U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Old Turnpike School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 171 Old Turnpike Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Califon   State NJ   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07830-3050

County Hunterdon County

Telephone (908) 439-2010   Fax (909) 439-3160

Web site/URL https://www.tewksburyschools.org/   E-mail mmitchell@tewksburyschools.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. Jennifer Shouffler   E-mail_jshouffler@tewksburyschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Tewksbury Township School District   Tel. (908) 439-2010

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 Cynthia Pettegrove
(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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.

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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

    2 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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
    [X] Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	4	4	8
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	38	28	66
7	27	35	62
8	38	40	78
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	107	107	214

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
   the school (if unknown, estimate):   3.7 % Asian
                                0 % Black or African American
                                3.3 % Hispanic or Latino
                                0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                88.8 % White
                                4.2 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 4%

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	4
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	214
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %

                                               0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

        Total number students who qualify: 6

8. Students receiving special education services: ___17___ %

   ___36___ 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	_3_ Multiple Disabilities
_0_ Deafness	_0_ Orthopedic Impairment
_0_ Deaf-Blindness	_14_ Other Health Impaired
_0_ Developmental Delay	_10_ Specific Learning Disability
_1_ Emotional Disturbance	_3_ Speech or Language Impairment
_0_ Hearing Impairment	_0_ Traumatic Brain Injury
_0_ Intellectual Disability	_0_ 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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   _15:1_

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	96%	97%
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 2019.

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.

The mission of the Tewksbury School District is the continual development of each child's intellectual, artistic, social, and physical abilities in a positive environment, which fosters self-esteem and a love of learning.

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

Old Turnpike School is a choice school that accepts Tier 2 students and gives enrollment preference to applicants who have a sibling currently attending our school. The district also provides enrollment preference to resident students who move before the application deadline and will give special consideration to resident students who move after the application deadline. Applicants for our school choice must meet any program-specific criteria and the district must have seats available in the desired grades.

PART III - SUMMARY

Old Turnpike School, in Tewksbury Township, is a residential community located in the northeastern portion of Hunterdon County, New Jersey. The community consists of approximately 6,100 people spread over thirty-one square miles. The entire Tewksbury Township is comprised of the unincorporated communities of Mountainville, Oldwick, Pottersville, Cokesbury, and Fairmount. Historically, the land was owned predominantly by farmers. Today, much of the land is owned and populated by many professional people who commute into New York City and other cities.

The whole community is well served by our school system which is noted for providing individualized attention to our students. We are well known for providing a curriculum that is educationally challenging and is enhanced by its outreach partnerships with local organizations, such as Bank Street College, Raritan Valley College, Whittemore Wildlife Sanctuary, and Raritan Headwaters Nature Conservatory. Tewksbury Township's rural setting has been preserved over the years.

Old Turnpike School applies all available knowledge about teaching and child development to improve the education of our students. It is necessary for educators to understand adolescent intellectual growth in order to design activities that meet students' "zone of proximal development," as theorized by Vygotsky, and allow them to find meaningful engagement. Teachers in our school are keenly aware of how children learn in order to create child-centered classrooms. Our in-house Professional Learning Communities of teachers share their expertise with each other. Our many professional learning opportunities that happen during the school day and beyond, also help our educators understand new research in education and explore ways to improve student learning.

Teachers recognize the benefits of collaboration with others to improve teaching and learning at our school. Our school this year has been working with local schools to learn about school scheduling alternatives. In addition, a group of teachers attended a workshop at Bank Street College in New York City on the emotional responsive classrooms. We started a partnership with Bank Street College to help guide us on strategies and practices that can help our community of learners focus more on social and emotional well-being. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is our district goal for the year. A coach from the college has visited our school several times to share strategizes with the Principal and our SEL committee. This helps our teachers learn more about the social-emotional learning needs of adolescents. In addition, teachers are active members in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). They meet multiple times a month to explore areas of student learning they would like to improve. Topics this year include: exploring ways to improve students' financial literacy, enriching students' experiences with alternative texts with in English Language Arts classes, and refining homework to allow for more meaningful after-school learning. Students have also worked with teachers in their PLCs. Our yearly Remembrance Day, a day to honor veterans, is an example of one PLC where students have made contributions along with teachers.

