

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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. Patrick Drees
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Teutopolis Junior High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 904 W Water Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Teutopolis State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 62467-1050

County Effingham

Telephone (217) 857-6678 Fax (217) 857-6051

Web site/URL <https://www.teutopolisschools.org> E-mail dreesp@ttown.k12.il.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Matthew Sturgeon E-mail sturgeonm@ttown.k12.il.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Teutopolis CUSD 50 Tel. (217) 857-3535

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 Mrs. Courtney Tegeler
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- ☐ Urban (city or town)
☐ Suburban
☒ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	17
K	101
1	79
2	70
3	78
4	80
5	72
6	91
7	83
8	95
9	70
10	81
11	96
12 or higher	74
Total Students	1087

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.3 % Asian
 - 0.3 % Black or African American
 - 0.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 97.4 % White
 - 1.3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 2%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	1074
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

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

Total number students who qualify: 37

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %
Total number of students served 128

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>5</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>18</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>16</u> Developmental Delay	<u>37</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>41</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %
Total number of students served: 5

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 13

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

12. 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 20:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	97%	98%	99%	99%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

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

Yes ☐ No ☒

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

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

To intellectually, emotionally, and socially equip those who pass through these doors with the ability and desire to make this world a better place for themselves and others.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://sites.google.com/town.k12.il.us/teutopolisunit50policiesmanual/section-5>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Teutopolis is a small, rural community in Illinois along I-70 between St. Louis and Indianapolis. The population of Teutopolis is 1,644 people; however, we draw students from 102 square miles. There is a very tight bond between the community and the Teutopolis school district. The vast majority of our students' parents and staff attended Teutopolis schools. Because of this, there is a great sense of pride and ownership in the district's successes. This tradition of unified excellence is what attracts new families to the area. To accommodate the needs of our growing community, new subdivisions with affordable lots for families are being constructed. Once established, it is uncommon for families to relocate out of Teutopolis; our mobility rate is 2%. Local parks, ice cream shops, and sports facilities are all within a mile of each other. It is a safe environment for children of all ages to interact, especially because of the close-knit and protective nature of the entire community.

Teutopolis Unit #50 consists of three buildings, each on its own campus, Teutopolis Grade School (TGS), Teutopolis Junior High School (TJHS), and Teutopolis High School (THS). Within the district, our free and reduced lunch rate is 3%. At TJHS, we serve students in seventh and eighth grades. It is located near a community park, which is often used for school activities such as physical education classes, recesses, and field day activities. Just as families form roots in the community, our teachers do as well with a teacher retention rate in the district of 92.8%. TJHS educators use a variety of research-based strategies to challenge, encourage, and support all students to achieve excellence in all that they do. Our staff is the frontline in the implementation of the district's mission: "The mission of Teutopolis Unit #50 is to intellectually, emotionally, and socially equip those who pass through these doors with the ability and desire to make this world a better place for themselves and others."

Our students are a vibrant component of life at TJHS. They enter with the strengths instilled in them by their families and the community. This enables them to achieve high expectations. Our daily attendance averages 98.2%, which demonstrates that academics are a priority for students and parents. When students are in the classroom, they actively participate in activities, discussions, and group projects. Extracurricular activities are offered to ensure all students feel included as a vital part of our school. These consist of athletics, scholastic bowl, student council, visual and performing arts, yearbook, lunchroom workers, and flag raisers. Yearly, over 90% of students are involved in one or more of these activities. Each and every day, students live out the school motto: "Learn Daily, Live Responsibly, Lead Respectfully, and Laugh Often."

TJHS is successful because of the combined efforts of all three of these vital components: community, school, and students. An interconnected web of support aids the school in reaching its goals. The Teutopolis Education Foundation (TEF), a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to supporting and enhancing quality educational programs for every student in Teutopolis schools. TEF seeks to generate funds not otherwise available to the district through fundraisers like electronic recycling drives, spaghetti suppers, and golf outings. These funds are awarded through grants to teachers and programs based on need. Teutopolis Sportsbackers provides financial assistance to athletics and other extracurricular activities. The funds generated by this organization are used to enhance programs and enable participants to reach their greatest potential. Teutopolis Park District works closely with the school district to ensure adequate facilities for athletic events. They have programs in place to develop student-athletes' skills outside of the school seasons. Finally, Teutopolis Civics Club is an organization available to the district as an avenue for assistance to families in need.

