

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 70 Shawsheen Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Andover State MA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 01810-2910

County Essex County

Telephone (978) 247-5410 Fax (978) 247-5490

Web site/URL https://www.aps1.net/183/West-Middle-School E-mail timothy.corkery@andoverma.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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Magda Parvey E-mail magda.parvey@andoverma.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Andover Public Schools Tel. (978) 247-7010

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Tracey Spruce
(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.

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

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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
3 Middle/Junior high schools
1 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 10 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	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	160
7	172
8	186
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	518

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 15.6 % Asian
 - 1.8 % Black or African American
 - 9.8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 70.5 % White
 - 2.1 % 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	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	518
(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):
Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Urdu, Arabic, Korean, Hindi, Albanian, Thai, Romanian, Swahili, Turkish, Marathi, Creole Haitian, Greek, French, Tagalog, Japanese, Gujarati

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
13 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %
 Total number students who qualify: 73

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 20 %
Total number of students served 106

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>7</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>26</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>45</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>9</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 5 %
Total number of students served: 25

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 4

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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	28
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	15
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 10:1

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	95%	97%	96%	96%	96%
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.

West Middle School holds the middle school concept close to its heart. Teachers work in teams coordinating curriculum to provide student centered lessons that engage students more deeply and thoughtfully, seeking to make connections between students' lives and the subject matter. Students, teachers, administrators, and other professional staff are empowered to make decisions in a supportive atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance.

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

<https://z2policy.ctspublish.com/masc/browse/andoverset/andover/AC>

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

Andover is a relatively affluent community twenty miles north of Boston. Parents of our students tend to be well educated. Companies like Pfizer, Raytheon, Phillips healthcare, and ENEL green power have a significant presence in our town. Over the past ten years, our demographics have slowly started changing; our school community is becoming more diverse. The number of families for whom English is not the primary language has doubled in last seven years and the number of economically disadvantaged students has almost doubled during that timeframe.

One of our mantras is to build a school where everyone belongs and where we value the unique identity of every child and family. Our families have many options for education in this area, because many high quality private schools are within a short drive from our campus. Despite all these options our middle school tends to be the school of choice for the families that live in our neighborhood. We believe this happens because we have built a true sense of community in our school and in individual classrooms.

At West Middle we believe more in the “middle school model” as opposed to a junior high school. We believe that belonging precedes learning and academic achievement. At the core of this belief is that our teachers value and respect our students and their families. We embrace the different and changing identities of our students. We have gradually built our support system around these core beliefs.

During the pandemic, we realized we needed to provide greater support related to the social and emotional needs of our students. We needed a better understanding of our student needs and then develop the support structures necessary. We started implementing changes to our structure based on this need.

Every Monday morning we start the day with our weekly Building Educational Support Team (BEST) meeting. The team identifies, supports, and monitors students that have significant social and emotional learning (SEL) needs. The administrators, social workers, nurse, guidance counselor, District Neuro psychologist and District SEL coordinator attend meeting. We insure that the students who require support are identified, supported, and progress monitored throughout the year.

During the pandemic we added a weekly advisory block to our schedule. This is scheduled first block every Wednesday morning for 24 minutes. Every teacher in building is assigned ten students. They meet with students every week throughout the year and we want every student to know that they have at least one trusted adult in the building whom they can go to at anytime. During this advisory block teachers also provide a curriculum that is built and designed by a four- person team (Social workers, guidance counselor, and one teacher). The curriculum is differentiated by grade. These staff members are given additional prep time to build the weekly lessons.

As we built out our SEL program we realized we needed more direct support. Over the last three years the only new full-time positions that were added to our school were directly related to SEL support. We added a guidance counselor to our staff this year. We also requested more clinical support and the District contracted with an outside provider to give us an additional full time clinician in our building.

We have also increased the frequency and diversity of student monitoring systems. The District and school mental health team has adopted the Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System (BIMAS-2) to help screen student social-emotional wellness, learning, and development. We now do this twice a year for all grade seven and eight students. This screening tool has helped us to immediately identify individual problems and trends.

Finally, the District has partnered with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and we will be implementing RULER next year in our school. RULER is an evidence-based approach to Social and Emotional Learning. The goal is to have staff be able to infuse research based SEL practices into their daily routine. Our staff will receive professional development next year with full implementation the following year.

