

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 444 Pleasantville Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Briarcliff Manor State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10510-1922

County Westchester County

Telephone (914) 769-6343 Fax (914) 432-8208

Web site/URL <https://www.briarcliffschools.org> E-mail agladstone@briarcliffschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. James Kaishian E-mail jkaishian@briarcliffschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Briarcliff Manor Union Free School District Tel. (914) 941-8880

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

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

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	105
7	99
8	90
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	294

*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
 - 19 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 12 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 59 % White
 - 7 % 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: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	2
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	269
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Romanian, Spanish, Tai, Telugu, Turkish

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

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

Total number students who qualify: 10

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 6 %
Total number of students served 17

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>3</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>3</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 19 %
Total number of students served: 55

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.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
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.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 23:1

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	96%	96%	98%	97%	97%
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 X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2005

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

To nurture students as they navigate the social, emotional, and intellectual journeys of early adolescence. We support students in developing effective habits to be ready to learn within the classroom and foster positive relationships and friendships. We aim to build a strong and positive community based on the belief that families and schools in partnership can support students in reaching academic success, fostering personal growth, and developing skills for life-long learning.

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

<https://www.briarcliffschools.org/district-information/annual-notices>

Under "equal opportunity" tab

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

Briarcliff Manor School (BMS) is an affluent, suburban community located in Westchester County, New York, with a population of approximately 7,600 people. In addition to its proximity to New York City, residents also have access to many parks and nature preserves, all while maintaining a small-town feel. Families seek to raise and educate their young children in Briarcliff Manor based on the high-quality school district and robust community activities.

The schools in Briarcliff Manor reflect the nature of the community and are designed to be academically rigorous, student centered, and culturally responsive. Briarcliff Middle School mirrors the community's small-town atmosphere with a student population of 294. Students are well known by teachers and staff, with relationships being at the heart of our educational philosophy.

BMS holds five-fundamental skills at the core of our work and seek to nurture students who are critical thinkers, able to solve complex problems, have a strong understanding of digital and information literacy, engage in civic participation, and possess personal agency.

To foster critical thinking, curriculum is designed with an emphasis on interdisciplinary connections. Within our 8th grade social studies and ELA classes, students learn about the historical journey surrounding the movement of people and read personal historical accounts which assist students in developing their own narrative based on their familial ancestry. This unit culminates with students learning about their peers' family history and join together to celebrate a meal filled with family recipes. As a compliment to this unit in their Studio Art Class, students are tasked with creating their own interpretation of migration inspired by the work of an artist and informed historical context.

BMS' enrichment program further enhances students' content expertise by using the skills of the discipline to solve complex, meaningful, and authentic problems. Students dive deeper into problem solving techniques through their enrichment Project Led the Way classes. Students in 7th grade participate in a design challenge where they have to develop a prototype orthotic for a child with cerebral palsy. Students must apply an understanding of the design process, while being sensitive to the challenges of those with varying physical needs.

Civic engagement is woven into the middle school experience both in and out of the classroom. Our 8th graders complete a Capstone project where they identify and analyze a civic issue, evaluate alternate possibilities, and design or execute a solution. Students are challenged to take action by facilitating a community service event or symposium to educate their peers. Beyond the classroom, we have an active student council where our students take charge and are passionate about helping others. Through Student Council initiatives our student body learns about democracy, empathy for others, and working together as a team.

We encourage our students to be advocates and play an active role in making our community welcoming and inviting. Our school psychologist organizes a 24-Hour Unplugged Challenge, which encourages students to refrain from texting, social media, and gaming. Complimentary to this, students create interactive campaigns to educate their peers about phone addiction, social media, and finding a healthy balance for device usage.

At BMS we understand that healthy students learn best. We partner with Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence to train staff in RULER, a systematic approach to social-emotional learning to support teachers, staff, and students with fostering emotional intelligence. The RULER approach supports teachers with creating a positive classroom environment and supports students with recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating their emotions. Within our school community and advisory program, we emphasize the importance of relationships (peer-to-peer and student-to-teacher), self-confidence and self-esteem, along with self-motivation and executive functioning skills.

Students can receive individual support from our school counselor, school psychologist, and student

assistance counselor in our Wellness Suite. The Wellness Suite is fitted with flexible furniture to ensure comfort for students to unwind, recharge, speak with, and hang out with friends in a safe, supervised environment.