Our school is humbled and honored to have been nominated for the National Blue Ribbon School Award. This nomination not only recognizes the work of our school, but of our staff, our students, and our town. Our school is a seamless extension of our community, and we are proud to play a part in its success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

At TJHS, the reading/language arts curriculum was developed with the fundamental belief that reading comprehension and writing are essential for success across content areas and in life beyond the classroom. With the Illinois Learning Standards in mind, TJHS offers two separate courses, one focusing on reading standards and one on writing. Students attend each class daily for 41 minutes.

The units selected for the literature class integrate fiction and non-fiction companion texts, anchored by overarching essential questions as outlined within the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Into Literature curriculum. Cold-reads, close-reads with annotations, in-depth discussions, and quick-checks using standards-based questions focus on the literary aspects of the texts. To complement the HMH curriculum, novel studies reinforce important skills like author's purpose, point of view, theme, and character analysis. With an understanding of the lack of diversity among students, the literature selections at TJHS are purposefully chosen to expose them to the world as a whole and educate them on being responsible and empathetic citizens.

The language class focuses on grammar, vocabulary, and writing. To ensure that all related standards are addressed meaningfully, teachers maintain a comprehensive curriculum using materials from Glencoe Writer's Choice, Great Source Vocabulary for Achievement, and Write Source, respectively. Grammar is explicitly taught using units of study focusing on parts of speech. Student understanding is applied in both teacher-identified and student-created texts to ensure conceptual understanding. Vocabulary instruction involves class dissection and discussion of targeted words along with daily practice and application. Within the writing curriculum, the students learn about and engage with a variety of writing, such as narrative, argumentative, informative, research, descriptive, and creative. Students learn a multi-faceted writing approach which can be applied to all subject areas and includes pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. The ultimate goal of the language class is to support students as they develop the skills necessary to excel in whatever avenues they pursue after TJHS.

While the content varies, the approaches to instruction and assessment are consistent in both classes. Educators utilize a variety of research-based instructional strategies, such as scaffolding, mentor texts, and cooperative learning. The diverse needs of students' learning styles are addressed through auditory, visual, and kinesthetic resources. Formative and summative assessments are implemented within whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings. For example, one-on-one conferences are conducted with students during the writing process to provide individualized feedback that is detailed and specific. Students are also encouraged to assess themselves through self-evaluation of their digital writing portfolio after learning new skills. Annual standardized tests and regular benchmarking assessments are conducted and evaluated to determine gaps in student achievement and guide further individualized instruction as needed.

Recognizing the needs of middle school students, TJHS is dedicated to promoting a love of reading and writing. This is accomplished through sustained silent reading, ten minutes of free reading, at the start of each literature class. Finished books are posted in the school hallway for others to share a pride and love of reading. Language classes foster a consistent, low-threat writing routine that allows students to express themselves freely.

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

At TJHS, our math department offers multiple pathways of instruction to address the needs of all learners. Students are supported through a basic math class, the on-level curriculum, or an accelerated course workload. Regardless of the pathway, students attend math class for 41 minutes daily. Curriculum in all courses is based on the Illinois Learning Standards. Teachers supplement the textbook for each pathway with resources to ensure a comprehensive covering of all grade-level standards. In addition to addressing

grade-level material, the accelerated class includes concepts that are taught in the high-school algebra course. All pathways provide a rigorous program that is paced appropriately, allows for discussions, promotes learning, and guarantees success. The curriculum is designed to meet the state standards and is crafted to address the unique needs of students. Educators meet throughout the year to ensure that the curriculum is aligned within and across grade levels. As a junior high school, a seamless progression is needed both from the elementary school to seventh grade and from eighth grade to high school. Therefore, the educators at TJHS prioritize a smooth transition for all students.