Based on these changes over the last few years we now have a comprehensive approach to SEL in our District and our building. These practices are directly related to our core beliefs. The gains we have seen in our students summative assessment scores in math and ELA are directly correlated to our renewed focus on supporting and caring for the student as an individual.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

The ELA Program at West Middle School is guided by the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks for English Language Arts and Literacy. Our program centers on essential questions that are developmentally significant and provide interdisciplinary connections. Each grade has two Language Arts teachers who are provided common time for planning together. Our District recently revised our curriculum and we have now included access to more diverse texts at each grade level. We have purchased class libraries for each of our Language Arts teachers in order to give students more choice in the texts they read. We believe having a wide range of books available in the classroom will help foster and build a love of reading. This practice allows us to be more inclusive and to reflect the cultures and identities of all Andover Public School students.

Our daily Language arts instruction focuses on both a workshop instructional model and research-based instructional approaches we have been developing through our work with the Institute for Learning. This year we have partnered with the Institute for Learning affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh. Our teachers are focusing on having more student-centered routines and accountable talk practices. Our Language Arts professional development time this year has been aligned with these practices that we have determined were important to our school community.

All Language Arts units have pacing guides that include both formative and summative assessment. In writing, we give students a flash draft pre-assessment in each of the three writing genres and have the student final draft as our summative assessment. We use similar rubrics for providing feedback to our students.

Data analysis is core to our belief that data should inform our instruction. During the summer, administrators review results from our Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). This is the summative test taken by all students at end of each year. School administrators do an item analysis to determine which standards were met in each grade. We then do an analysis of student growth and achievement by teacher. At the beginning start of the year, the principal then meets individually with each teacher to review these results.

We also use NWEA Measured Academic Progress (MAP) as our formative assessment tool that is administered three times each year for all students. Our teachers are expected to set goals with each individual child for the winter and spring assessment and then review results with them after each assessment. We have found this practice of student goal setting has resulted in students taking greater ownership of their learning. The principal will meet individually with each ELA teacher after each assessment to review results and make needed adjustments. When able, the District ELA curriculum coordinator joins these data discussions between the principal and teacher.

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

At West Middle School, we follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks which was built upon the Common Core State standards. We believe our students need both a balance of mathematical procedures and conceptual understanding. We also believe that our students need to be actively engaged in discussing mathematical ideas, performing meaningful mathematics, and be able to apply mathematics in meaningful, relevant, and real-world situations. We currently use “In Focus” as our math curriculum. This year we are reviewing our curriculum and will likely select a new curriculum to guide our math work for the next five years. All middle school math teachers are part of the team that will select the new curriculum.

For the last two years we have partnered with the Institute for Learning, affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh. Teachers and administrators have received significant professional development on infusing more

“accountable talk” in our classrooms. We want our students to listen attentively, elaborate and build on each other’s ideas, and actively participate in classroom talk. We believe in selecting tasks that will generate more classroom talk. Classroom activities should also build on prior learning and allow students to solve progressively more complex problems.

Assessment is key to informing and modifying instruction. We start the year with a review of our annual summative data from the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment system (MCAS). Administration conducts a detailed item analysis, reviewing school and student progress on individual standards and strands. That data is shared with individual math teachers. Administration also reviews the growth data for each math teacher. We then review the data for each student subgroup to check for learning of all students.

We use Measured Academic Progress (MAP) as our formative assessment tool. Students take the formative assessment three times per year. Prior to each assessment the expectation is that the math teachers conference with students and set goals for each assessment. Teachers then review the data post assessment. Additionally, administration meets with each math teacher after each assessment to review student progress.

We then take the data we glean from MAP and make needed adjustments. Each student has three to five flex blocks in their weekly schedule. If we identify students that require remediation the math teachers can adjust flex blocks to provide additional instruction during the school day. We also use our Title I funds to hire a math tutor who is in the building three days per week. Teachers provide recommendations for students that would benefit from small group tutoring. After each MAP assessment we also review progress of students in Title I tutoring to check the effectiveness of the program.

Our school offers an accelerated math curriculum for grade seven and eight students. We use MAP data, MCAS data, teacher input, and class grades to determine what students are ready for an accelerated pace of math instruction.