With social and emotional learning being at the core of our work, we hold an annual Wellness Day each spring. This event highlights the year-long work that students have engaged in to promote a health and wellness mindset. The theme of last year's Wellness Day; "Tap into Your Passion" encouraged students to identify an interest or hobby that brought them joy. Students participated in workshops that ranged from physical activities to mindfulness. Our goal was to encourage students to continue to tap into their passion and pull that passion into their daily lives.

For the first time this year we had an All-School Ice-Skating trip to foster community building and encourage risk-taking. Kids who were tentative at first, grew in confidence by the end of the experience. Teachers participated and supervised, and the students loved seeing them in this light. It was a great example of the type of community-building that is a cornerstone of BMS.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Our English Language Arts department prepares students to become well-rounded readers, writers, speakers, and listeners by delivering an engaging curriculum that encourages creativity and critical thinking skills. In order to meet students where they are as readers and to allow for a greater exposure to a writing style and character perspective our department thoughtfully selects and incorporates choice books into many units. To further prepare students for a modern world, there is an emphasis on visual and digital literacy where lessons carefully utilize technology to enhance learning. Ultimately, our ELA department seeks to instill a love of reading and writing in all of our students to enable them to become lifelong learners. Our department follows the standards of New York State via the Next Generation Learning Standards while also incorporating student voice and choice into units of study. All units and their subsequent assessments focus on the writing process, analytical reading, comprehension, as well as public speaking and discussion skills, all of which foster college and career readiness and prepare students to fully participate in the world around them.

Each grade level is a literature-based curriculum, studying a variety of prose and poetry, including essays, short stories, novels, and dramatic works. Literature involves the classics, contemporary works, a diversity of authors, and a wide variety of cultural perspectives. Through literature, informational texts, and thematic writing projects, our 6th graders develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Our sixth grade Team collaborates to develop interdisciplinary connections for students, and to build a rich vocabulary. Sixth grade is a time of developmental change and transition; therefore, instruction is differentiated to meet the individual needs of all students. The seventh-grade course of study includes the formal review and teaching of literary elements and genres, with the emphasis on application of rules to writing, the study of vocabulary, the teaching of the research process, and exposure to a variety of writing techniques and public speaking. Students focus on creating a Call to Action Project. Emphasis is placed on exposure and implementation to a variety of apps on student devices through the lens of ELA. Studies include thematically based novels, short stories, and poetry often linked to informational texts. Students use classroom libraries to supplement their outside reading and are encouraged to choose challenge texts to augment existing themes in the classroom. Eighth grade English Language Arts continues the study of literary skills from sixth and seventh grade. There is an emphasis on more analytical reading and writing; building on text evidence and the foundations of claim writing to further develop students' insight into the class texts. The 8th grade curriculum has a humanities focus, with multiple connections to Social Studies. Students will read historical fiction and informational texts while simultaneously learning the historical context within their social studies class, allowing students to develop discipline specific writing skills. This helps students prepare for high school reading and writing as well.

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

Our Math department aims to teach mathematics with an emphasis on reasoning, understanding and problem-solving by the use of hands-on and tech-based manipulatives. Lessons are designed to be student-centered, collaborative, and incorporate problem solving. We believe mathematics should be accessible and made meaningful to all learners with students having the opportunity to transfer and apply skills and concepts across content areas. We emphasize connections and common themes across grade levels to provide better coherence and deepening of learning. At all grade levels, our Math curriculum follows the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards that develop students' understanding of Ratio's and Proportions, Number Systems, Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities, Geometry, and Statistics & Probability. We recognize students' various strengths and learning styles, consequently, wherever possible, concepts are investigated and presented from several different perspectives. The learning of mathematics is enhanced when students feel they belong to a community of learners; when they have the opportunity to interact and learn from and alongside each other. Teacher designed assessments as well as standardized assessments such as MAPs and State exams are used to identify areas of strengths, weaknesses, and

opportunities for remediation or acceleration.

