# U.S. Department of Education
## *2019 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. Todd Schroeder
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.)  (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 400 North 9th Avenue PO Box 5000
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Winneconne                     WI                     54986-5000
City                           State                  Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Winnebago

Telephone (920) 582-5800                 Fax (920) 582-5816
Web site/URL
        http://www.ms.winneconne.k12.wi.
us/                              E-mail    schroedt@w-csd.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*Margaret Larson
        (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)   E-mail larsonm@w-csd.org

District Name Winneconne Community School District    Tel.    (920) 582-5802
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 Robert Ronk
(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, write N/A in the space.*

# 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 2019 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 includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 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: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.

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. 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.

# PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

**Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.**

## DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district     1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):          1 Middle/Junior high schools
                                        1 High schools
                                        0 K-12 schools

                                        3 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban
   [X] Rural or small city/town

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

| 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 | 54 | 61 | 115 |
| 7 | 64 | 62 | 126 |
| 8 | 71 | 61 | 132 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 12 or higher | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Students | 189 | 184 | 373 |

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

4.  Racial/ethnic composition of      1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
    the school (if unknown, estimate):   0 % Asian
             1 % Black or African American
             4 % Hispanic or Latino
             0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
             92 % White
             2 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: ≤1%

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 *to* the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year | 2 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year | 0 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 2 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017 | 364 |
| (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.  English Language Learners (ELL) in the school:    0 %
                                      0 Total number ELL

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

7.  Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals:    17 %
    Total number students who qualify:    64

8. Students receiving special education services:     8 %
                                                      30 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. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 Autism | 0 Multiple Disabilities |
| 0 Deafness | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 1 Deaf-Blindness | 8 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Developmental Delay | 7 Specific Learning Disability |
| 5 Emotional Disturbance | 2 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 0 Hearing Impairment | 0 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 2 Intellectual Disability | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

| | Number of Staff |
|---|---|
| Administrators | 1 |
| Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 15 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc. | 9 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 4 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 1 |

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     25:1

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

| Required Information | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily student attendance | 97% | 99% | 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 2018.

| 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 X

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.

Maintain its high academic standards while providing each student with challenging opportunities in a safe, nurturing environment where students experience success and become lifelong learners.

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

# PART III – SUMMARY

Winneconne has a population of 2,392 and is located in east central Wisconsin. It is on the Wolf River with over 160,000 acres of waterway access to Lake Winneconne, Lake Poygan, Lake Butte des Morts, and Lake Winnebago. Winneconne residents are fiercely independent, wanting to maintain their "village" atmosphere and outstanding quality of life. This independence is best shown during the annual Sovereign State Days festival. When Winneconne was not accounted for on the 1967 official Wisconsin highway map, the village made national news when it decided to call itself a sovereign state. Winneconne is marked by many tree-lined streets, exceptional parks, a full-service local government, small scale industrial community, village businesses, and inviting neighborhoods. Located only a few miles from State Highways 45 and 41, Winneconne is bisected by the Wolf River. At the north and south boundaries of the village of Winneconne are Lakes Winneconne and Butte des Morts, home of the finest walleye and white bass fishing in Wisconsin. Our kids enjoy many community activities and sports through the Winneconne Parks and Recreation Department and other youth programs.

The Winneconne Area School District is comprised of three schools: a 4K-5 elementary school, a 6-8 middle school, and a 9-12 high school. Winneconne Middle School was built in 1975 and served as the district's high school until 1997. The middle school and new high school are connected, providing many shared learning spaces. The middle school is also fortunate to have access to a full range of athletic fields around our shared campus. We remain true to our middle school roots, offering full-range exploratory rotation classes and a few electives, in addition to our core curriculum. Winneconne Middle School currently has an enrollment of about 380 students.

Our community has greatly supported our middle school and district with volunteers and private donations. In addition, the community recently approved referendums to build an auditorium, create high school STEAM additions, and upgrade the elementary school building. Our middle school and high schools are connected on one campus. As a result, the middle school students have benefitted by their technology and agriculture classes taking place in classrooms with state-of-the-art equipment.

We are very proud of our great work and celebrate learning achievement with our kids, families, community, and the elementary and high schools. Student learning growth is a product of a team effort among teachers, support staff, and administrators throughout the entire district. We have learned together as we have taken on the targets-based instruction, assessment, and reporting journey. Our collective work (ES, MS, HS) has resulted in closing learning gaps and high learning achievement.