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

At West Middle School, each grade level conducts one unit of study in each of three domains of science - earth science, physical science, and life science. In sixth grade, the units are Astronomy, Waves, and Cells/Human Systems. In seventh grade, students study Ecology, Geology, and Forces/Motion. In eighth grade, the units are Chemistry, Heredity/Evolution, and Meteorology and Climate. All the Massachusetts middle school science standards are incorporated into at least one of the science units. The Science Dimensions program, with consumable texts and a digital platform is used during instruction. Teachers assess students using their own repertoire of assessment tools/activities (objective/subjective written, projects, labs, class assignments) and all students take a common unit exam, the results of which are shared and examined by teachers to determine areas where instruction and curriculum can be improved.

Each middle school student rotates through a 10-week cycle of engineering classes during each of their three middle school years. In sixth grade, students are introduced to engineering/design basic principles with several small design challenges. In the seventh grade cycle, the primary focus is the design and construction of a model green home. In the eighth grade, students learn to program and utilize Lego Spike Prime resources and use them to address design challenges. Assessment for student work is usually completed through the use of rubrics designed to measure different aspects of the projects.

Student progress is assessed by reviewing MCAS results each summer. Administration completes an item analysis of the summative data. The principal then meets with the science teachers to review the standards and strands. When we identify a standard that students did not meet expectations, we look for ways to remediate or make curricular adjustments.

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

At West Middle School, in the course of studying history, geography, civics, as well as beyond the social studies classroom, students engage in an inquiry-based approach to examining society to inform how we could support and interact with our local, state, national and global societies today. In grades six and seven,

students examine and critique societies, governments, and civilizations of the ancient world, from prehistory through the rise of some of the largest and most influential civilizations known to have existed. This prepares students to then examine their own society at both local and national levels in which students examine the development of our modern society through a deep examination of important events in early American history that had a profound impact on the development of our government and society today.

By using inquiry-based instruction, students are asked to look at problems within every content area they study and think about the best approaches to addressing those problems. They then compare their thought processes to historical approaches and consider pros and cons for tackling the problems they examine. Students cap off their middle school experience in grade eight by utilizing the civic skills and dispositions they have spent three years developing to address real problems facing their community through an action civics project.

Students and teachers evaluate student progress towards these goals using written and oral assessments tied to the MA Standards for Social Studies Practice. Students are assessed on their ability to research inquiry questions, develop their own research questions, analyze multiple perspectives, and determine steps to take. Teachers meet in grade level teams to review student progress towards proficiency of these standards and as a team adjust to meet the needs of their students.

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

In the Fall 2023, the middle school guidance counselors will be implementing a Career Interest Survey with the eighth grade classes, designed for middle school students. This is meant to help the student build self-awareness of their interests, strengths and challenges, as well as career choices that may match those areas. This self-awareness will help the student to select high school courses and placement that will best match their needs. In addition, this helps to ensure that students are beginning to think about college and career choices in the Middle School years. We also bring in parents for an end of the year career fair for all grade eight students.

The school only offers an accelerated math program for grade seven and eight students. Students that take this route are then eligible to take Algebra 1 as a grade nine student. We offer a few different leadership opportunities for our students during the year. We have a program called Where Everyone Belongs (WEB). Any grade eight student can apply, and we accept 30 students each year. They receive training over the summer and then when the school year begins, they serve as mentors for our grade six students. They also provide school tours to new families over the summer.

We also have a program where grade eight students can sign up to be mentors in one of our substantially separate Life Skills classrooms. Each year we usually have over 50 students volunteer for this program. We have also partnered with a group called “Aarons Presents.” This group works with our students who want to carry out an idea that benefits at least one other person, animal, and/or the environment. We follow the children’s vision as they create and lead a memorable, meaningful, and fun experience by practicing kindness, empathy, and generosity.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

West Middle school offers a robust arts program for all students. All students have art for one quarter in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade years. Students continue their studies in using a variety of methods, materials, and techniques including painting, drawing, printmaking, collage, and sculpture. Further

development and understanding on how to utilize Art Elements (line, shape, color, value, form, texture, space) and Principles of Design (balance, contrast, emphasis, movement, pattern, rhythm, unity) are explored within each project. Students continue to create art from observation, abstraction, invention, and expression.