We know through Piaget's research that knowledge is being constructed through interactions between mental structures and the physical/social environment. In our school, the teacher's role is to facilitate students' discovery of knowledge through activities and social interactions. The teachers work to find rich teaching materials that allow our students to engage in various problem-solving situations to find new possibilities and new ideas. Our teachers model critical thinking as they examine evidence of student understanding and find their own discoveries into student thinking. They use a variety of technology tools and test-based resources to meet various students' learning needs.

Our school community believes all children should have the ability to participate in the decisions about how their time is spent in school. Students have opportunities to have voice in the functioning of our school through an active student council and many school committees. Who we are and how we treat one another is where we begin in our community as learners. To live by this message, we have worked with our students to organize and run events, such as our Week of Respect, where students painted rocks and created paper cranes to beautify our school. Students also created Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on how to show greater respect for one another. Another example of student engagement is the extended participation in several student-educator committees. These include the Food Advisory Committee, Bus Recommendations

Committee, and Student Awards Committee. Lastly, recognizing the challenges our students and families face with technology, particularly social media, students and the principals designed a Social Media night for our community. Students help educate others on promoting better social and emotional well being considering the negative effects social media can have on adolescents. Students ran sessions educating parents on the how-to's of the various apps popular in their age group. Through these experiences we hope our students can discover how to participate in the transformation of society for the better.

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 curriculum and instruction at Old Turnpike School embodies the belief that education should be a vehicle to transmit the knowledge and skills that humans have accumulated over time (Dewey, 1916). We also believe that it is not enough to just integrate children into society as it exists today. Our curricular approach is one in which students learn to be critical thinkers about their world. This vision is reflected in the teaching strategies and learning standards used to engage students. Our pedagogical practices focus on inquiry-based instruction, where students are encouraged to make meaning out of their learning through interactive experiences. The teachers ask highly thoughtful questions to guide and enhance student learning. Achieving the skill of critical thinking will enable our students to be successful participants in society.

Learning is always personal, so we differentiate learning to help meet students' needs. Teachers know that our students will understand material at different levels of sophistication and plan for this in lessons. Our school curriculum mirrors students' own experiences back to them, while also insisting that they look through the window of others' experiences and develop empathy (Styles, 1996). We view differences as a resource in the classroom, and, therefore minimize ability grouping in our school schedule. Individual differences are seen as beneficial because they produce a range of ideas and allow students to make connections. The sharing of ideas through discussion allows each student to learn new concepts and ways of viewing learning.

Old Turnpike School has applied available research about teaching and intellectual development to improve the education of our students. Our educators apply research on adolescent intellectual growth to design activities that meet students' development needs and find meaningful engagement. Knowing how children learn supports our goal of creating children-centered classrooms. New research in neurobiology informs how we help our students develop logical decision-making and relationships. The teacher's role in our school is to facilitate students' discovery of knowledge through activities and social interactions.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Old Turnpike School follows a Language Arts curriculum created by the sixth through eighth grade Language Arts teachers. The curriculum is based on the state standards and focuses on reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Grade level curriculum is divided into a blend of thematic and genre based reading and writing units. Each unit and 55 minute daily class is designed with the learner in mind.

To begin each year, all grade levels focus on character development in a work of fiction. Following this introductory unit, grade levels explore different literary genres. Examples of these genres include: realistic fiction, historical fiction, dystopian fiction, informational text, and nonfiction narrative. All grade level literature consists of a variety of texts that represent different races, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and geographic locations. This literature enables students to broaden their perspectives and to make real world connections. Each reading unit allows for thematic connections between novels and paired texts, including poetry, song lyrics, short stories, and nonfiction in order to communicate the real-world significance of material in both a personal and a universal way. Through the use of read-alouds, mentor texts, close reading, and modeled mini lessons, students are taught a variety of reading and writing skills which are then applied to their independent experiences. Each reading independent experience is differentiated based on student choice. Through this instruction, the integration of reading and writing becomes more rigorous.