The math curriculum at TJHS is created with the foundational idea that math is essential for success across content areas and beyond the classroom. Therefore, the concepts taught using the curriculum created by educators at TJHS not only address the standards, but incorporate real-life connections that are discussed throughout the year. Students are taught how to solve math problems while integrating the ideas contained in the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice.

A variety of research-based strategies are incorporated into instruction with students, including scaffolding, technology, manipulatives, cooperative learning, and discussions. Scaffolding forms the foundation for daily instruction. Each day, teachers move students through whole-group, small-group, and individualized practice. Technology is a tool utilized for its ability to maintain communication between school, home, and student. Teachers regularly post videos to Google Classroom as an additional resource. Students engage in a weekly activity, based on Building Thinking Classrooms, in which they engage in problem-based learning. In this activity, students learn collaboratively and verbalize their mathematical strategies, process others' ideas, and build arguments to support their reasoning.

Both formative and summative assessments are used with students at TJHS. Formative assessments are conducted daily to monitor learning and help teachers determine the next steps in instruction. Summative assessments, annual standardized tests, and regular benchmarking assessments like AIMSWEB are conducted and evaluated to determine gaps in student achievement and guide further individualized instruction. Struggling students receive opportunities with individual or small-group instruction during study hall or Response to Intervention (RtI). Students who excel are given challenge problems to explore higher-level concepts. If they continue to excel on assessments, avenues are available for movement between pathways. Finally, students are encouraged to self-assess their answers whenever possible. Teachers encourage critical thinking by challenging students to evaluate whether their answer makes sense within the problem's context. These higher-order thinking skills will benefit students as independent learners in the future.

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

Our science curriculum is based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). By incorporating the three dimensions of NGSS, which include disciplinary core ideas, crosscutting concepts, and science/engineering practices, our students learn how to think and act like scientists. We expand upon these standards to best prepare students for life beyond high school.

To implement our science curriculum, we use a variety of tools within daily instruction. As a school that is 1:1 with Chromebooks, technology is utilized daily as well as standard textbooks with an online version. We integrate hands-on and virtual labs, such as dissections, to optimize learning; those hands-on labs include individual, small-group, and whole-class demonstrations.

Seventh grade students study life sciences which include ecosystems, the cell system, and genetics. Our eighth grade students explore physical science, chemistry, physics, engineering practices, astronomy, and Earth's structure. 41 minutes of daily science instruction is carried out all year for both seventh and eighth grade students. Teachers at both grade levels consistently incorporate activities and discussions related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In addition, we have an exploratory class where we supplement the STEM discussions with projects including building bridges and engineering air-powered cars. Students also engage in a unit that focuses on the uses and safety of drones. They conclude the unit with the opportunity to fly a drone.

Multiple assessments are utilized to ensure that the NGSS are being met. Formative assessments include pre-tests, lab discussions, quizzes, and teacher monitoring during experiments. Summative assessments include in-class tests, lab summaries, and the Illinois Science Assessment. This data is used to inform which students would benefit from additional services. Struggling students receive RtI to facilitate a better understanding of scientific concepts.

Science is a subject that offers something for everyone. The classroom environment allows students to build a lifetime habit of observing, questioning, and analyzing the world around them.

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

Our social studies curriculum includes a seventh grade geography class and an eighth grade United States history class. Each class meets for 41 minutes daily. Geography is introduced through science and then evolves to include the historical aspects of different countries. The goals of the curriculum are partially accomplished through inquiry-based learning. Students are able to explore unique cultures allowing them to develop an appreciation of the world around them. Introduction videos spark interest in topics. Students then channel their curiosity into a learning experience.

For United States history, we use a chronological approach. Part of the curriculum includes educational content through a set of online learning platforms. Essential questions guide the lesson plans and provide students with opportunities to contemplate larger topics, further allowing them to find relevance and relatability to the material. When applicable, primary sources complement areas of study to open students' eyes beyond the text.

Our curriculum incorporates teaching strategies, such as visualization, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, technology-based activities, and student-centered learning. Both geography and U.S. history allow the students opportunities to discuss and examine world events and explore how these events affect their lives and others. This provides an opportunity to challenge students with higher-level thinking.

