

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Sally-Ann Stukuls  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Tahanto Regional High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1001 Main Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Boylston State MA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 01505-1014

County Worcester

Telephone (508) 869-2333 Fax (508) 869-0175

Web site/URL <https://www.bbrsd.org/Domain/10> E-mail sstukuls@bbrsd.org

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Ms. Carol Costello E-mail ccostello@bbrsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Berlin-Boylston Regional School District Tel. (508) 869-2837

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 Mr. Michael Totman  
(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**

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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

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**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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
1 Middle/Junior high schools  
0 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	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	77
7	85
8	74
9	75
10	70
11	84
12 or higher	66
Total Students	531

\*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
  - 4 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 81 % White
  - 5 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 13%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	58
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	63
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	478
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

Portuguese, Spanish, Persian, Urdu, Russian, French, Tagalog

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 31 %

Total number students who qualify: 165

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 14 %  
Total number of students served 75

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>13</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>15</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 12 %  
Total number of students served: 65

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 1

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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	46
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
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 22:1

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	91%	96%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	99%	100%	97%	99%	97%

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	77
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	71%
Enrolled in a community college	15%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	4%
Found employment	6%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	3%

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 support and to challenge students in achieving personal and academic excellence in a safe, collaborative, and student-centered environment.

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

<https://www.bbrsd.org/domain/67>

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

Our school is not a magnet or charter school. We do however offer school choice to grades where we can fit students. Every year we look at enrollment and make recommendations to the school committee for how many students we can take for school choice in each grade. The school committee then votes on this. Interested students can fill out an application. After the school committee vote takes place and we know how many students can attend, we look at applications. This is a first come first serve basis however; we do take consideration for students with siblings in the school and for students who attend here but move out of the district when they are juniors or seniors.

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Tahanto Regional Middle School is a combination of students who come here from our two feeder elementary schools and about ten percent of the population being school students who live in a variety of neighboring towns. Each class is relatively small, averaging about seventy students. This allows for a family feel and the ability for all staff and students to know each other; however it can create scheduling conflicts and challenges. We are lucky to employ some of our alumni and also Boylston and Berlin residents for various staff positions. Being a middle/high school, we are able to watch students grow and develop over a period of seven years. We are dedicated to offering many rigorous educational and vocational paths for students, acknowledging that some students may move on to post secondary education at either the four or two year level, vocational training, military services, or the job force. In addition to several advanced placement course offerings, we also have a dual enrollment program with Quinsigamond Community College, offer Bank Teller internships through our banking program with Clinton Savings Bank, and have students work in our preschool as they take Child Development classes and be able to work in day care centers upon graduation, and offer a class entitled "Tools for Living" where students learn essential life skills. We are in the process of developing an career shadowing/internship program for our high school students.

We also offer a variety of after school activities to address the many interests of our students, ranging from athletics, to drama, musicals, art, robotics, chess, and automotive interests. In addition, we provide activities through groups that address mentoring, social/emotional and mental health awareness such as our Mind Matters team or teams that offer tutoring and extra help. We offer students a "Refresh Day" every year to teach students strategies to cope with stress and anxiety, e.g., yoga, meditation, journaling, aromatherapy, and trail walking. We are dedicated to working with students to provide them with enriching, hands-on, project-based learning that is inquiry-based and involves collaboration and higher order thinking skills.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Our grade six students all take one semester of a reading class in addition to their ELA 6 class. Students showing need for additional one on one support are pulled from this class to work on reading skills in a smaller class environment until they can show they are reading at the level of their peers. Our grade seven students all take a course for one semester called Middle School Essential Skills in addition to ELA 7. English class is also taught to all students in grade eight and we offer a ELA Lab in grade 8 to support those students who are recommended by teachers as a result of their MCAS and AIMSweb scores and overall performance in class. In the high school, we offer English I, II, III and IV in both College Prep and Honors levels, and AP Composition and AP Literature courses. Curriculum is recorded in ATLAS RUBICON and is monitored by department chairs, administration, and the district Curriculum director. Should a teacher leave the district, the curriculum can be shared with the replacement teacher via this platform.

Assessment for the middle school is monitored by AIMSweb testing that takes place in the fall, winter, and spring, and in the high school through midterm and final exams as well as formative and summative assessments through each semester. MCAS data are also analyzed. Teachers have the autonomy to use their own formative and summative assessment methods but often utilize “Do Nows,” exit tickets, journal entries, and mini quizzes as well as digital games such as “Kahoot” as formative assessment while summative assessment is accomplished through unit and final exams as well as district developed DDMs. All of these assessments are analyzed by the departments and individual teachers to inform instruction moving forward. Analysis allows teachers to inform instruction moving forward and helps teachers to decide if the topic should be retaught or if the lessons should be adjusted depending on the nature of struggle. In grade 6, students who show need for extra support can be supported during what we call “QUEST” block, which is a response to intervention block.