Embedded within each reading unit, students simultaneously take part in a writer's workshop which reflects main ideas and themes within the novels studied. The writing curriculum throughout all grade levels is based on a progression composed of narrative, informational, and argumentative pieces. Students use classroom resources and teacher-modeled examples as springboards to brainstorm, plan, revise, and complete their own original work. Writing skills are developed through guided mini-lessons and one-on-one conferencing

allowing each student personalized learning instruction.

Word study is driven by the novels and used as a method to improve reading comprehension. Vocabulary instruction is designed to advance students' understanding of the importance of diction and interpreting meaning and expressing ideas. Grammar instruction is approached both holistically and through the use of direct instruction and the online resource NoRedInk.com

Various formative and summative assessments are used to monitor student learning. Assessments include, and are not limited to: on-demand cold writes, formal essays generated through the writing process, written reflections, annotations, dif,ferentiated learning stations, and daily entrance and/or exit assessments. Through ongoing assessments, teachers have the opportunity to design mini-lessons and small group instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Speaking and listening skills are assessed informally through class discussions and formally through socratic seminars, book club discussions, and oral presentations, both individual and group.

1c. Mathematics

Old Turnpike School follows a mathematics curriculum developed by the math teachers and the curriculum supervisor. The curriculum is built on the New Jersey Learning Standards. While these standards are the main learning goals, there are many strategies used to implement the standards in the classroom. For example, teachers use differentiated instruction strategies to meet individual learning needs. Lessons are designed to allow for student choice and include students' interests. By empowering students and tapping into their interests, students are better able to make the connections for challenging mathematical concepts. Teachers use effective questioning techniques to support meaningful whole class and small group discussions. This strategy helps students become partners in the classroom by constructing meaning for themselves and their peers. Having students talk through their thinking out loud is how we help students conceptualize the standards at OTS.   When students talk about their thinking, they make connections among math concepts.

The instructional approach used most frequently to meet our learning goals in mathematics is teaching through problem solving. We believe students need to be problem solvers to be able to be better citizens in our society. We have learned that meaningful student engagement comes from offering rich problems. Rich problems have a variety of solutions or a variety of strategies that lead to one solution. We also believe that it is important for students to share their ideas with small groups or the entire class. This way they can learn about the many different strategies others have used to solve the same problem. Differentiated instruction is also an instructional approach teachers employ regularly to meet the needs of individual students. Differentiation occurs when students are given opportunities for choice, multiple entry points, and interest-based instruction.   At times, teachers use explicit instruction strategies to correct student misconceptions about essential mathematical concepts.

At OTS, mathematics teachers use many forms of assessment to understand what students know and do not know. The information from various assessment tools inform instruction. Teachers use formative assessment at the end of lessons, such as exit tickets, to help to plan for the following day. This helps to determine whether teachers need to go back and review some of the topics before moving on to new concepts. Teachers also use formative assessment at the beginning of a unit or lesson to determine if students have prior knowledge about the concept or if they have any misconceptions that we need to address before starting the unit.

Summative assessments are used at the end of each unit to check for student retention of topics learned. In addition, summative assessments are used at the end of each school year to make data driven decisions on how learning should be planned for the following year. Teachers use a standardized test, MAPS testing, in conjunction with teacher generated assessments to gather data needed to understand overall student learning needs. Every year we analyze state-wide assessments to help monitor student learning and make decisions about curriculum scope and sequence.

1d. Science

OTS approaches New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) science standards through inquiry and three-dimensional learning, drawing from the pillars of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) (cross-cutting concepts, science/engineering practices, and disciplinary core ideas). As a department, we believe inquiry-based learning, supported by this three-dimensional approach, is the best method to hook students' interests, encourage authentic learning, and foster lifelong interest in science. We address standards by soliciting student ideas about natural phenomena, then planning opportunities for related student inquiry. This leads to true learning and understanding of how the world works and, most importantly, instills a love of science.