Our curriculum and instructional practices are grounded in focusing on learning targets and learning data. Within the past five years, we have implemented college prep math (CPM) and Lucy Calkins' Units of Study in Writing. We offer our students about 100 minutes of ELA instruction daily, which has contributed to our students achieving at high levels and closing learning gaps. Our math, science, and social studies classes are about 55 minutes in length. We are a one-to-one school; each of our students have their own Chromebook in addition to access to a computer lab and an inviting library.

Our students are encouraged to stay busy by being involved in many middle school experiences. Students participate in a variety of activities. School sponsored sports include volleyball, football, cross country, basketball, wrestling, and track. Club opportunities include student council, art, forensics, drama, ski club, VEX robotics, equestrian team, quiz bowl, mathletics, jazz band, pep band, and jazz choir. There is something for all students to get involved in if they so wish.

At Winneconne Middle School, building relationships and meeting the social and emotional needs of our students are valued. We have implemented PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) in our school and call it the "Winneconne Way." Our "Winneconne Way" program promotes positive behaviors throughout the building. In addition to a few building led PBIS celebrations/rewards, individual teachers and core grade level teams also recognize students and build in reward days/events. We have one full-time counselor who teaches the grade 8 careers class as well as many developmental guidance lessons in classrooms. She also supports our students with open office hours each day. Shared with the other schools

in the district is a school psychologist and nurse to support our students' physical and mental health.

The middle school summer school program has grown to offer summer enrichment classes, academic support classes, and athletic programs for all our students. Students engage in extended math, foods, art, kindness, robotics, and band classes, and are provided with open library hours. Sport camps include golf, basketball, wrestling, volleyball, and open weight room hours.

# PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

**1. Core Curriculum:**

**1a. Reading/English language arts:**

The Winneconne Middle School English Language Arts curriculum is a spiral curriculum designed from the Wisconsin Common Core Standards divided into the domains of language, writing, reading, and speaking and listening. The students are exposed to various genres of literature, as well as numerous authors, through textbook selections and novels. Activities and projects, often including a multimedia component and centered around stories, novels, dramas, poems, and informational text, allow for individual interests as well as collaboration. Our major writing units (persuasive, argument, informative, explanatory, and research) incorporate the application of language conventions. Students' writing progress is supported through sustained writing pieces using the writing process, as well as through journaling. Numerous speaking and listening skills are developed through collaborative discussions and various group and individual presentations throughout the year. Our success as a school is attributable in part to the time the English Language Arts department is allotted to meet on a weekly basis. This collaboration has built a cohesive 6-8 program. As a team, we have unpacked state standards, created grade level targets, and designed assessments aligned with them.

To support our data-driven instruction, we differentiate through leveled texts and student choice. We provide a variety of best practices to support multiple learning styles, conduct writing workshops, deliver intervention support through online instruction and teacher-led small group instruction as well as create opportunities for peer and group collaboration. We regularly utilize technology in our instruction. Students have their own Chromebooks which promotes web-based learning. Our one-to-one technology allows for immediate feedback which is an effective practice for helping our students develop as proficient learners. With writing pieces, we consistently give thorough, meaningful written feedback to each of our students. In addition to written feedback, we strive to provide conference opportunities with students to meet each learner's needs. With these practices, we are able to foster individual students to reach their zone of proximal development and ensure that all students learn at high levels.

**1b. Mathematics:**

Our building has adopted College Prep Math (CPM) and has found the format and curriculum to be challenging to all students. This curricular resource engages students through problem-based learning in collaborative groups and emphasizes mixed-spaced practice to promote long term retention of material.

In grade 6, instructional time focuses on four critical areas: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

In grade 7, instructional time focuses on four critical areas:(1) developing an understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations;(3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples.

In grade 8, instructional time focuses on three critical areas: (1) formulating reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

The Algebra course provides the student with basics in the use of variables in problem solving. Topics include: working with real numbers, solving equations and inequalities, polynomials, factoring, fractions including polynomial, basic functions and graphing, solving systems of equations and inequalities, as well as an introduction to the Quadratic Formula. Story problems are an integral part of this course and used to demonstrate understanding.