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

Mathematics is offered as Grade 6 Math, Grade 7 Math, (Accelerated Grade 7 Math was offered up until the end of this year as we have found that post COVID, our students are in need of a slower pace to help them to catch up to speed for the time being), Pre-Algebra and Algebra I for grade eight, and in high school, we offer a variety of courses from Applied Math, Math Connections, Algebra, Geometry, Statistics, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, and Trigonometry. The High school courses are offered mostly in person and some on-line at the college prep, honors, and advanced placement levels. Curriculum is uploaded and housed in ATLAS Rubicon and is monitored by Department Heads, Administration, and the Curriculum director. In our middle school, those students struggling with math can work with the math teacher during our intervention “QUEST” block and we offer a math lab for both seventh and eighth grade students who are recommended by teachers based on MCAS and AIMSweb scores as well as overall classroom performance.

In the middle school, assessment is monitored through AIMSweb testing, and in the high school assessment is through mid-term and final exams in addition to formative and summative assessments throughout each semester. MCAS data is also analyzed. Analysis allows teachers to inform instruction moving forward and helps teachers to decide if the topic should be retaught or if the lessons should be adjusted depending on the nature of struggle.

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

We offer Grade six, seven and eight science classes along with electives such as Horticulture, Forensics, LegoMindstorms and Technology and Engineering electives in our middle school. In our high school, we offer Engineering in the Future, Biology Part A and B, College Prep, Honors and Advanced Placement, as well as Chemistry Fundamentals, Chemistry at the College Prep, Honors and Advanced Placement Levels, Physics at the College prep, Honors and Advanced Placement levels as well as electives such as Forensics,

Anatomy and Physiology, Earth and Space Science, and Computer Principles. These are assessed formatively and summatively by teachers and through mid term and final exams in our high school as well as analyzing MCAS data. Science classes include laboratory experimentation and the assessment of skills and such as data collection, data analysis, graphing, and the ability to use CER (Claim, evidence, and reasoning) as they evaluate the results of laboratory inquiries in addition to hands on projects to help student to acquire vocabulary and scientific concepts.

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

We offer social studies in grades six and eight, Geography in grade seven, and Civics in Action for grade eight in our middle school. We offer History I, II, and III in levels of College Prep, Honors, and Advanced Placement. In addition, we offer Psychology, Human Behavior, and Nature of Being as electives as well as AP European History and AP World History and will be adding AP Geography to the mix next year. These are assessed formatively and summatively by teachers and through mid term and final exams in our high school. Our grade 8 and 11 students participate in Civic Action Capstone projects that involve student collaboration to identify a school or community need and a plan for corrective action. These projects are displayed at the end of the project and are followed up with through administration.

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

We offer both college prep, honors, and Advanced Placement courses for most of our courses. We also offer dual enrollment to student interested in taking courses at our local community college, which is Quinnsigamond Community College and have also partnered with Massachusetts Bay Community College in the past as well. We invite our community in as career panelists and are offering a Career Fair this April. We will be starting a shadowing/Internship program next year. As previously mentioned, we have some programs such as our Bank Teller and Child Care programs that train students to enter those work forces upon completion of these programs. We offer a work study program for students who are in need of credits if they have a consistent part time job. This is monitored by our counseling department. We do offer electives that expose our students to trades such as Graphic Design, CAD/CAM, Robotics, and Manufacturing I, II, III, and IV. Student leadership opportunities exist through student advisory councils, a school committee student representative, student council, National Honor Society and Junior National Honor Society and through a program called ACE, which pairs older students with younger students in need of assistance with assignments during a structured, afterschool activity time weekly. We offer classes in person, on line, and also offer students opportunities to take courses entitled Independent Study and Teacher Assist in most classes offered.

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

There is a pre-school housed in our building for Boylston. Although the program is housed in our building, the curriculum is managed by one of our Elementary schools and if overseen by our Director of Pupil and Personnel Services. Lessons are aligned to state curriculum and recorded and uploaded into ATLAS RUBICON.

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

#### **2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

We offer Art and Art Drawing as middle school electives and Art I, Art II, Painting, Fiber Arts, and Ceramics I and II to our high school students. Students may also take Independent Studies classes for these subject areas or may become Teacher Assistants in these classes if they have already taken them and have a required minimum grade in that class. We also have students taking Chorus, Band, Jazz Band, School of Rock, Guitar, and Music Technology classes and well as one on one music lessons offered to our incoming sixth graders if they opt to take them. We have a Drama club that performs Dramas and Musicals and we collaborate with our local dance studio in town for choreography and dance lessons.