Throughout their middle school experience, students study five content strands within their math classes; number systems, ratio and proportional relationships, algebra, geometry, and statistics and probability. Our 6th grade math class emphasizes developing students' proficiency in numerical operations and developing problem solving skills. As students evolve as math students, the 7th grade focus is placed upon developing algebraic understanding and learning how to represent problem situations in several different ways. Acceleration in 7th grade is available to qualified students. These courses are designed for students who wish to pursue their studies more extensively and at a more demanding pace than the regular curriculum allows. In grade 7, accelerated classes combine the 7th & 8th grade curriculums in a single year. Emphasis is placed on deepening their understanding of the five mathematical strands and more advanced problem solving. In addition to the accelerated 7/8 class, we offer an honors level class. The expectations for this course are higher, as students are expected to solve more rigorous open-ended problems and provide proof of their solutions. Similar to grade 7, we offer two math pathways; students can study the grade level Math 8 curriculum, or continue with acceleration to high school Algebra I. In the 8th grade curriculum, students are developing an algebraic understanding and learn how to represent problems and solutions in several different ways. Acceleration continues for those students enrolled in the Math 7/8 courses. Algebra I students will begin their first course in the high school math sequence. Algebraic concepts and skills will be explored and developed through multiple representations. The class culminates with the state assessment for Algebra I in June. This class provides a high school credit, and students' final grades for this course are entered on their high school transcripts.

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

Briarcliff Middle School believes that science education is essential in helping our students develop a deep understanding of the world around them. We provide a stimulating and engaging learning environment that encourages students to explore and discover the wonders of science. Students develop the skills of the discipline including data analysis, application, investigating phenomena, and understanding that certain concepts cut across all scientific disciplines. We are committed to the New York State science learning standards which developed from the Next Generation Science Standards. These provide a framework for science instruction that is grounded in inquiry, problem solving, and hands-on experimentation. To meet the needs of all our learners, we use a combination of direct instruction, inquiry-based and problem-based learning to engage our students and help them develop a deeper understanding of scientific concepts. Students are assessed in a variety of ways including practical examinations, multiple choice, and open ended writing prompts. All forms of assessment incorporate having students make a claim and use data and evidence to support and explain their reasoning.

The 6th grade science curriculum is focused on Earth Science topics. Students will study topics related to Earth's Systems, History of Earth, Weather & Climate, Human Impacts, and Space Systems. All units incorporate lab activities, and engineering and design. As 7th graders, students study the living environment. The course focuses on the study of the biological make up of living organisms from simple to complex and the impact they have on their environment. Our 8th grade science course is uniquely designed to prepare students for the rigor of high school science, students study the foundations of chemistry and physics, through the investigation of the basic structure of matter. The course provides a blend of science concepts and skills culminating with a state assessment that includes a laboratory practical.

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

Our social studies department strives to help middle school students understand the world around them and how they contribute to it. The Social Studies program helps students develop critical thinking skills, expand knowledge and understanding of history, foster awareness of larger communities (local, national, global), and cultivate understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens. Historical inquiry, student voice and choice, accessing the incredible resources and technology available to us, and appreciation of different viewpoints, are mainstays of our program. The goal of our program is to help students grow into global citizens who can solve problems, think creatively, and live as learners in an increasingly complex world.

The Briarcliff Middle School Social Studies Department follows the New York State Social Studies Framework for Grades 6-8. The framework places emphasis on the skills and dispositions needed for college, career and civic life. Our approach to teaching and learning embeds historical inquiry through the use of open ended questions that students explore using primary and secondary sources. Teachers encourage students voices and choices by offering opportunities for self-paced and collaborative learning, as well as, differentiated opportunities to express learning goals. Civic readiness is weaved into lessons by establishing real-world connections made to historical events and opportunities for students to participate in community service events. Our teachers develop students historical thinking skills by analyzing primary and secondary sources which include images, recognize sequence of events and how they are interrelated, recognize patterns and themes in history and understand how events impact or help explain each other. Teachers assess students by using formative and summative assessments that include; authentic assessments that are project based, claim-based and document-based writing assignments, and stimulus-based multiple choice questioning.

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

Briarcliff Middle School is committed to preparing students for high school and beyond, we support our students through academics, career exploration, and leadership opportunities. One of the ways that our students can begin to prepare for college is by gaining one high school credit each, in the disciplines of math (Algebra) and world language (French or Spanish) in the 8th grade. An early start to credit accumulation opens the door to taking high level or college credit bearing classes during high school.

Beginning in 6th grade, students explore life after high school through our enrichment and advisory programs. Our enrichment program makes real world connections to the core content classes. In the 6th grade STEAM careers class, students learn about career opportunities that exist in STEAM from professionals in the field. The thread of career exploration is continued in 8th grade advisory, where parents and professionals come in to meet with students to discuss their work and how they got there. These classes help students choose what courses they take in high school, as they plan for post secondary experiences.