This is accomplished through collaboration of teachers across the district. Scaffolding in learning at the junior high level has given our students an opportunity to build on what they know, creating interest at the appropriate level.

Lastly, we encourage good citizenship in both classes. Our goal is to mold students to be productive citizens who are kind and contribute to society in positive ways. We build our curriculum on the fundamental belief that this citizenship can be best developed through the study and analysis of concepts learned in history and geography.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

At TJHS, students can engage in a variety of activities that develop tools needed for success in their postsecondary education and beyond. The study skills class explicitly teaches soft skills like organization, responsibility, and leadership. Sports, clubs, and activities are all structured to further develop these skills. For example, all students have the opportunity to run for student council. Once the council is selected, members learn to implement activities for the student body and the community. Distinct leadership positions teach students how to fulfill specific responsibilities when working as a team. Students learn how individual roles benefit the whole when all do their part.

Efforts are made to expose students to various career paths throughout the year. For instance, active military visit and share their path with students, and both grade levels tour area businesses during Career Day. These businesses range from banks to printing companies to businesses specializing in industrial assembly. TJHS educators prepare eighth grade students for college and career readiness using the Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework. During language class, students engage in a careers unit where they complete a career cluster inventory, explore various careers, learn about financial literacy, and research a career of interest. This unit is co-taught by the teacher and guidance counselor, and it culminates at the Lake Land College Career Day as well as a visit from the high school counselors to start building their four-

year plans. Prior to the end of the year, eighth graders go to THS and tour the school with guidance from high school student council members. The middle school and high school make intentional efforts to collaborate in a way that sets students up for success and provides a seamless transition into their high school years.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Band and visual arts courses are offered as non-core subjects at TJHS to help students learn how to express themselves in creative ways.

Band is a year-long, 41-minute course for seventh and eighth grade students. In addition to the standard band curriculum, students can enhance their knowledge and skills by participating in solo and ensemble contests as well as performing as a district musician with the Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA). To showcase their skills as performing musicians, the band plays the National Anthem for the St. Louis Cardinals each year. Additionally, to ensure junior high musicians continue band in high school, collaborative opportunities exist with the Teutopolis High School band students, such as joining pep band performances.

Visual arts courses are offered to eighth grade students to develop skills utilizing various art mediums. The curriculum is designed for project-based learning throughout a semester-long, 41-minute class. Scaffolded, individualized instruction prepares students for success in high school visual arts courses by introducing skills in 2D and 3D areas. Critiques are incorporated to reinforce ways to constructively discuss artwork. To showcase artwork, students can provide submissions to a variety of exhibitions, including a multi-school showcase at Eastern Illinois University.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The physical education (PE) curriculum used on a daily basis not only creates an understanding and interest in fitness for that day or week but also for a lifetime. At TJHS, both seventh and eighth grade students engage in physical education every day for 41 minutes. Our average class size of 22 students provides opportunities for individual fitness as well as team-oriented activities.

Each day, students begin class with a ten-minute individualized fitness program where students keep a daily fitness log of the exercises they complete. For the remainder of the class period, one of our main focuses is promoting team building and collaboration through activities. Students are given ownership of the class through student-led demonstrations and activity choices. Within the PE class, we allow our students to be competitive while emphasizing an understanding that students possess a wide range of physical abilities within each class. Students are encouraged to build on one another's strengths and assist their peers to create a strong team unit.

Eighth grade students also take one semester of health education for 41 minutes daily. The curriculum focuses on educating students on the function of each system of the body. There is a very strong emphasis on nutrition and the benefits of physical activity and how both impact a person's overall well-being.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Our students are 1:1 with Chromebooks, and TJHS has a fully-equipped desktop lab. This combination provides students with ample opportunities to learn about all types of technological tools. For example, seventh grade students practice typing as well as using Google and Microsoft applications in a semester-long, 41-minute class.