An example of an inquiry-based lesson that encompasses the heart of our instructional approach is engineering a prosthetic hand. This authentic learning experience tasks students with using the three pillars of NGSS to solve a problem: design a prosthetic hand that can hold a cup of water. Explicit instruction is utilized to learn about anatomy of a hand, the school's 3D printer is employed for students to design parts, G Suite for Education is used to collaboratively maintain an Engineering Notebook, and an amputee comes to present about different types of prosthetics and surviving the loss of a limb. These multifaceted approaches enrich understanding of scientific concepts while engaging students in real-life experiential learning.

Formative assessment data drives our practice. We constantly check the pulse of our students' understanding, informally through conversations and formally through tech-based applications like Google Forms. This allows for differentiation; for instance, formative assessment might inform us that students are struggling to write arguments, prompting the need for graphic organizers. For summative assessments, authentic, problem-based assessments are the best opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge. In place of traditional memorization tests, we opt for lab-based assessments. For example, sixth-grade students are tasked with designing an investigation to test the strength of an electromagnet. They test numerous variables, analyze their data, and then write arguments supported by evidence. Both formative and summative assessment data leads to a greater understanding of our students and informs future instruction.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

The Old Turnpike School middle school Social Studies curriculum spans sixth grade through eighth grade. In sixth grade, students are exposed to the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome, as well as the medieval empires of Byzantium and the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. In seventh grade, students learn about the discovery of the Americas up to the formation of the Constitution, and in eighth grade, continue American history through the Civil War.

In addition to fulfilling the Social Studies New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) requirements, the Social Studies classes integrate Language Arts standards as well, employing a rigorous writing program in all three grades. Using data, from written assessments and comparing it to NJSLA scores in Language Arts helps the instructors to plan for instruction and group students appropriately, which helps to fulfill a district goal to provide small group instruction to students within a class.

Students use a variety of technology in class to create presentations, videos, and creative art. They are also required to integrate STEM and problem-based learning into their Social Studies assignments; for example, they design a functional Roman-style aqueduct in sixth grade and simulate the creation of the Constitution in a Constitutional Convention unit in seventh grade.

Social Studies classes do not simply cover the history; however, the classes also integrate a discussion of current events, a study of geography and culture, the art of debate, and a study of genocide in accordance with the 1994 NJ Holocaust and genocide education mandate. Financial literacy is emphasized throughout all three grades, both as a separate unit and as a subtext to existing units (i.e. simulating how a mercantilism-based economy functions while learning about the American colonies). All in all, it is the firm belief of the OTS community that our Social Studies curriculum makes our students well-rounded, informed citizens with the ability to empathize and communicate with others, as well as the ability to solve real-world problems.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

The Tewksbury Preschool is based on the philosophy of preparing children at a young age to be self-motivated and self-directed learners in an inclusion setting. Our language-based program is designed to be both child-centered and exciting with a play-oriented curriculum driven by the teaching strategies of The Creative Curriculum for Preschool in alignment with the New Jersey Department of Education's Preschool Teaching and Learning Expectations: Standards of Quality. Our preschool curriculum is planned to stimulate intellect and imagination so that powers of thinking are developed. By allowing the children to explore questions about their world, they make connections to their surroundings that encourage them to be enthusiastic, kind, and conscientious individuals.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool focus is built on productive decisive play that wires essential learning, social- emotional fitness, teachers-families as a valued community, as well as physical, cognitive, and language development. This all takes place in a routine driven environment with choice times and small/large group instruction that create a classroom community in which the children learn how to get along with others and solve problems peacefully. The Creative Curriculum permits the children to embrace six content areas which include- literacy, science, social studies, math, the arts, and technology. The children participate in many multi-sensory activities and language rich experiences that frame the knowledge included in the NJ State Standards. Other addressed core-curriculum areas include social/emotional development where the children participate in a variety of interactive activities that develop self-confidence, focusing skills, pro-social behaviors, and team building. The creative arts are enhanced through opportunities for artistic self-expression, movement, music appreciation, and dramatic play experiences.