For general music, each student has music class four times per week for nine weeks. Music class consists of project work, with a more in-depth exploration of topics. Students are playing instruments including guitar, ukulele, and piano, singing and performing in groups or pairs. The music curriculum continues to embrace the philosophy of Carl Orff and Kodaly, strengthening musicianship through singing, playing instruments, and creating music. Building on the various sounds to symbol approaches in elementary school, students begin to learn the traditional symbols that represent the sounds they are creating.

We also offer band, orchestra and chorus during the school day as an elective. These groups perform at least three times a year for the public and is an extension of our elementary music program. Students begin to develop ensemble playing/performing skills as well as developing musical literacy and aural skills. In all ensembles, students begin to perform with expression and exploring dynamics. Finally, we present one musical per year. Any student can participate.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

Physical education is scheduled for each student twice per week over the course of the school year for all students. Health education is scheduled quarterly for each grade. Each of these programs focuses on developing students' physical, social and emotional wellbeing through skill-based instruction, engaging activities, and collaborative/team activities. Physical education includes skilled based practices, team building challenges, introduction to many sport based activities, and fitness. Physical education increases knowledge about how to take responsibility to exercise regularly, find interest in sport or leisure activities and lead a healthy lifestyle. Health education includes topics that are age appropriate for middle school, and addresses the changing body and mind. Students learn about body systems, goal setting, developing healthy habits, and risky behaviors such as vaping, drug and alcohol use. Skill-based lessons address refusal skills and communication skills so that when experiencing real life challenges, students can navigate safely through peer pressures and other negative influences.

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

All students at West Middle are required to take Spanish or French for all three years. The World Language sequence begins in grade six and continues throughout their high school years. The curriculum is based on the State Standards and the three years at the Middle School allow students to progress from Novice Low to Novice High or Intermediate Low following the Proficiency guidelines. The program is aligned to the standards for students to acquire the skills and knowledge to become “World-ready students who fully participate in their local, national, and global communities by proficiently using multiple languages and demonstrating competency in multiple cultures. Having acquired linguistic and cultural proficiency, they are aware of and responsive to the world around them. They are empathetic listeners and viewers, understanding how challenging it can be to communicate in new languages. They demonstrate insight into the nature of culture, language, and communication, having compared their own experiences to the culture of the target language. (MA curriculum frameworks 2021).

Students meet four times per week for approximately 50 minutes. Each year we administer the Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) to measure language proficiency.

2d. Technology/library/media

The West Middle School library is a resource for our school community. It is a bridge from skills learned in elementary school to teaching advanced skills in digital media, research and to evaluate sources. Classes are brought to the library to discuss digital citizenship and online etiquette. Above all, the library promotes a love of reading and literacy through a variety of programs including “Readers of the Month” and “Our March Madness of Books.”

This year our district received a grant that brought five Young Adult writers to speak to our school. The writer series included Gordon Korman, Kayla Miller, Aisha Saeed, Ellen Oh, and Steve Sheinkin. Schoolwide and grade level assemblies highlighted the writers, their works and their diverse lifestyles. Students could ask the authors questions and teachers could teach their books and assign projects based on the writer talks.

Our library also hosted a COMICON this year. Students were able to showcase some of their creative skills writing and drawing about their favorite comics.

We are a one to one Chromebook district where all students use a personal device or one issued by the district. We use technology as a tool for scaling and supporting blended and personalized learning.

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

One area that stands out in our school is the number of after-school clubs and activities we offer for all of our students. We currently offer 17 after school clubs and activities. These clubs are mentored by teachers, parents, or high school students. Our offerings include Culture Club, Ally Social Justice Club, homework club, Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), tech crew, E-cyber club, running club, Youth Assisting Youth (YAY), Lego, Animal Action, Dungeons and Dragons, math team, Futsol, debate club, student council, yearbook, and sketch club. These clubs are all free of charge and meet on either Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday right after dismissal. Spreading them out over three days allows students to join more than one club. We believe that students who frequently participate in after school activities are more connected to our school, more engaged in their classes, and are more likely to develop new friendships.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

For students who are identified as below grade level, our school has an Instructional Support Team (IST). Teachers refer students to IST, who develops an intervention plan to support students' areas of need. In order to identify students who are below grade level, we use a variety of data, including MAP, Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and Behavior Intervention Monitoring Assessment System (BIMAS). These data allow us to identify students in need of academic and social/emotional support.