Our school library specialist ensures that all students have access to resources that meet a variety of needs and interests. For obtaining books not in our library, our students utilize the Illinois Heartland Library System. CloudLibrary is available for digital books, and online databases are used for research projects. All students participate in activities, such as book speed dating and tasting and the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Book Award challenge. Our seventh graders participate in a shoe box book project, in which they read a book suggested by a high schooler with correlating items within the box, all for the love of reading and connecting our students.

Our Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics MakerSpace utilizes LEGO Education products like WeDo 2.0, Simple and Powered Machines, EV3 Mindstorm, and Spike Prime. TeamSpace allows students to assemble a 1,000 piece puzzle, work with snap circuits, make rubber-band bracelets, and create origami ornaments. MakerSpace and TeamSpace provide students with a variety of digital literacy skills needed to be successful.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

TJHS students are given opportunities to participate in exploratory classes offered on a quarterly basis for 25 minutes, three days a week, to expose them to areas of study beyond the core subjects. Students build vehicles out of K'Nex parts and construct bridges out of straws and pins. Art exploratory teaches students how to weave and gift their finished project to a community member as well as focusing on art-based careers. Another class partners junior high students with kindergarten buddies for whom they write a children's book. Classic board and card games are taught as well as current events. These are a few examples of the exploratory options students have had the opportunity to enroll in. Each year, adjustments are made based on student interests.

All seventh graders participate in a study skills class using the Soar curriculum consisting of setting goals and investigating careers, while also utilizing code.org and coding robots. In addition, the teacher stresses the importance of organizing materials, asking good questions, and investigating how each student learns best. The class also emphasizes social and emotional learning. Steve Hartman Kindness 101 videos are used to spark discussions and projects. These programs help develop well-rounded and successful students.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

At TJHS, students who perform below grade level are offered varied supports through a tiered intervention system based on a variety of data sources. Students receive 82 minutes of core literacy and 41 minutes of mathematics daily. Within the classroom setting, differentiation is built into lessons and assignments. For example, our literature curriculum provides Lexile-leveled texts and assignments based on benchmarking scores. In other content areas, where the textbook does not offer resources, modified notes are provided, created by the special education department. Based on the percentage of students with individualized education plans (IEPs) in a given class, a paraprofessional or special education teacher is embedded to encourage, assist, and clarify for all students as needed. However, it is never at the expense of the needs of the special education students. Self-contained instruction is available for students who are significantly below their peers.

When students need additional assistance, the Student Intervention Team (SIT) implements interventions based on benchmarking, teacher recommendation, and classroom performance. For instance, Check and Connect is a program for students who need assistance staying organized and on top of assignments. Students are required to meet with a certified teacher twice each day. Before school ends, students show their planner to verify assignments. Every morning, students then confirm completion of assignments.

Another intervention, RtI, addresses academic needs. The support is 25 minutes, two days per week, during sustained silent reading. Because some content area textbooks are higher reading levels, RtI bridges literacy and mathematics gaps and provides students support to be successful in all areas. Homework Hangout is an afterschool program offered to any student seeking additional help from a certified teacher. The doors to these interventions are always open for students to enter and graduate as needed. TJHS strives to prepare all students intellectually, emotionally, and socially for the world beyond the classroom.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all students. While TJHS does not have designated time or a program specifically for students above grade level, we strive to provide them with opportunities to be challenged within the existing curriculum.

For example, in math, an accelerated pathway is offered to students who are ready for above grade level content. Currently, 56% of seventh graders and 38% of eighth graders are enrolled in advanced math classes. Regardless of the pathway, daily bell ringers in all math classes are tailored to each student based on his/her individual level of understanding as determined by benchmarking data. In addition, students who demonstrate mastery of a skill are offered extension activities to further their understanding.

Students performing above grade level in writing are challenged to act as peer editors and peer teach concepts. Rubrics for writing assignments are extended for those students to push their writing beyond grade level standards. In literature, our curriculum has above grade level texts that pair with stories to expand on skills and broaden horizons.

Students are grouped heterogeneously to encourage those above grade level not only to peer teach but to develop their leadership skills by serving as models for their fellow students. This strategy is used in a variety of content areas, from labs in science classes to literature circles in language arts to group projects in geography and history. Heterogeneous grouping is just one of numerous research-based strategies utilized to challenge gifted students.