Being an inclusion preschool in the Tewksbury Public School system has given us the opportunity to be communal based. It has been extremely valuable being able to articulate with upper class staff. Our communication has made it possible to be privy to the skills that are essential for success in subsequent grades as well as share the needs of our children so that they have many future enriched school experiences.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Old Turnpike School recognizes students for their unique abilities, ideas, and needs. We do not narrowly define education in terms of academics, but also include emotional, artistic, and creative aspects of individuals. Students have many opportunities to learn about the arts, social-emotional competencies, music, S.T.E.M., sports, and digital literacy throughout their day and after-school in 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

Old Turnpike School offers a performing arts program that includes elective participation in choral music, band, and strings. These programs offer instruction in over twenty different instruments, and students receive up to 90 minutes of instruction on each instrument per week. OTS offers auditioned after school performance groups for students in choral music and instrumental music. These groups perform at least four times per year for concerts and community outreach events.

The general music program at OTS focuses on a performance-based curriculum where all students receive instruction in guitar, piano and ukulele. The program culminates with authentic assessment where students plan a class performance and perform full arrangements on instruments of their choice. Students also explore other topics such as the History of Western Music, Composition using our Mac music lab, and a survey of the 21st century music industry.

Old Turnpike Middle School welcomes students into a rich visual art program. With their time at OTS, student artists become well versed in various artistic processes including but not limited to drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking and graphic design. Each skill is explored through student choice with freedom to express their individual ideas, producing a truly personal experience and final product. Students also discover the work of various artists and art movements across many cultures.

The Digital Literacy program at OTS shows students how to navigate research in the 21st century. Through authentic problem solving students learn how to employ effective research strategies and collaborate together to investigate solutions. Students learn effective communication skills and are asked to convey complex ideas through presentation, digital communication and visual models. In addition, students learn how to be responsible and positive digital citizens through exploring ethical internet practices and the permanence of their actions in the digital world.

All students at Old Turnpike School participate in Project Lead the Way's Gateway to Technology Middle School program. Students explore and are engaged in units that not only develop knowledge and skills in disciplines such as computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. They also are empowered to develop essential 21st century skills such as: problem solving, critical and creative thinking, communication and collaboration, and perseverance.

Old Turnpike Middle School offers Spanish as a World Language to their students. Sixth and 7th grade focus on thematic units with support of the textbook "Realidades" while 8th graders engage in a mini-novel called "Patricia va a California". Students also create songs, poems, dialogues, and presentations in the target language to demonstrate mastery of skills. The program engages students in cultural aspects as well such as El Dia de Los Muertos and El Cinco de Mayo.

At Old Turnpike School, students in the 6-8 grade participate in a comprehensive Physical Education and Health program. In Physical Education, the primary focus is to promote lifetime activities to enhance the student's overall physical health. In every Physical Education class, students participate in a prescribed progressive exercise routine and a variety of team centered activities. Students in Physical Education work collaboratively with each other to improve team building, compromise, and communication with their classmates. Classes are designed to be student centered.

In Health, students in the 6-8 grade focus on three very important areas of overall well being. The three areas are physical health, mental health, and social and emotional health. The main goal of the Health program is to provide current, relevant, and accurate information to the students in order to promote a healthy lifestyle and to allow the students to make healthy lifestyle choices.

In the area of Character Education, as a district we have been working with Bank Street College of Education for the past school year to align our SEL program with Emotional Responsive Classroom practices. ERC helps students learn to understand and manage emotions as well as how to feel and show empathy for others.

3. **Academic Supports**:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Close relationships between staff members provide the foundation for layered, more formal/extensive mediation for students who perform below grade level. Staff compiles and analyzes New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) scores, MAPS scores, informal reading inventory data, grades, and class materials/notes to perpetually monitor student performance. Grade level teachers are in constant contact with support staff to make sure needs are being met and challenges are always addressed if students outwardly start to falter. A formal network for intervention/referral also meets as needed for students who show signs of struggling. Supports would then include ASAP (Academic Skills Assistance Program), organizational help (with peers), and extended review periods built into school schedules.

The ASAP program operates in Math and Language Arts and provides extended modeling, one to one instruction, and constant check-ins within the classroom. In Math, subject area teachers co-teach sections of students along with another math teacher. This is also done in ELA; moreover, phonics instruction is also offered for students who show severe issues with decoding/encoding/fluency. Through the Wilson program (Just Words and WRS), students are in small groups or 1-1 with certified Wilson instructors during extra instructional time. This multi-level approach for students with ELA deficits arose due to the increased

emphasis on literacy across content areas.