The math department uses data to make informed decisions about our students. Based on the iReady assessment, which students take at three intervals throughout the year, students receive math instruction that is tailored to their specific needs. If students are significantly behind grade level goals, they are recommended for our math intervention class. This class provides an additional instructional block for students and is taught by a math interventionist. Math Lab takes place every day within the elective band / choir block in grades 6, 7, and 8. Math Lab gives selected students an opportunity to close identified math learning gaps. From a student perspective, Math Lab meets every other day during the elective block for grade 6, 7 and 8. The math teachers also use this data to identify holes in understanding, and create mixed-grade small groups based on similar deficiencies. These groups change regularly, and are available to all students, whether they receive special education services or other math interventions. The iReady, state testing, and classroom data also allow teachers to make informed decisions that lead to acceleration. Accelerated math courses are available to students in grades 7 and 8. These students not only receive instruction for the course-specific learning targets, but teachers also intentionally teach grade-level learning targets, regardless of the math course to which these students are assigned. We have found this to be essential for students who participate in accelerated math classes to maintain and strengthen grade-level proficiencies. In addition to global assessments, teachers use local assessments to ensure that students are working toward proficiencies throughout the year. These assessments are based on learning targets that were created by the math teachers based on the grade level Common Core State Standards. Assessments, like the core instruction, uses the mixed-spaced practice idea. Students are tested on targets that were recently taught, as well as targets that were previously taught. For example, on a chapter 7 math assessment, about half of the targets were directly instructed and practiced in chapter 7, while the other half of the targets are from previously-learned material.

We do not accelerate students in other curricular areas; however, all of our teachers differentiate within their classroom instruction to challenge each student. The teaching staff at Winneconne Middle School believes that all students can learn and achieve at high levels. The learning expectations for all grade 6, 7, and 8 students is to attain a proficient level of knowledge and skill as measured against each learning target. This expectation is inclusive for all students within all curricular areas. The goal for our students is to achieve a minimum of one year of learning growth as a result of one year of instruction.

## 1c. Science:

Winneconne Middle School adopted NGSS in 2014 in order to provide a more hands-on approach to learning. It incorporated a K-12 scaffolding of the four major science domains: Life Science, Physical Science, Earth and Space Science, and Engineering. In 2017, when Wisconsin adopted a slightly modified version of NGSS, Winneconne did as well in order to provide a more local approach to the education of our students while maintaining the high expectations set by NGSS.

In grade 6 science, students are immersed in hands-on science labs and activities. Students experiment using a variety of lab equipment and materials which reinforces science concepts, vocabulary and skills. Four major units of study include: Engineering and Experimental Design, Environmental Geology, Biology, and Physics. Each student also prepares a science fair project.

In grade 7 science, students learn through large and small group collaboration, hands-on lab experiences, online activities, and written assignments. They engage in learning three major content areas of science, Astronomy focuses on space exploration, composition of matter in the universe and the formation of objects in our solar system. Chemistry focuses on discovering what makes up all the matter on Earth, properties of matter and how matter is classified. Physics focuses on the various forces we experience in our daily lives and how forces affect motion. Engineering concepts are incorporated into science fair projects.

In grade 8 science, students explore basic biological concepts in a laboratory setting. Students focus on concepts that are shared by all living things such as cell structure, biochemical makeup, and inheritance. There is also a focus on the diversity of life: students classify the many different species of living organisms into kingdoms and other classification categories. Students learn that ecology relates to the interdependence of living organisms with each other and with their environment.

To ensure that each standard was being met, we distributed the standards in a manner that allows spiraling of the content through the middle school that aligns with our K-12 standards. Our teachers then broke each standard down into learning targets written in student-friendly language. Targets form the base of their daily lessons, each of which ties back to the Wisconsin Standards for Science.

The science teachers utilize multiple approaches for meeting the learning needs of students. For example, students engage in projects, stations labs, problem-based learning, and are presented with differentiated instruction throughout each unit. While completing projects, they are given choices in how they present what was learned. Stations labs allow students to encounter multiple learning styles including interactive videos, short readings, hands-on manipulations, art, and discussions at their current level of understanding. Problem-based learning opportunities encourage peer collaboration and critical thinking skills to solve challenges or complete tasks. The teachers strive to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in numerous ways during the learning process as well as during both formative and summative assessments.

### 1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

The Winneconne Middle School social studies teachers cover material spanning the early settlements of the United States to modern day American history, as well as the eastern hemisphere beginning with ancient civilizations to modern day. The K-12 social studies department meets throughout the year to create a scope and sequence that is aligned with the Wisconsin State Standards.

In grade 6, students build upon their knowledge of U.S. history. Students focus on the growth of our nation starting with the westward expansion and continuing through to present day. They explore the westward expansion of our nation, the Industrial Revolution, the growth of our nation during and after World War I. Students analyze the impact of the Great Depression on a nation and the factors that led World War II. As a new world power following World War II, students analyze the social and political changes that form the nation up to today.