The IST Team begins with Tier 1 interventions, including after-school help from their team teachers, check-ins with our social workers and positive behavior plans. Additionally, we have the Youth Assisting Youth Program (YAY), in which our middle school students are supported and mentored by high school students. This program not only supports students academically but also emotionally, as it fosters relationships with mentors, furthering students' connections to their community.

If students demonstrate a continued need for intervention, the IST Team suggests Tier 2 support. To support academic achievement gaps, we have a Title I math tutor, who provides additional support during the school day. Students receive Title I math support in addition to their scheduled math class, providing an additional block of instruction in areas of need. In addition to our Title I tutor, our schedule has team flex periods. During flex blocks, team teachers strategically assign students to content area teachers. For example, if a student requires additional support in writing, he/she/they will be assigned to the team ELA teacher to receive re-teaching of skills. Groupings are flexible and fluid, changing as students build skills or need further remediation.

For students who require further social and emotional support, the IST Team may recommend a "Lunch Bunch" with one of our social workers or individual sessions with Effective School Solutions (ESS). Our ESS clinician provides individual therapeutic services for students and wrap around support for families if needed. These sessions are flexible in duration, allowing students to receive support for a brief period of

time or throughout the school year. This is a Tier 2 service, providing students access to therapeutic support before referring a student for special education services.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Though Massachusetts does not provide programs for gifted and talented students, we expect our staff to challenge all their learners at an appropriate level. Teachers are expected to have extension activities available for students that have already mastered current content. For our students who perform above grade level, we have a variety of courses and activities that provide academic enrichment. Starting in seventh grade, high-achieving math students have the opportunity to take Accelerated Math. This course provides grade-level content at an accelerated pace, which allows students to explore math at a deeper level.

Since 2012, West Middle School has participated in the eCybermission competition. eCYBERMISSION is a national web-based science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) competition for students in grades six through nine, sponsored by the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and the U.S. Army. Students are challenged to explore how STEM can be used to solve problems in their community. Students work collaboratively in teams to investigate a community problem and then use scientific inquiry or the engineering design process to propose a possible solution. Last years' national finalist team from West Middle School, a seventh grade team, created an Arduino-based prototype device to warn communities of wildfires in the area. Wildfires are on the rise in Massachusetts, and their early warning device could save lives. Teams compete virtually in state and regional competitions and in-person through the National Judging & Educational Event (NJ&EE) that occurs in June. Working with their team advisor, teams of West Middle students and former students have competed for the past eleven years and have won well over \$100,000 in U.S. Savings Bonds. Six teams have advanced to the National Competition in Washington, D.C., and three of those teams have each won a \$5000 STEM-in-Action grant to further develop their prototype designs. Students learn that they can make a difference in their community.

Our Math Team provides an opportunity for students who excel in math to compete against schools across Massachusetts. Students participate in five math meets throughout the school year. Each meet consists of five mathematical categories, each with three questions. This year, the West Middle School Math Team earned ninth, fourth, and first place standings in the first three meets. Competitors are exceptional math students, who partake in the American Mathematics Competition 8 (AMC 8) through the Mathematical Association of America.

3c. Students with disabilities:

At West Middle School, we provide support for students with a wide range of disabilities and levels of need. Students with an identified disability but who do not require curriculum modifications, we provide a 504 plan with classroom accommodations. For students who require curriculum modifications, we have a continuum of special education services, ranging from full inclusion to substantially separate. West Middle School has an extensive team of service providers, including special education teachers, reading specialists, instructional assistants, speech-language pathologist, board certified behavior analyst, occupation therapist, two social workers, and a contracted clinician.

Every grade level has two academic teams, each with its own special education teacher and at least one instructional assistant. That high level of support allows us to provide a co-teaching model for our core classes. Our special education teachers also run academic connection (AC) blocks, which focus on supporting students' goal areas on their IEPs. Students on IEPs have AC blocks each week, depending on their needs. For students who require reading instruction, we have three reading teachers, who provide small group instruction between one and four times per week.