Using multiple data points and constant communication between all parties, students with decoding/encoding/fluency issues are identified in ELA. Students who struggle to work at grade level independently in math are supported through a similar combination of strategies. The process of identification and implementation reflects synergy between general education, special education, administration, and school-home communication. The flexibility of the educational community at OTS aims to support all students, especially those who struggle with literacy.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Old Turnpike School identifies students above grade level beginning in 5th grade through two tests, the CogAT and the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. Students who score at a designated level on the CogAT then take the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking. Students who score high on the Torrance can then enter our Aspire program. The Aspire program provides above and beyond the normal scope and sequence of curriculum and learning experiences provided for OTS students.

Aspire meets twice a week for students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Over the course of three years, students in Aspire have multiple learning opportunities that allow them to go deeper and further in their learning. Aspire creates the conditions for learning via multiple strategies and techniques. Student agency is an essential part of Aspire and a lot of the work done during their Aspire time is student driven such as student designed and created TedTalks. Students choose a topic they're passionate about or something they want to influence and/or change and create a TedTalk.

Students also have the opportunity to partake in Junior Solar Sprints where they are challenged to design, build, and race solar-powered model cars. Students also have the opportunity to partake in the Future City competition, a project based learning experience, where they are challenged to reflect on and research what is the model future city.

Students in Aspire also have the opportunity to work with the Digital Literacy teacher. This collaboration helps them develop and learn higher level digital literacies skills they use to assist in the completion of their various projects. These tools provide students the ability to leverage technology to connect, create, change minds, raise awareness, take action, and find answers to their questions.

3c. Special education

Old Turnpike Middle School tailors instruction, interventions, and assessments to meet the needs of our special education population by providing formative and summative standard-based assessments and several levels of services. Depending on testing results the students are afforded different levels of placement. The students, with Individualized Education Program who that exhibit dyslexic tendencies including severe decoding issues, yet are able to function within the general education classroom, are able to attend pull-out reading intervention either one-to-one or small group through the Wilson Program. Students with a minimal communication disability or a lesser discrepancy in specific learning disabilities may be afforded in-class placement with para-educator support. Students with more involved issues may be assigned an in-class placement with a special education teacher. Tier three students have the option of resource room pull-out instruction where the student is able to work on individual objectives in a small group setting. Depending on the nature of the specific learning disability these students may also receive in-class support for all or some of the other academic subjects.

Individual student achievement is ascertained each year by employing several different types of assessments. First, New Jersey state testing results are shared with teachers at the beginning of the school year results are analyzed to critique the current curriculum, highlight areas of strength, and indicate areas that need growth. The students also take the MAPS NWEA test at the end of each year for reading and math. The items generated during this online test are an effective indicator of individual growth. Additional reading progress for special education students in the middle school is assessed using the Burns and Roe Informal Reading Inventory. Three times each year the students are individually tested for word

recognition, reading pace, and comprehension. Writing progress is monitored through student benchmark writing samples along with graded grade-level rubrics. In addition, three times each year student performance on individual objectives is reviewed and results are recorded in a Progress Report sent home to parents. These progress reports become a permanent part of the IEP.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Old Turnpike School is a small school, with under 200 students in three grade levelsAs a result every student is seen and known as an individual by every adult in school, staff as well as teachers. Our principal and school secretaries, our nurse and the cafeteria staff are all comfortable engaging with our students in meaningful and personal ways.

Teachers are organized into grade level teams who are able to take "ownership" of the students at that grade level. Our schedule allows for four team planning times a week. As a result, teachers are really able to consider the whole child. They can discuss and problem solve around social, emotional and behavioral concerns, as well as academic concerns. This also allows them to engage in cross-curricular planning, to plan exciting lessons and units, as well as school wide special events and activities, such as fun and creative activities related to our Week of Respect. Each grade level also has larger specific events and activities that are unique to each grade, such as our three day environmental learning trip for 6th grade, or our three day Washington DC trip for our 8th graders. These activities promote a sense of grade level cohesiveness.