In grade 7, students explore the eastern hemisphere by building basic concepts of geography and analyzing world populations. Students explore the culture, history, economy, geography, and government of areas in the eastern hemisphere. They learn about ancient civilizations of the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, India, China, Greece, and Rome, this includes the fall of Rome and the middle ages.

In grade 8, students learn the history of the United States from America's First Colonies up to the Post-Civil War. There is an emphasis on authentic-learning which requires the construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry with evidence that connects history to today's world.

This is to ensure that topics are covered with fidelity and to eliminate redundancy. The department values the use of multiple types of primary and secondary sources, critical thinking and analysis, utilizing one to one technology to enhance web-based learning and target-based assessing. The department has looked closely at the wording of our questions in summative assessments to promote the use of higher-level thinking. Students are assessed on learning targets created by Winneconne educators that are modeled in accordance to the Wisconsin State Social Studies Standards. The assessments vary from creative ways to show their learning through projects, presentations, and writing. Students receive rapid individual feedback, with encouragement towards taking topics outside of the classroom for additional study. When students are not proficient on assessments, they receive reteaching on individual targets and are allowed to retake assessments to show growth within learning. Overall, the social studies department promotes learning that will create reflective, empathetic, and engaged citizens.

**1e. For secondary schools:**

We prepare our students to be college and career ready via a variety of opportunities. At each grade level, students utilize Career Cruising software to start goal setting and planning by developing and revising their personal academic and career plans (ACPs) under the guidance of their mentors, staff, counselors, and parents. The ACP process is intended to be gradual, building year after year and supporting the unique development of each student. Goals and plans are expected to change through their middle school years based on each student's experiences, values, interests and ideas.

Grade 6 and 7 students focus on understanding the academic and career planning (ACP) process. They complete a Career Matchmaker and Learning Styles assessment. The students then use the results of these assessments to select two careers to research and explore. Grade 8 students take a Careers class, this class takes each student's college and career readiness to a much deeper level. The students continue working with the Career Matchmaker Learning Styles assessment , and My Skills Assessments in Career Cruising. They then research three different careers that most closely align to the assessment results. Students talk with professionals in those career paths at a career expo and learn from adults who are working in their chosen career. They explore each of the sixteen career clusters to broaden their exposure and understanding of each pathway. The students use all this information to create a plan for the high school classes needed for future technical school, four year college and work world applications. We want our students to have the knowledge, skills and and practical experiences to be successful in life after high school.

**1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**


**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

We believe that middle school is where students should explore a variety of subjects. While students learn from curriculum in core courses, kids also benefit from exploratory and elective subjects. These exploratory courses are sometimes called encore classes. These courses are beneficial to students, exposing them to areas not focused on in the core curriculum. These classes also impact student interests and future educational choices at the high school level. We offer elective classes and exploratory rotation classes at each grade level. Our students are strongly connected to music. Each year we average about 75 students in grade 6 band and choir. We have about 120 students in the combined grade 7 / 8 choir and 100 students in the combined grade 7 / 8 band. Grade 6 elective classes include band and/or choir. Rotation classes include art, health, Spanish, and Gateway to Technology (GTT). These classes rotate every quarter. Grade 7 elective classes include band and/or choir, art, and Spanish. Rotation classes include agriculture, health, and tech 7. These rotate every trimester during the school year. Grade 8 elective classes include band and/or choir, art, and Spanish.  We have about 120 grade 7 and 8 students taking Spanish and about 60 grade 7 and 8 students taking art each year. Rotation classes include careers, health, and Gateway to Technology (GTT). These rotate every trimester during the school year.  Physical education is offered to all of our students every other day all year.

**3. Special Populations:**

The middle school special education program is built on the philosophy that all students can achieve at high levels and individual students' needs drive the services and supports we provide.  There is definitely an emphasis on the "I" in Individual Education Plan (IEP). The special education services provided are tailored to meeting the individual academic and/or behavioral needs of students with disabilities. Our special education programs consist of full inclusion for students needing minimal academic and/or behavioral support, a co-taught model in math and language arts for students who are able to work within the regular education classroom receiving the support of the regular education teacher as well as the special education teacher and instruction provided in a pull out setting for students needing extensive intervention, modifications and/or accommodations.  In each of these environments, the regular education staff and the special education staff collaborate together to design and implement programs so that all students are exposed to and receiving grade level curriculum/instruction and learning at high levels.  Instruction provided

one-on-one, small group or whole group, uses targets that are based on grade level standards and curriculum but are modified to fit each students academic needs aligned with their IEP. Students' IEP goals and academic progress are closely monitored, data is collected on a regular basis to determine if the student is making progress toward meeting grade level learning targets as well as their IEP goals. Data-decisions are made, which leads to Instructional decisions being made, which ultimately leads to our students making academic and/or behavioral progress.