Preparing students for life outside the classroom is a priority at TJHS. Having students of all ability levels interact in every class encourages them to recognize and embrace each others' strengths while collaborating. We feel this is a life-long skill that emulates the environments they will encounter as productive members of society.

3c. Students with disabilities:

The entire educational staff at TJHS is dedicated to individual successes of students with IEP services. Our special education department works closely with the general education teachers to ensure that all services listed on the IEPs are met. There are a wide range of services available to students with varying abilities.

For our students with the most significant needs, individualized instruction in core curriculum areas is available in a self-contained classroom. This ensures that the students are learning at their academic level in a small-group setting. The special education teacher conferences with the general education teachers in those areas to work on parallel instruction so that the students can join the general education class when class materials and activities are appropriate.

For our students with areas of need in math, reading, writing, and/or executive functioning, our special education teacher and paraprofessional provide push-in support in the general education classrooms. Our department works closely with the general education teachers during classes and offers accommodations, modifications, and supports to students with IEPs. Assistance to all students is given, but primary focus is dedicated to students with IEPs.

All students with IEPs have a resource study hall. This ensures the students are in a small-group setting with more one-on-one assistance. The students must show the special education teacher their assignment notebook to verify they have all assignments and tests written down. The students then prioritize these

assignments for completion. The teacher checks work, studies with the students for upcoming tests, and monitors each IEP goal.

The special education staff at TJHS works closely with the administration and teachers at the grade school and high school levels to ensure an easy and successful transition between buildings for all students with IEPs.

3d. English Language Learners:

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Because adolescents are high energy and always seeking engagement, our daily routines and activities reflect this. TJHS is a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school. Wooden Shoes is our district mascot, so we encourage students to behave the “Wooden Shoe Way.” When caught doing something positive, students earn “Wooden Shoe Way” cards that enter them into weekly and end of the year drawings.

On day one, our principal stresses the importance of being involved and supporting each other with an ice-breaker activity. This concept is reinforced throughout the year by encouraging participation in a variety of school-wide special activities. Twice a year, TJHS hosts a Bike to School Day. Students and staff members meet at a local parking lot to bike to school as a group. Each fall our student council hosts a field day where students compete in team-building activities. A pickleball tournament is held in the spring after school for students who wish to participate or watch. We conclude the school year with a day of inflatables, Deal or No Deal, and a cookout.

Extra-curricular activities are open to all students, and we have a “no-cut” policy to encourage students of all abilities to try new things. During the regular season, our stands are full of students supporting each other. As teams advance to sectionals and beyond, our students pack fans buses dressed in blue and gold to represent TJHS.

Locker tags are displayed for flag raisers, lunchroom workers, drama and band participants, honor roll, and students who meet reading goals. TJHS students have time in the morning and at lunch to interact with each other. Outside, they can choose from nine-square, gaga ball, cornhole games, Spikeball, Kan-Jam, basketball rims, and volleyballs and footballs. Inside, students can play chess, checkers, and card games as well as ping-pong, volleyball, and basketball.

TJHS engages with students across the district as well. We meet kindergarten buddies and write picture books for them. High school students create book boxes for our students and meet for a book talk. High school clubs and athletic teams come over for High Five Fridays. Pep band is composed of students from both the high school and the junior high bands.

By keeping all students engaged and reinforcing that everyone belongs and has something to contribute, TJHS students feel emotionally and socially ready to approach each day and challenge with a positive attitude, knowing they have a support system behind them.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

“It takes a village to raise a child.” This African proverb sums up the Teutopolis families and community. TJHS embraces this idea and engages family members of our students and community members in a variety of methods. On a regular basis, our staff members contact parents/guardians via email and phone to share both positive experiences and to discuss areas of concern regarding their children. In addition, teachers and coaches utilize Google Classroom to post announcements, assignments, and other information parents/guardians would need to know. Grades are available to families at any given time online through TeacherEase. Our daily announcements are available on our school website for all to stay informed on weekly and monthly events. Finally, the district social media sites showcase our students and their accomplishments.