## **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

We offer Health and Nutrition 8 to our Middle School students and a Health class to our High school students, preferable taken during their sophomore year. Our sixth grader take Physical Education for one semester and our 7-12 students take a full year of Physical Education every other day. This coming year we will be allowing students to opt in to physical education the year that they take their high school health class. We also offer Child Development Classes that include classroom instruction during year one and internship opportunities in our preschool for levels 2, 3 and 4.

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

We offer Introductory Spanish and French to our middle school students as an elective and we offer Spanish and French I through IV to our high school students. Our grade 6 students may opt to take Spanish 6 during their sixth grade year, every other day as an elective. We offer Introduction to French as a optional elective for grade seven and our eighth graders may opt to take a full year class that is broken down into two semesters called Exploratory French and Spanish where they learn about not only the languages (one each semester) but about the culture of countries that speak those languages. We have a Spanish Club and will be starting to offer a Biliteracy Program next year for those students who score a minimum requirement on their MCAS scores, and who speak more than one language, resulting in a distinguished acknowledgment on their records and during graduation.

## **2d. Technology/library/media**

We have a media specialist available in our library. She teaches Computer Science Discovery to all middle school students for one semester, every other day. This course teaches students about digital literacy and coding. We also offer Computer Principles to our high school students. Our 7th and 8th grade students take Technology and Engineering classes for a full year, every other day and Engineering and the Future as well as CAD/CAM, Robotics, and 3 D Design (which will be referred to as Manufacturing I, II, III, and IV moving forward) and Graphic Design are offered as electives in our high school. Since COVID, the majority of our faculty utilizes Google Classroom as a platform to upload resources, assignments, notes and activities.

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

Our high school teachers collaborate for a interdisciplinary field trip to the Cape Cod Conservatory each year, addressing humanities and the sciences at the same time. We also offer a STAAG program to allow students returning from extended illnesses or hospital stays to transition more smoothly back into the classroom upon their return with necessary academic and social/emotional supports. This allows students to slowly transition back into the classroom rather than be overwhelmed by missed work. We have expanded the use of this program to include students with school phobia and students who are struggling with severe anxiety and depression and those with poor attendance in general.

## **3. Academic Supports**

### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

We offer a "Quest " block to all 6th graders as an intervention/enrichment block. Sixth graders in need of more reading support are pulled to work one on one with a literacy specialists in addition to the same being available to seventh graders in lieu of Middle School Essential Skills class. We offer ELA and Math labs to our seventh and eighth graders who need more support. We also have students on 504 and IEP plans with proper and appropriate accommodations to meet their needs in Academic Support and Intensive Language classes along with small group core classes. Our speech pathologist works with students taking Intensive Language Arts classes and we offer small group classes for ELA, math, social studies, and science to allow for more one on one, targeted instruction. We also offer a STAAG program to allow students returning from extended illnesses or hospital stays to transition more smoothly back into the classroom upon their return with necessary academic and social/emotional supports. This has expanded the use of this program to

include students with school phobia and students who are struggling with severe anxiety and depression and those with poor attendance in general.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

We offer a variety of advanced placement and honors courses as well as some high level electives such as Economics and American Government for example that appeal to students with above grade level performance. We also offer online course and give students the ability to become student teacher assistants in classes as well as partaking in independent studies. Our faculty uses differentiated instruction to meet the individual needs of all students and we take the time to pod our middle school students so that we are sure to create classes that are not leveled per say, but for instance would not include a student who performs above grade level in the same class as students in classes where there may be more students performing at or below grade level.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Students with disabilities have either IEP's or 504's to help them receive accommodations and modifications here at Tahanto for their physical, academic, and social/emotional needs. Plans are reviewed and adjusted appropriately with team input yearly and as needed and are re-evaluated every three years. Students with physical disabilities are supported by use of sound systems for hearing impaired students, special adhesive tape on our stairs to assist students in stairs (or with use of our elevator) and we have developed special evacuation plans for those students and staff who are mobility impaired either permanently or temporarily in the event of an emergency. Students in need of feeding tubes for example, are accompanied by a Paraprofessional one on one during the entire school day and are allowed to enter and exit the school at our front entrance for easy access to the building. Students on IEP's take Academic support classes as well as small group and Intensive Language classes and are supported in math with a "Math Connections" class.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

We offer an ELL class to support our ELL population and our ELL teacher can push into classrooms as well. Students take this course either every other or every day depending on their level of skill in speaking the English language and as deemed appropriate through testing and assessment through our ELL teacher. Our teachers are SEI endorsed.