West Middle School has two partial inclusion programs. The first is our Language Based Program for students with language-based disabilities, such as Dyslexia. The second is the Social Academic Independent Learning (SAIL) Program. In SAIL, the curriculum is modified for specific targeting and review of essential skills. Students are highly motivated to learn, but typically have difficulty with long-term retention of material and require frequent review and re-application of skills. Students often require a high level of

support, as well as a slower pace compared to their grade level peers.

Our school also houses one of the district's self-contained programs. Our Excel program supports students diagnosed with a developmental delay, intellectual impairment and/or other complex learning needs. These students require specially designed instruction outside the general education setting in order to access a modified curriculum at each student's access point. The program focuses on providing functional academics as well as hands-on learning experiences that empower students to become as independent as possible.

3d. English Language Learners:

At West Middle School, our English Learner (EL) staff works closely with content teachers and specialists to ensure that all ELs, regardless of proficiency level, are able to fully access the curriculum. Based on prior year Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State (ACCESS) testing, students are assigned a level which determines how much direct instruction they receive from the EL teacher. The data also provide our content teachers with a student's skill level in reading, writing, speaking and listening. All other teachers in our school hold a license endorsement in Sheltered English Immersion (SEI).

We utilize the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Model in our District. Using this information teachers are then better able to build lessons and classroom activities that are tailored to what a child "can do." Throughout the year we monitor the progress of our former English learners (FELs). Twice a year, content teachers conduct FEL monitoring and enter students' current progress into our school information system. At the end of the year the Language Acquisition Team (LAT) will review progress. Last year our ELs and FELs had higher student growth percentages (SGP) than the school average for both math and Language Arts as measured by Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).

This year we were able to partner with local high school students and match some of our EL students with high school tutors that speak their native language. Twice a week after school, our tutors work with some of our beginner ELs in our building. Our District also has an English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC); this group supports the academic success of all current and former English Learners and promotes cultural diversity within the Andover Community.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

To bolster our grade six class, we offer a transition program that starts in the spring of their fifth grade year. The principal and assistant principal visit each of the three elementary schools that funnel into West Middle School (WMS). We introduce ourselves and discuss what students will experience at the middle school as grader six students. All the incoming sixth graders then visit WMS. Eighth grade students give groups of fifth graders tours and then answer their questions. An Open House rounds out our sixth grade transition program which invites incoming students and their families to visit our school and to meet our teachers. A BBQ wraps up the evening in our courtyard.

Our middle school also supports our grade six students by training eighth grade students (who apply) to become WEB Leaders. WEB, Where Everyone Belongs, is a program that WMS adopted over 15 years ago. WEB Leaders train for two days in the summer to support our sixth graders. Each sixth grader gets a phone call from a WEB leader before the start of school introducing themselves and answering any last minute questions. On day one of the school year WEB Leaders spend the morning with our sixth graders playing games, using ice-breakers and easing anxiety while meeting others in their class. WEB leaders celebrate birthdays, host movie afternoons and offer exciting opportunities for the sixth grade class.

Student Leadership opportunities are an integral part of WMS. If students feel they are involved in the school in various ways, their pride for WMS soars. Grade seven and eight students can train to become EXCEL mentors. Once a week they are scheduled to assist, teach, or mentor our neediest students. This program has grown to over 100 students and everyone is placed to help out.

Eye to Eye is a program that pairs middle school students identified with a learning disability with similarly identified, specifically trained high school mentors. The focus of the program is to empower younger students through a supportive community of mentors and peers who all share in the experience of learning differently. Every week they focus on fun and engaging art-type projects designed to improve confidence, self-esteem, growth mindset, and self-advocacy.

West Middle School has hosted a Career Fair each spring for our eighth grade students. Community members volunteer to set up a booth explaining their career. Police, Fire and EMTs also participate. Students enjoy hearing about all types of careers in hopes of kindling a potential interest to guide future coursework.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Every morning as students arrive, they are greeted by an Administrator. The principal and assistant principal are in front of our building greeting students that are dropped off by parents. The special education coordinator personally greets all students that arrive by bus. All our families know that we are accessible and available to them. At dismissal time all three administrators are in front of the building saying goodbye to students and talking to parents.