Besides simply sharing information with families and community members, TJHS strives to actively engage with the community. We host a Read & Feed where students and community members come together after reading a common novel to discuss over lunch. Physical education classes walk to a local veterans memorial in November where veterans talk to the classes. Before Thanksgiving, our students participate in Food for Friends by donating food to a local agency that helps those in need. In February, making cards for local

nursing home residents spreads love and kindness, while teaching empathy. Each year, our students participate in the Americanism Essay Contest which concludes with our local American Legion members and community members joining for a school-wide ceremony. To go along with our Career Day, community members are eager to come to TJHS and share their expertise in their chosen field. Students have the opportunity to ask questions and seek advice from these professionals about their futures. Local businesses also open their doors to our students for tours of their facilities.

Members of the Teutopolis community are seen at various sporting events, band concerts, book fairs, fundraisers, drama productions, and our eighth grade promotion. This level of support for our students in all areas is proof of the community's pride and investment in student success.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The professional culture at TJHS begins with leadership that builds trust so that educators can take risks and explore new practices to increase student achievement. The small staff of TJHS feels respected and valued. They are given time to collaborate with each other but also choose to work together daily across the curriculum to provide a learning environment that makes students feel comfortable and welcome.

The staff at TJHS is committed to building a positive environment among themselves and with the students who pass through their doors to ensure their overall well-being is cared for. Each morning, teachers stand in the hallway and welcome students into the building. Teachers are also present in the doorways and halls during passing periods to welcome students into their classrooms. Various duties are split among the staff which allows them to interact with the students outside of the classroom setting. Many teachers are seen at sporting events, band concerts, drama productions, and other activities students are involved in outside of the school day. The students of TJHS know the staff is a very close-knit group that works well together and brings a family-like environment to the building. This also contributes to fewer behavior problems and a safe place where students can come to teachers with concerns.

Teachers are valued and encouraged to voice their opinions about upcoming events and programs at monthly staff meetings and by serving on a variety of building-wide and district-wide committees. At the building level, PBIS, SIT, and professional learning communities are organized to ensure students' needs are met intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Our district has teams set in place for handbook review, school safety updates, curriculum adoption, and advisory meetings where concerns from each building are brought to the superintendent.

The district's vision, mission, and core values stand at the forefront of professional development opportunities that are offered to the staff. These are offered as in-service days, release days, and paid workshops. Everything from curriculum content to CPR and other safety training to student and staff well-being are addressed on these days. Teutopolis Unit #50 recognizes that the physiological, mental, and emotional needs of both staff and students must be met before excellence can be achieved.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership at Teutopolis District Unit #50 begins with the Board of Education, superintendent, and building administrators. The administration team meets monthly to discuss district policies and goals, current issues, and professional development ideas. Collaborative decision-making among administrators regarding policies, initiatives, and issues is commonplace at each meeting. The administrative team consists of individuals who are different in nature but all come together for one goal... the success of our students.

The TJHS principal is the instructional leader of the staff. The principal's philosophy is to work with the staff to make decisions that allow students to excel in the academic environment, extra-curricular activities, and the Teutopolis community. The principal and teaching staff meet once a month to seek input for school improvement, provide support and direction, and monitor progress of our learning community. The small teaching staff at TJHS allows for any additional needs to be communicated and handled in a timely manner.

To help new teachers get acclimated, a teacher mentor leads and guides them through daily, weekly, and

monthly tasks but also provides additional support related to the curriculum, assessment expectations, data collection, and behavior management ideas.

The TJHS faculty has a tremendous commitment to high academic standards and a respect for individual growth and development. The principal is proactive in promoting and protecting our vision to ensure goals are achieved through monitoring daily operations while cultivating a high-performing culture. The principal and teachers model the positive character traits that they want their students to adopt. These traits are honesty, respect, dependability, compassion, determination, and responsibility.

The TJHS principal commits to being present in the school building as much as possible when students and/or parents are present. During the school day, the principal is not only present in the hallways as much as possible but frequently visits classrooms as well. These visits are not just part of the teacher evaluation process. They stem from a desire to be present, to gain a better understanding of all that is taking place in the building, and to provide informal feedback to teachers. At events after school hours, the principal establishes collaborative relationships with parents and the community. This involvement is a key factor in the ongoing success of our building.