We use iReady as our math and ELA universal screener. We screen all our students three times per year. Teachers are able to use their professional judgment to not assess students at mid-year who already are meeting end-of- year achievement benchmarks on earlier screeners. That said, all of our ELA and math teachers currently screen all students with a mid-year and spring assessment. Our teachers realize that this data is valuable to determine levels of learning growth for all of our students, regardless of the level of achievement demonstrated on the fall assessment. Individual teachers and ELA and math data teams analyze the data to determine students' instructional needs.

Middle school students can participate in more than one learning intervention. Students identified with an ELA and math learning gap are placed in the intervention that reflects the greatest learning gap. This decision is made by our core team of teachers using data collected from universal and follow-up screeners. We normally select to support learning with an ELA intervention when the student data shows similar learning deficits in both ELA and math. We believe that supporting ELA first has the greatest learning impact across the other curricular areas. Students can participate in a tier 2 ELA intervention and still receive math support via our Math Lab every other day. The students who are most challenging to schedule and support are students who are at a tier 3 intervention level in both ELA and math. Tier 3 students are supported in an identical manner as the tier 2 students with the only difference being the intensity of time, tier 3 student are engaged in an intervention fives days a week for a minimum of thirty minutes each day. Students involved in a tier 3 math and ELA intervention is a very rare occurrence.

Each core grade level-team shares students who are not involved in interventions to balance supervision responsibilities; the priority is always to provide ELA and math support before support is given in other subjects. Our ELA and math teachers normally provide interventions during Focus Time. We provide ELA reading and writing interventions. Tier 1 (universal interventions) happen within the classroom through differentiation and during our 30 minute focus time. The primary goal for Focus Time is to provide a method of learning intervention for students, as well as to provide self-directed learning and enrichment opportunities for all students. We provide opportunities for reteaching and learning feedback for students from a content specific teacher. We provide an opportunity for selected students to receive additional learning support in Math and ELA. For Tier 2 and 3 interventions, the ELA team (6 teachers) is given the freedom to schedule the students and pair them up with the teacher to provide the ELA intervention that best uses time and resources. We allow our ELA and math teachers to use their professional judgment to determine the teaching and curricular approach that best meets the learning needs of the students identified for support. In addition to using the iReady toolbox for reading interventions, students are supported within the current curriculum and are clustered for support when common learning gaps are identified. Students are then progress monitored as needed. The teachers determine daily what each of the students need to work on to best close learning gaps. As time permits, students go to other teachers for support in social studies and science.

We provide math interventions for tier 1 (universal interventions) within the classroom through differentiation and during our 30 minute Focus Time. The math teachers identify students who for tier 2 learning supports who have gaps in essential math knowledge. Students are selected using the iReady assessment data, classroom observation, using local departmental grade level screeners. Math Lab is scheduled every other day (44 minutes). Tier 3 interventions occur during our 30 minute Focus Time with a math interventionist. In addition to receiving support on the standard curriculum, including clustering when common learning gaps are identified, students in tier 3 use the iReady toolbox for math. Math Lab is offered in grades 6-12 by a math teacher/interventionist.

We strive to have all of our students grow more than one year in their learning as a result of one year of instruction. Although closing student learning gaps is a focus, we also expect continued growth from

students who are working at/or above grade level. Classroom and standardized assessments are used to guide planning and instruction. Our teachers differentiate instruction to provide students with flexible learning options that extend and deepen learning. It is common for our students to have options in how they show evidence for learning. Projects, real world applications, and verbal assessments are used by students to show proficiency. Students also transfer skills and knowledge from one context to a new context with different variables and conditions.

We have accelerated math courses in grade 7 and 8.  We use a compacted math model in grade 7, essentially teaching two years of math within one school year. These accelerated math students then take Algebra in grade 8.  We intentionally teach grade level learning targets regardless of the math class that our students are assigned to. We have found this to be essential for students who participate in accelerated math classes. We use College Prep Math (CPM), we have found the format and curriculum to be challenging to all students.