Considering the small size of our school, Old Turnpike School offers a wide variety of after school clubs and activities. This includes twelve interscholastic teams over three seasons, two intramural/club teams (ultimate frisbee and volleyball), a full scale drama production, an improv club, ski club, jazz band and vocal ensemble

Every school day includes a 40 minute flexible period called Enrichment and Review or E&R. E&R allows students to get extra help or to make up missed work. It is also a time for our full chorus and band to hold practices. But mostly, our students use it as a time to relax and socialize, to chat with teachers or the school counselor, or to get caught up on their homework, alleviating some of their stress.

Our school counselor and the social emotional learning team are exploring a myriad of ways to promote emotional growth in our students. This includes classroom lessons, weekly activities by teachers, rotation of all students through a "Guidance Lunch," and special programing. A peer mentorship program connects 8th graders with 6th graders in need of organizational support, and participation in the President's Volunteer Service Award promotes volunteerism in our community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Old Turnpike School (OTS), actively partners with community organizations and our community. To ensure these relationships grow and improve, we implement several strategies. School leadership regularly meets with our education foundation to discuss ways our relationship can benefit OTS students academically as well as their social and emotional well being. The education foundation has helped us partner with Code the Future for our 6th graders where they learned to code and design robotic cars. This partnership helped bring in BJ Ward to talk with our 7th graders to learn about poetry. The education foundation also sponsors a trip to Broadway for every 8th grade student to experience a musical. Every student at OTS has the opportunity to meet a holocaust survivor that comes to share their story yearly because of this partnership.

At OTS, we also partner with a county organization, Hunterdon Health who comes to our school and speaks with our students in Health/PE class about fitness, cyber addiction, and mental health awareness. Another county organization we partner with is Hunterdon Prevention Resources who presents their program TEEN VAPING: On The Road to Addiction to each of our 6th, 7th and 8th grade health.

This year, OTS partnered with our education foundation and PTA to design and run a Social Media night for our community to help educate our OTS community on the negative effects social media can have on tweens and teens. What made this evening particularly unique were our students who sat on Town Hall Panel discussion and ran ten tables that educated the parents about the various social media apps students use.

OTS also ensures that parents and students are part of the change process. Whether it be our Food Advisory, Scheduling Committee, School Safety Committee, or many of the various PLCs we have in our school, parents and students are always part of the process. Their input is not only valued but helps us make the necessary changes to make OTS a better school for all.

Bringing parents and other community members into our school makes us aware of the various skills, knowledge and experience they have to offer that can create a broader and deeper learning experience with their participation. This year a parent, whose work is involved with mindfulness and is now willing to volunteer time to provide some mindfulness practice to our students. Another parent will be leading CPR classes for teachers and students.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

To support our goal of creating an environment where teachers' expertise is valued and supported, OTS has, over the years, implemented many opportunities for on-going professional learning. Establishing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have encouraged teachers' voice and leadership in affecting positive change in the school community. The teachers themselves create a goal around one area of student learning that they see as needing improvement. For example, in one PLC, teachers of English Language Arts are investigating new resources for supporting students' literacy skills with the use of shorter texts. Another PLC, working to beautify the school has created a garden with students. In order to design and implement a culture of norms around PLCs, teachers are encouraged to choose topics that align with their school goals and student learning needs.

Another way that we have created a professional learning culture in our school is through various committees and effective use of collaborative meeting times. Teachers have a voice in all our school goals, where we need to improve, and what should be on our agenda. In one example of a school committee, the teachers and the principal have created a Scheduling Committee to work on improving and changing our current schedule to improve the culture of learning for our students. This committee recognizes the increased importance of social-emotional learning (our district goal for the year) and how much a carefully designed schedule impacts student learning. This committee met with students and parents to allow all stakeholders to provide insight and feedback on our ideas of the current and proposed schedule. Our faculty meetings are collaborative. Teachers help create the agenda and facilitate the faculty meetings with their Principal. These practices turn our teachers from passive learners to active learners, as we hope for our students, as they are empowered to make decisions and suggest things to improve in our school.