Community and civic leadership is woven into the fabric of our school. Students are given many opportunities to build community and engage in leadership through our core classes, enrichment program, and co-curricular activities. For example in the 7th grade, students learn about ecology in science class and can explore this further in our after school Nature Club. The club raises trout and quail with the intention of releasing them back into the local environment so that these species can play a vital role in their food webs. Through this experience of stewardship, students take an active role in learning about and educating their peers of the delicate balance between human impact and a species survival in their ecosystem.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Art skills are demonstrated, practiced, and built upon at each grade level. All students are enrolled in two quarters of art classes each year where they explore two artistic strands: Visual and Computer Art.

Visual artistic expression is one of the ways in which students seek, explore, and find a unique voice. We believe middle school is time for students to experiment with a variety of media, techniques, and making art. We strive to include historic and cultural backgrounds that enhance the meaning and depth of the lessons and helps students to make connections between art and other disciplines. Students learn about the human achievements of that subject area and translate those achievements into written and visual expressions.

Through our Computer Art courses, students learn how to use computer art tools to create and enhance their original artwork. Students will explore drawing by using traditional art tools and using the equivalent tools on their iPad. The creation of mosaics strengthen the concept that drawing is based on the arrangement of shapes. Observational and auditory drawing assignments assist students in developing the skills of looking and listening while illustrating on the computer.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

At all grade levels, physical education offers students an opportunity to learn various sports, cooperative games, and fitness strategies that are coupled with an opportunity for self-expression and stress release. We strive to present students with a range of physical activities they can enjoy and incorporate into their lives, and ultimately remain physically active for a lifetime. We emphasis cooperative learning and foster an environment that allows for students to understand and demonstrate what it means to be a part of a team.

At BMS, students are enrolled in Health classes every year, for one-quarter of the academic year. We recognize the need for students to establish healthy habits, which is why our students are enrolled in Health beyond the New York state requirements. The health education curriculum is designed to help students understand that the decisions they make now can affect the quality of their lives. Our content and activities focus on educating students in the following areas: health promotion and disease prevention, nutrition, identifying risky behaviors, human sexuality and healthy relationships, mental and emotional wellness, goal setting, and responsible decision making. Throughout all three-years of Health education, students practice Mindfulness to help promote a healthy lifestyle.

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

Our World Language Department is committed to preparing our students for today's increasingly global society. Our language courses focus on the four essential skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with an emphasis on listening and speaking. The New York State Learning Standards for World Languages are integrated into our curriculum through the utilization of authentic sources and technology with project based and hands-on activities. Our World Language Program provides the opportunity for students to select the study of French or Spanish beginning in the 6th grade, which is a three-year commitment to instill an in-depth emersion of language and culture. Our approach is communicative, with vocabulary and grammar intertwined to help students feel comfortable listening, speaking, reading, and writing about what they are learning. We build interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational activities into each lesson everyday, to allow for a comprehensive input for vocabulary acquisition with many opportunities for practice. With new shifts in New York State teaching and learning standards, we have a targeted approach to support students with their understanding, and express ideas in a meaningful context. Our goal is to prepare students to become life-long language learners and to be able to compete in the global society.

2d. Technology/library/media

In the Fall of 2021, Briarcliff Middle School earned the coveted Apple Distinguished School Designation for our continuous innovation in teaching and learning. It should be noted that we are the only school in the Hudson Valley and one of 15 schools in all of New York State to have received this award. This designation celebrates the work of our teachers who cultivate environments that foster curiosity, creativity and collaboration. It also celebrates the work of our students who always display a love for learning, a desire to inspire, and technological savviness.

Throughout their middle school years, digital and information literacy is an essential component within the learning experience for our students. Our Library Media Specialist supports teachers with the implementation of their curriculum to teach developmentally appropriate research skills. These skills include a focus on digital research techniques, determining the validity of sources, and understanding the implication of social media algorithms.

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

BMS offers a robust performing arts experience. As students enter middle school, they select a three-year course of study in a particular area; chorus, orchestra, band, or exploring music. Within the musical ensembles students receive a well-rounded education including exposure to a variety of musical styles, a working knowledge of music fundamentals and terminology, and musical literacy. These courses of study foster the acquisition of advanced technical skill to assist while performing. Students perform during a winter and spring concert. Additionally, students may participate in performances at other venues, such as, the New York State School Music Association festival and All County. For those students who are not interested in learning an instrument or performing, students can enroll in our Exploring Music class. Through hands-on experiences in a music lab, students explore interesting and relevant topics in music while gaining an understanding, appreciation, and skill in a variety of musical endeavors.