We have a five to seven-person Parent Advisory Council (PAC) that meets monthly with the three school administrators in the building. This group fundraises for our students, supports school improvement ideas, and keeps administration updated on the pulse of our school community. During the past three years, this group was the driving force behind the building, designing and funding an outdoor learning space, the revitalization of our playground area, and improvements to an outdoor dining space.

Three to four times per year the PAC and school administration co-host virtual forums for our families. This started during COVID as a means of sharing information directly to families. We have continued with these forums as they are well received and allows our community members direct access to school leadership.

Our families are involved in the hiring process. Every interview team for open teaching positions will have

at least one family member as part of the interview team.

Our school is supported by the Andover Coalition for Education (ACE) and Andona. Both of these in-town, non-profit organizations provide grants to the school and individual teachers. This year we received a \$50,000 grant from ACE to support an author series. Throughout the year, five acclaimed young adult authors visited our school to meet and speak with our students. We selected a diverse group of writers to appeal to as many students as possible: Gordon Korman, Kayla Miller, Aisha Saeed, Ellen Oh, and Steve Sheinkin. ANDONA has provided grants each year to fund our “Where Everyone Belongs ” (WEB) curriculum. This program trains and educates a group of 30 grade eight students to mentor our incoming grade six students throughout the school year.

Due to an increase in the need for social emotional supports, our school partnered with Effective School Solutions (ESS). This year we have contracted with them to provide a therapist in our building five days a week. The therapist can have a 15 student caseload and provides therapeutic services to students in the building during normal school hours.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The Andover Public Schools has a robust professional development program for our faculty, staff and administration. Our social workers are involved in a year-long program focused on cognitive behavior therapy led by a cognitive behaviorist which includes one-on-one consultation on difficult cases our social workers are dealing with this year. Our newly appointed district SEL coordinator has organized talks for our guidance counselors on topics such as eating disorders (with Walden Behavioral Care Facility) and LGBTQ topics (whose speaker will also address our faculty this spring).

The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence RULER systematic approach to SEL has been implemented in our preK-12 district this year to bolster our faculty understanding of the value of emotion, build the skills of emotional intelligence and create and maintain positive emotional climates.

Each districtwide department has a program advisor who meets with their departments monthly. At these meetings, curriculum is discussed, budget reviewed, and thoughts heard. Departments know they will have time to talk their talk with colleagues and their program advisor.

The Institute for Learning (IFL) and the Andover Public Schools have joined hands to offer administrators and teachers the opportunity to visit math and English Language Arts classrooms at their levels to observe teachers and then discuss the experience to better understand how teachers teach and students learn.

Our six West Middle School teams each have a team leader. Administration meets with these leaders to discuss team concerns and school climate issues. Teachers know that their voices will be heard at these meetings supporting their thoughts and concerns. Team leaders return to their own team meetings with answers to their team’s questions.

Our Parent Advisory Council does an excellent job of supporting our teachers. At the start of each year every teacher gets \$50 to spend on classroom supplies. Each team receives \$1000 to use as they see fit on team activities. Teacher Appreciation Week is celebrated with a variety of activities from a coffee cart to a luncheon. Teachers appreciate the outpouring of appreciation from our students and their families.

4. School Leadership:

At West Middle, the role of the principal is to build a school community in which the student is at the center of every important decision. The principal is responsible for establishing positive and effective relationships with parents, teachers, students, other administrators, and the community. These relationships need to have a core built on trust and mutual respect, and once that is established, we then have a foundation to best and fully support our students and their learning.

The principal, assistant principal, and special education coordinator are visible and available to all parties in

our school community. We want our school to be a place where everyone is respected for who they are. Each morning our announcements end with, “treat everyone with kindness and respect.”

At West Middle we are organized by teams. Each grade is comprised of two teams, each team has 80-90 students, one teacher per team is designated as team leader. We give our teams and team leaders a significant amount of autonomy. Teams and team leaders are expected to make decisions based on the premise of always asking the question “is this in the best interest of our students?” Our team teachers have two prep periods per day. One is a personal prep, and the other is a team prep. Our teachers meet as a team multiple times per week and focus discussions on student growth and development. Our teachers are also scheduled so they can meet with their peer content teacher on the other grade level team on a weekly basis.