We have a strong STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) program in our middle school and high school. The STEAM program includes Project Lead the Way classes. In Design and Modeling, our grade 6 students engage in developing mechanical design modeling skills using Autodesk Inventor. In Introduction to Technology, our grade 7 students focus on applying technology skills. They Identify, select and safely use tools, machines, products and systems for specific tasks. In Automation and Robotics, grade 8 students develop, analyze and understand the use of control systems. These classes serve as a natural bridge to our High School.

Student learning is also extended through our electives and clubs. Students at all grade levels participate in Vex Robotics, Art club, Mathletics, Quiz Bowl, Spanish 1, Jazz band, and Jazz choir. These learning opportunities also highly motivating to students while broadening their creative talents.

# PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

## 1. School Climate/Culture:

There is a shared vision and philosophy when it comes to teaching here at Winneconne middle school. The team effort is led by the grade 6-8 teachers and is supported by administrators. Many schools come to visit us because of our test results. We try to stress to the schools that they have to work on the culture of their building before they can fix their structures. All of the staff at our school strongly believe that ALL students can learn at high levels, and that it is their job to ensure all students learn. This belief permeates everything we do.

Assigned homework in all of our curricular areas is purposeful and aligned with the learning targets being taught. We have tried to eliminate a "worksheet mentality." A focus for the middle school and the district is aligning our assessments to our targets. The middle school also emphasizes "formative assessment" and "purposeful homework." The teachers are aware of the role that formative assessment (homework) plays in positively impacting student learning. Teachers give students learning feedback in real time, they take advantage of formative assessments used during class time to immediately reteach targets that students don't understand. This is more effective than waiting weeks to reteach targets after it is realized on a summative assessments. Regular formative assessment with feedback gives teachers the greatest chance for closing learning gaps.

Our classrooms have evolved to meet the changing needs of learning. Many of our classrooms have table versus traditional desks in rows. This change fosters collaborative student conversations around specific topics and/or question prompts. By having our students participate in conversations, teachers quickly confirm student engagement, respond to common misconceptions and provide learning feedback. This collaborative climate also makes it safer for students to make mistakes. Our students have shared that they are more likely to participate and answer questions after first being able to discuss and process their thoughts in small groups. The teachers take many student responses to questions before offering feedback or elaborating on what is shared. Teachers have found that this wait time encourages diversity in responses. Simple follow up questions such as "Tell me more" encourages deeper answers with students defending their answers with evidence.

Our success in closing student learning gaps is also the result of our school wide student learning objective or SLO. This student learning objective has focused on increasing student literacy achievement, and it aligns to our district wide literacy goal. We have intentionally chosen to use the building SLO goal as our individual teacher SLO objective in the middle school. The rationale behind this is to create and maintain a PLC (Professional Learning Community) relationship among all staff members. Having one learning objective for all staff members fosters a collective commitment within the staff to achieve the desired learning outcomes for all of our students. The middle school teaching staff supports all students in achieving the objective: student literacy transcends all curricular areas. We provide all our teachers with professional resources and collaborative meeting opportunities that ensure they are providing instruction that supports student literacy development in an effective way. The middle school has focused on improving our students' writing in past years, and our SLO for the 2018-2019 school year is to improve student vocabulary. Each year we establish a baseline achievement level for all of our middle school students. This data is then used by the building principal to create our building student learning objective. We collect data at mid year to determine if we are on track to achieving our student growth objective. We repeat this process in the spring to determine the success of meeting our student learning objective. This SLO is a continuation of the annual goal to improve achievement in student literacy which was first established in the 2013-14 school year.

The Winneconne Community truly understands the value our educators have on our students. As a symbol of that appreciation, the School Board gave all staff members an additional Personal Day for them to use as a thank you for all of their hard work.

## 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Winneconne Middle School has a tradition of building bridges with our families and community and this does not just mean that WMS welcomes all guests into the building. Our students reach out to the community as well. For example, a middle school teacher offered a summer school class that focused on kindness. Part of the curriculum included doing kind gestures outside of the building. Our community just completed a major Main Street overhaul which included a new expansive bridge that connects our East side of the village to the West side. Our "kindness club" summer school students brought the bridge construction workers bottled water and wrote kind messages to them on the sidewalk. The students also wrote messages on Main Street wishing our community members a wonderful day. Each lesson focused on being grateful and kind. It was a heart-warming experience for our students and our community members.

Our community recognizes that emotional wellness is critical in all grades. Through a community effort and the amazing work of our local Winneconne Area Community Foundation, approximately $14,000 has been raised to assist with emotional wellness screenings in 7th grade and 9th grade. Our community recognizes the importance of emotional health in our students and is willing to partner with us to ensure students get whatever assistance they need to ensure their health.

