisories and build an even larger student-led RF team. Within six months, Rush Arts has become the model high school for RF work in our District.