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

For those students with concussions or returning from any type of out of school program or hospitalization, we have the STAAG program to help them transition back into the classroom with support and ease. This has expanded to students who also struggle with social/emotional and mental health issues and those students with negative attendance patterns or those that are school avoidant.

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Our teachers use inquiry and project based learning techniques as well as differentiated instruction. Our middle school counselor provides lessons to students regarding bullying and also making positive choices. We are looking into Caring School Communities for SEL curriculum for next year. We have people come in to speak with students in panels and career fairs to promote career knowledge and readiness and are instituting a shadowing/internship program for next year. We engage students by providing a variety of methods of instruction including collaborative work, project-based learning, inquiry-based projects, and flipped classroom approaches to keep them engaged and interested. Lessons involving real world application, 21st Century Skills, and topics that relate to students lives and/or community which also piques the interest of students and keep them motivated.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

We partner with our PTO, Boosters, and SEPAC groups. These groups provide input, offer grants to reimburse special projects not covered by teachers budget lines, and offer parent education about subjects such as Financial Literacy, mental health and wellness, Vaping, support for students applying to college, scholarships, and much more. We also have a partnership with Clinton Savings Bank. Not only do they have a working bank branch in our building, students can learn to be bank tellers and actually serve staff and students who have accounts with the bank during school hours. This bank also participates in our evening events by having information booths at events. We have a school council that has parent and community member participants to have a voice in developing our school improvement plan. We hold evening presentations for families on such topics as the dangers of vaping or social media concerns with youth. We offer dual enrollment with our local community college.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

We offer a mentoring induction program for all new teachers and administrators to help them acclimate to our school and teaching in general. We use evaluation as an opportunity to mentor and coach staff. We treat our staff to occasional staff lunches and goodies at various times of the year. We play bingo at lunch time on professional development days. Administration works to be visible and have an open door policy. We openly share communication that goes home with staff as well. Our school is comprised of many staff that are either alumni or live in our two towns. Some of our staff have children that attend our school. We are in the process of starting to engage in “A Portrait of a Graduate” through a consulting firm that specializes in this area and they have recommended that we first take steps to increase a positive school culture amongst staff. We have new administration coming in, including an additional, new second Assistant Principal which will allow for administration to have more time to focus on improvements to school culture which has diminished post COVID and due to recent administrative flux after years of consistent administration.

### **4. School Leadership:**

Our administrative team appreciates a collaborative approach and values staff input. We ensure that everything we do is geared towards not only academic achievement for our students, which we recognize with honor rolls, student and staff of the month nominations, academic award celebrations, a kindness campaign that involves issuing students STAG bucks for kind acts that can be entered into a biweekly raffle for STAG swag and awards at our Grade 8 Recognition Ceremony, Sports Awards, and at Graduation. We had one principal and one assistant principal but as mentioned previously, we are in the process of hiring a second assistant principal. These administrators are part of an administrative team that is very collaborative, transparent, and progressive. We have a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion and also in developing our STEM program and music programs.

### **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

We offer translation services for families that need it. Our administrative team worked with Teachers 21 for two years learning about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and we celebrate these things with an Inclusion week, having a LGTBQ after school club, and such events as a cultural foods event. The principal and assistant principal presented to staff at the beginning of the year to discuss offering diverse and equitable resources and texts in the classroom after taking a two-year course through Teachers 21. Our principal, who is transitioning to the role of Curriculum Director for the district beginning July 1, has taken workshops and classes in Cultural Proficiency and is working with staff to educate them about using diversity through learning resources and experiences and plans to offer professional development in this area through the next school year.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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We have a small school. All staff know each other and we all know all of the students. There is a family feel at Tahanto that makes people want to come to school everyday whether it is to work or learn. When you can work as a team and family, then all other policies, initiatives, etc. work through smoothly. We put effort into encouraging the continuance of this feeling of family that we have despite the fact that every year we lose some staff and students and welcome new ones. The one practice that is most instrumental to our school success is the consistent use of formative and summative assessments as data points to analyze student performance and work towards adjusting practices to meet the needs of our students. These assessments come in a variety of formats such as check ins, partnered pair and share, journal writing, exit tickets, pop quizzes, mini quizzes, games, reviews, and computer generated check ins using programs such as gizmos. Our middle school students take AIMSweb testing at the beginning, middle and end of year for data information gathering purposes. Departments analyze these assessments and make decisions about their curriculum and lesson planning that impacts students in a positive way. The goal is to assure that we know where every student is at when it comes to comprehending concepts, developing skills, and in learning in general and if they are struggling, they receive the support they need based on this data collection.