Our middle school science team has written grants to host out a Middle School Showcase night. Our community and families are invited to attend an amazing night of learning. Our students create a hypothesis in their science curriculum area, test it, analyze the results, and create a display module to explain their work. Our art students display their talents throughout the building. There are musical performances throughout the evening. In addition to our students displaying their efforts, the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh brings in hands on activities to show how science is applied in the "real world." This event is very well received and very well attended.

The Blue Ribbon nomination obviously recognizes our school's student achievement and growth. That being said, we also believe that the entire community is to take pride and credit in this nomination. When middle school students know they are valued and appreciated by not only their guardians but their community, it is one more developmental asset that allows for positive growth.

Our community has high expectations for all students. We collectively believe all students can learn at high levels, and clearly our middle school students are doing just that.

All of these endeavors create a true sense of community. Our name says a great deal - Winneconne Community School District. The community and school form a true partnership.

## 3. Professional Development:

In 2013, our district and school made a very intentional change to focus on four primary initiatives. We understood that initiative fatigue is real and wanted to have our teachers truly invest in fewer initiatives. As a result of many conversations, our focus for professional development directly relates to these four main areas of focus.

Educator Effectiveness: We want every student to have an effective teacher working with them for every hour of the day.

District-Wide Literacy: this is the foundation for the middle school's SLO goal.

Professional Learning Communities - Response to Intervention Process: We have systematic approach to how we work as teams, and process the needs of our students.

Grading and Reporting: We have a very clear set of targets that we teach to, assess to, reteach, etc. This is the foundation of answering the four questions of a Professional Learning Community.

The district provides significant time and resources to ensure our staff development (external presenters

and large conferences) directly relates to these four areas. Most of what our teachers attend on their own is also tied to these key areas of focus. That being said, we try to support the opportunities for learning for other areas as well. When teachers come across professional learning opportunities, we closely examine how it will help them improve in their instructional practice and make decisions to support on a case-by-case scenario.

During the past four years, our early release times and full professional learning days had a directly link to these areas. As a result of a very targeted focus, our teacher truly began to invest in our four initiatives and student learning was the beneficiary as a result of this very clear and specific focus.

4. **School Leadership:**

We believe that quality teaching is not an individual accomplishment; it is the result of a collaborative culture that empowers teachers to team up to improve student learning beyond what any of them can achieve alone. As a result, leadership in the building (the principal) trusts that the staff will do the right work and that work is done well. There is a collective commitment to learning that all staff embrace. We have high expectations for student learning (all students can learn at high levels). This positive climate and culture extends to students, teachers and all support staff members within the school. We develop the teaching skills of the staff by focusing on best practices and student achievement. Professional observation starts with giving feedback regarding how to improve instruction and student engagement. Ultimately, the goal is to create a great place for kids to learn that is evidenced by data driven results. We do not accept failure, the philosophy of "not yet" is part of our normal vocabulary. We have a positive learning climate and culture that extends to students, teachers and all support staff members within a school. We as a middle school staff start each school year developing relationships with our students. We focus on relationships by not addressing curriculum in any way during the few days of the school year. All students can achieve if they are surrounded people that believe in.

Teachers are empowered to lead formally and informally. The middle school building leadership team is selected by their peers. The building leadership team is comprised of one teacher from each grade level teams, one teacher from the special education team and one teacher from the encore team in addition to the principal and guidance counselor. The agenda topics are mutually created by the teachers and administration on the team. All topics are taken seriously regardless if they are considered to being trivial or complex. We have meeting norms that ensure we are positive, keep the greater good of all students in mind when making decisions and that we support each other when sharing information to the staff. Many teachers on the staff lead by example, they have no formal title nor formal recognition. For example, during a post observation conference a first year teacher was asked the reflective question, "What are the qualities of a distinguished teacher?" The first year teacher responded with, "That is easy" and then gave the name of a partner teacher. The discussion continued with numerous descriptions of how that partner teacher plans, uses learning data, and responds to both students who need learning extended and those that need learning gaps filled. Teachers working hard and "doing the right work" is common in our middle school.

Continual improvement and growing student learning is a leading mission for our school. We have the expectation and culture for growing our students' learning as our highest priority. The middle school has improved its overall state report card achievement score each year since 2011.