Teutopolis Junior High School recognizes the potential of all students and strives to facilitate a lifelong love of learning. Leadership at Teutopolis Junior High School is not simply in the hands of a few, but rather found in the dedication of many.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

As many are members of the community themselves, the faculty at TJHS have a strong understanding of the students and families that we serve. While the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds may appear to be similar on the surface, every child comes to school with a unique set of needs that need to be met. We begin each year by analyzing how to best meet these needs.

First and foremost, these needs are addressed through classroom instruction. In literature, reading selections are intentionally chosen to expose students to a variety of cultures and belief systems and equip them with the tools to navigate those systems. Explicit teaching and discussion of these cultures are embedded into everyday activities. The geography curriculum immerses students in the resources and economies of other nations. Lessons are intended to broaden students' perspectives and understanding of how the United States functions as a part of the global landscape. Today, some topics in current events and history can be challenging to broach with students. However, teachers prioritize navigating these conversations in an unbiased way. By providing students with critical literacy skills, they learn to explore diverse topics using reliable sources. All classrooms maintain an environment of equity and respect for students.

During the first day of the school year, every teacher at TJHS is involved in establishing building and classroom expectations with students. Once a universal understanding is achieved, students then take part in maintaining that environment, one that meets their intellectual, social, and emotional needs. The Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards are integrated into everything that we do. We provide a safe space for students to be who they are. Assemblies and activities are developed to broaden their perspectives.

At the district level, the guidance department makes note of families with specific needs. When applicable, they make these needs known to organizations who seek to offer assistance. In addition, programs like Shop with a Cop are implemented in conjunction with the school resource officer. The school involves students in helping a local agency that assists families in need of food, clothing, and medicine. These initiatives are designed to benefit students within the school and encourage them to recognize needs, show empathy, and help when able.

Building relationships with students is the foundation of culturally responsive teaching and learning. Through daily interactions, educators model inclusivity, empathy, and compassion for all. Teachers support students in embracing their own identities while accepting the perspectives of others.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The one practice that has been most influential in Teutopolis Junior High School's success has been building on the core value of excellence through unity that has been instilled by our community since the town's conception. Achieving excellence is easier said than done. However, members of the Teutopolis community and our school live by Helen Keller's words, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Teutopolis has a rich history of celebrating successes, including academic successes, athletic achievements, community efforts, and individual accomplishments. In academics, honor roll and scholarship recipients are showcased on social media as well as in the local newspaper. Teutopolis Wooden Shoes are known across the state for athletic successes. Many coaches attribute this to our sporting events being well-attended by community members from young to old. When teams reach the state level, businesses decorate their windows in support, and the school closes for the day to provide families the opportunity to attend as a whole unit. Annual community efforts such as picnics, Oktoberfest, wiffleball tournaments, and trivia nights benefit local organizations that give back to our town. Unity is evident both in the number of attendees and in the success of the fundraisers themselves.

TJHS recognizes the effectiveness of excellence through unity in our community and strives to mirror this unified excellence in everything that we do. We teach students to be unified from day one with the use of an icebreaker activity. All students begin with a game of rock-paper-scissors. After each round, eliminated students sit while winners find a new challenger. Eventually, there is only one winner feeling accomplished. A new version is then introduced. Competition begins the same way. However, instead of sitting, eliminated students follow and cheer on their former opponent. By the championship round, the entire school, including teachers, is actively involved in support. Even though only one winner is declared, the entire student body feels accomplished through their supporting role. This is the tone that sets our school up for success in every area for the duration of the year.

The combined efforts of students and staff lead TJHS to excellence. Our school is an extension of the Teutopolis community, and it is our honor and privilege to continue the tradition of unified excellence. Our job is to reinforce this core value, ensuring that all who enter our doors will leave more prepared to give back to the community that has given so much to them. We accomplish this by living our school motto of "Learn Daily, Live Responsibly, Lead Respectfully, and Laugh Often."