All significant building-based decisions are made through team leader meetings and conversations with parent leaders. For example, we recently had a teacher submit a proposal to tighten up our phone policy. First, we discussed the matter with parents through our Parent Advisory Council (PAC). We then brought the issue to our team leader meeting. It was not until we had built consensus with these groups that we then changed our policy.

This demonstrated a model of how change works in our building. A teacher had an idea. The teacher trusted that it would be considered by the school leadership. The principal brought the issue to the parents. The team leaders discussed the matter with teachers on their team, and then brought that feedback to the team leader meeting. Once we built consensus we then shared with our students why we were making the change in the middle of our school year.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Over the past ten years our school is slowly becoming more diverse. We have realized the need to adapt our practices in many areas, so every student feels like they belong. We have made changes to our curriculum, clubs, and staff training to support this effort. Specifically in Language Arts we have selected new texts for use in our classrooms that reflect a more diverse set of writers and viewpoints. The genre of texts has also changed. For example, instead of teaching from the traditional Language Arts texts, we now have classroom libraries with books from Japanese, Hispanic, Indian writers. Our librarian has also increased the variety of books we have to support students of different ethnicities and sexual identity so all students can see themselves in the texts.

We have four teachers that make up a Cultural Climate Committee (C3). This group provides presentations to our staff and students annually on following topics: hate speech, micro aggressions, and racism. They have also advocated for ensuring staff use students' preferred pronouns and preferred names. This group has also been the driving force behind the formation of new clubs for students.

Three years ago, we added a Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color (BIPOC) Affinity Club and an Ally Social Justice Club. The purpose of our BIPOC club was to create an identity safe space for students to share, discuss, and validate their unique experience in the school and our community. The Ally Social Justice club is for students who are looking to learn more about topics surrounding racism, privilege, discrimination and how it affects our school and community. The main goal of this group is to learn and create action plans to support any traditionally marginalized group within our school and our community. In the past two years this group organized two peace rallies. Our District also has an English Language Parent Advisory Committee. The purpose of this group is for parents of our English Learners to have a support network and access to community resources.

This current year Andover Middle Schools received a grant of \$50,000. We used this money to create an author series for our students. Five authors came and visited each middle school. The group selected were intentionally selected with diversity in mind. The following writers came to our school: Ellen Oh, Gordon Korman, Aisha Saeed, Kayla Miller, and Steve Sheinkin.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

The singular practice that has been most influential in building a successful school at Andover West Middle is relationship building: school to family, school to community, teacher to teacher, student to teacher and student to student. Andover West Middle School has flourished by building bridges between groups and that has made all the difference.

Our school is built on a foundation of teamwork. Each of our three grades is divided into two teams which makes our school of 518 students seem much smaller. Each team is comprised of a math teacher, a social studies teacher, an English Language Arts teacher, a science teacher, a special education teacher and an instructional assistant. Class sizes are smaller which allows the team teachers to better instruct and create meaningful relationships. Our students funnel to West Middle from three elementary schools, and our team approach allows them to have a better experience through building new friendships and peer groups.

Our schedule incorporates daily meeting times for team teachers to discuss curriculum, students and to schedule/attend meetings. Teachers have the time to build their team relationships and to effectively build the most effective academic and social/emotional construct for their students.

Our relationships with our families are key to student success on many levels. Teams encourage dialogues between families and meet with parents/guardians to learn more about our students. Teachers invite parents into school throughout the year to hear student readings, to view projects, and to cheer on competitions. WMS is proud of its Parent Advisory Council (PAC) which meets with school administration and student government representatives to plan events for our students. Our one fundraiser occurs in the fall and is a wonderful way for students to get excited about our school and to raise money to fund school improvements. Students are polled on what events they would like to see and the PAC helps plan and fund school dances, three-on-three basketball tournaments during March Madness as well as teacher appreciation events. PAC parents have redecorated our Faculty Room, bought additional outdoor seating for students at lunch and upgraded our courtyard to include outdoor learning spaces.

Our Student Government started the Westie Besties which celebrates students and teachers who make us proud. The WMS community votes on deserving members and achievements are celebrated throughout the school year.

Each spring at West Middle, grade eight students attend a career fair populated by local businesses, organizations, and emergency services personnel. Our students speak with these professionals to better understand our local community and to explore potential career opportunities. Putting faces to the Andover fire, police and emergency service heroes makes our community, and school, a special place to be.