Winneconne middle school State Report Card rating history;
2011-12 = 71.4 - Meets Expectations
2012-13 = 74.0 - Exceeds Expectations
2013-14 = 77.2 - Exceeds Expectations
2014-15 = No State report card issued
2015-16 = 89.8 - Significantly Exceeds Expectations (5th highest score in the state)
2016-17 = 93.5 - Significantly Exceeds Expectations (4th highest score in the state)
2017-18 = 93.9 - Significantly Exceeds Expectations (3rd highest score in the state)

Every adult at Winneconne Middle School; teachers, paraprofessionals, office staff, library staff, custodians, and principal have a role when it comes to our students' educational success. Relationships

formed with staff have positively impacted individual student attendance, attitude, motivation and kindness. We believe our success in closing the gaps starts with our students feeling welcome, safe, and respected. Everyone at Winneconne middle school finds themselves in a leadership role even when it is least expected.

# Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our success in closing learning gaps and students achieving at high levels is the result of three elements; targets based teaching and assessment practices, separating student learning from student behaviors, staff communication and collaboration.

Our transition from traditional teaching and grading practices to targets based instruction, assessment and reporting approach started with four questions from a professional learning community perspective (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker): What will we expect our students to know? How will we determine that they know it? How will we respond when they do not know it? How will we respond when they do know it? Early in our work, our teachers realized that the standards were too broad to effectively teach to and assess. As a result, we now call it Targets Based instruction, assessment and reporting. Our teachers broke each curricular standard into smaller specific learning targets that are taught and assessed. We are in the sixth year of that journey and are seeing a difference in how our students approach learning in classrooms. Our teachers no longer view learning through a traditional "I have taught it" approach. Instead, we now have a "have the students learned it" approach. We view learning as the constant and time as the variable in our planning for instruction and assessment. We have separated learning from behaviors. We do not penalize an academic grade because of late work, for example. Turning in something late is a behavior; it is not a reflection of the knowledge or skill that the student has. We have aligned our assessments to learning targets and have written quality assessments that represent appropriate depth of knowledge. We continue to have conversations on how to best report out to students and families. (report card). We continually reflect on how to best implement high quality instruction, provide regular formative feedback, and provide learning supports and interventions within the context of a targets-based approach to learning. We continue to grow as professionals.

We report out behaviors to our students and parents using the "PAW." (Practice Kindness, Always show Respect, Work to do your Best.) The PAW focuses on student life skills/behaviors. This reporting is done via regular progress reports. Each teacher gives feedback to parents and students with a PAW behavior rating for their class. The behavior ratings that we use are 3 = Consistently, 2 = Sometimes, 1 = Rarely. A student behavior rubric is used by teachers to help parents and students see the behavior items that are evaluated.

We view learning as the constant and time as the variable, all students are given opportunities to demonstrate their current level of understanding and proficiency of targets via summative assessments at any time. Students are able to redo/retake any summative assessment recorded as evidence for proficiency of a learning target. These opportunities are intended to allow students to demonstrate improved level of competence with respect to a learning target. This procedure requires additional learning on the part of the student, and additional teaching by the teacher before another assessment opportunity is provided. Homework/practice is not part of a student's summative grade (not graded). Formative work is used to determine a student's progress toward understanding and proficiency of a learning target. As a result, formative assessments such as homework, quizzes and check-ups are also not part of a student's summative grade. Extra credit is not offered as a means to improve a grade(s) because the academic grade is based on proficiency of the course learning targets. Analysis of assessment data to improve our student and school performance is a continual process. For example, our school's Wisconsin Forward Exam results alerted us to the fact that our students needed support in building their vocabulary, so our ELA department put together cross curricular activities for root words, prefixes, and suffixes of Greek and Latin origin to help our students learn how to decode unfamiliar words. In-class activities involving word building and decoding, along with periodic formative assessments, allow our teachers to keep track of student vocabulary growth. Careful building-wide analyzation of our assessment results helped us determine this deficiency, and we worked quickly to come up with a solution to help our students grow in this area of need.

Communication and collaboration play a major role in the learning success of our students. We have a 44 minute block of time daily for our core teachers (ELA, math, science, social studies) to meet and collectively plan. Monday and Friday are grade level core team meetings. Tuesday and Thursday are curriculum team meetings. Wednesday is student day. The principal, counselor, school psychologist, special

ed teacher meet with each grade level core team to discuss the social emotional needs of our students in addition to their learning needs. The teachers have the freedom to determine how to best use their planning time. For example, the teachers may chose to meet exclusively as a curriculum team for extended period of time when there it is a planning need.