Lastly, this past year we started a new way of honoring all OTS teachers with an activity called "You've Been Penned". Teachers who want to thank others in the school who have helped them, write a message celebrating those efforts and put in a large jar. A pen is then passed to symbolize this acknowledgement. That teacher then passes the pen to another educator. At the end of the year, we take out all the notes and read each one to celebrate the great work done throughout the year, and celebrate our fellow teachers.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of leadership at the Old Turnpike School is a collaborative leadership model where teachers, students, and stakeholders are part of the decision-making and execution of our vision for student learning and experience. The Principal is the educational leader of the school and works with the Supervisor of Special Services who works between two buildings; the elementary school, which is K-5 and OTS. They work together to make sure the needs of all students are met. The Principal also works regularly with the Superintendent who oversees the district curriculum. Together they ensure the curriculum is aligned with New Jersey State standards and instruction is delivered with a creative and innovative approach so students are not only engaged but empowered to learn. The Principal, Supervisor of Special Services and the Superintendent regularly meet to strategize policies and programs that will help create the proper conditions so learning happens more organically and students can maximize achievement.

The Principal and teachers partner with the education foundation regularly to help provide authentic learning

experiences for students. In the past and currently, this partnership has brought in Holocaust survivors to share their stories. This year a documentary movie maker was scheduled to come to talk about life in a Syrian refugee camp and help to bridge a partnership between OTS students and middle school Syrian children who live in refugee camps. The education foundation also brings in young entrepreneurs yearly to teach our students STEM through various project based learning experiences.

The Principal recognizes that effective leadership begins with establishing meaningful relationships with every part of the community of school. This involves parents and students assisting in processes and programming such as designing a schedule that facilitates a better learning environment, helping to decide what a healthy menu looks like for lunch, and running a social media night to educate parents and students about the many ways social media impacts our lives.

Teachers also play an active leadership role by working with school administration to write the student handbook, improve the code of conduct, and rethink homework policy. OTS administrators and teachers believe that meaningful learning cannot happen in the absence of an environment that does not put the social and emotional well-being of children first. Therefore, we worked together to redesign our schedule that focuses first and foremost on social and emotional learning, so our students can achieve in and out of the classroom.   Teachers also run events that bring history and literature alive so their learning isn't merely the product of class lessons or reading from a book. Remembrance Day is a day-long event that is run by teachers and students for local veterans who come and educate our students about history and share their powerful stories.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been the most instrumental to the success of Old Turnpike School is our practice of weaving the social and emotional into the fabric of everything we do. Old Turnpike School is a rural school with small class sizes that help our teachers build unique and lasting relationships with students in the classroom and outside of it on the athletic fields, on the stage performing, and in the art studio creating. Relationships are fundamental to not only leadership but learning and teachers and staff at OTS take this very seriously. The entire year teachers and students take time away from the classroom studies for programs and events that help bring us closer together. We organize and run pep rallies. The band plays music, our cheerleaders sing and dance, and other students fire up the crowds for the different sports teams. Throughout the year we run socials on weekends for students to come and dance or blow off steam in the gym playing various games. We have yearly trips to Camp Mason for 6th grade students, to Philadelphia for 7th grade students, and a two night trip to Washington, D.C. for 8th graders. Our student government and other students run various fundraisers to make many of our special events happen and raise money and awareness around issues that affect our local community, state, and world. Providing students the opportunity to bring about change enhances our academic environment because it feeds the social and emotional well-being of students and without that, learning is more difficult, challenging, and quite often, disengaging.

Camaraderie among staff is also very special and unique at OTS. Each month, groups of teachers organize and run a breakfast or lunch for all the staff. This winter we even had a chili cook-off with 15 submissions from our OTS community. We also have a Sunshine Club that supports teachers who get sick, are in need, or are welcoming a new child into their lives. Each day teachers have a 55 minute grade level meeting where they meet and collaborate on cross curricular learning opportunities and discuss the students they all teach. These meetings allow for greater discussions around each individual child so teachers can work together to support every student at Old Turnpike School. In particular, these meetings tend to focus mostly on the social and emotional well-being of OTS students. This commitment to taking care of one another is, ultimately, what helps OTS be a school where all students can learn and thrive.