After-school students can continue to engage in the performing arts. The BMS singers, String and Wind Ensemble, and Dance club let students spend more time practicing or explore another avenue of performing arts. Additionally, our annual spring musical inspires students to perform onstage or backstage learning about technical theatre arts.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Within each grade level, one section of each subject is designated as a “supported” section. This section is taught by the general education teacher, with support from either a teaching assistant or related service provider. Students are identified for this academic support through the yearly team articulation process. The role of the support staff is to assist students with their attention, provide small group instruction, and scaffold tasks to meet individual needs. The class is designed to not only provide academic instruction, but also to build up a students’ self-advocacy and confidence.

Though a team approach to teaching and learning, grade level teams meet weekly. The team reviews students’ academic and socio-emotional progress and data to determine if an intervention would be helpful in supporting a child. As every student situation is unique, the team explores a variety of classroom interventions to be implemented, including special seating arrangements, chunking assignments, providing direct and indirect instruction, incorporating visual examples, daily monitoring of academics and behaviors.

If a child needs additional support beyond the classroom intervention, that child is referred to our Response to Intervention (RTI) team, comprised of general and special education teachers, school psychologist, school counselor, nurse, and school building leaders. Any one of these members or a parent can refer a child to RTI, the process may determine if a targeted intervention is needed for an added layer of support. We have three “strategy” classes, that students can move in and out of throughout the year. Classes include Math, Writing, and Reading Strategies. The classes provide small group and/or individual instruction to build skills and conceptual understanding tailored to individual learning goals. In addition to our strategies classes, we offer a course called Learning Center, which develops students’ executive functioning skills to become independent learners and self-advocates.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Teachers at BMS work towards designing individualized curriculum that pushes students to a deeper level of thinking and understanding. Having been trained in Innovative Designs for Education (IDE), our teachers create projects and tasks that allow for multiple ways of demonstrating understanding. Students have voice and choice to respond to a prompt that has varying levels of difficulty, challenge, and access points. This curricular design allows teachers to target students above grade level and push them to go further with the content, develop their skills, and become independent in their learning. This student centered, project-based approach encourages teachers to conference with students and direct them into an appropriate challenge whether this is a higher level text, an extended response, conduct additional independent research, or come up with a unique way to respond to the prompt at hand.

For those students who are seeking an additional academic challenge, there is an opportunity to participate

in an accelerated math program starting in 7th grade. Students are exposed to both the 7th and 8th grade NYS math curriculum in the 7th grade, which affords them the opportunity to learn and sit for the Algebra I Regents in the 8th grade. Students who successfully complete the Regents in Algebra I will earn high school credit, with the final grade appearing on the student's high school transcript.

3c. Students with disabilities:

We believe every student can learn by providing support and guidance for students with learning challenges. We understand and recognize the needs of each individual student and provide them with the support to build confidence and experience success. Our learning specialists provide a myriad of academic services that are specifically designed to keep students engaged in their learning and give them the opportunity to grow and flourish at their own pace in a safe and nurturing environment.

Special education students can be recommended for either our fully integrated co-taught (ICT) classes or our supported class sections. The ICT class is co-taught by the general education teacher and special education teacher. These teachers plan and design lessons collaboratively, and provide instruction using a variety of co-teaching models.

In addition to our ICT and supported classes, we also offer a Resource Center class for students who need the highest level of academic support within our school. Students programmed for a Resource Center class, work in a small group (6 or less students) facilitated by the special education teacher. During this class, the special education teacher can preview material, reinforce concepts, and work on individual student goals. This model is highly successful because the special education teacher is also the co-teacher in the ICT classes. The special education teacher develops academic goals for each student and progress monitors throughout the year. This teacher will write the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and be the bridge between the family and the school.

We have recently redesigned our classrooms to be flexible learning environments, allowing students to move around the classroom freely, and offering teachers creativity and privacy when working with small groups. The furniture and classroom spaces have been intentionally chosen and designed to meet the unique sensory needs of this age group.

3d. English Language Learners:

In the Briarcliff School District, the stand-alone ENL model is implemented where students receive English language development instruction taught by a NYS-certified teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), in order to acquire the English language needed for success in core content areas and the cultural knowledge needed for social integration. ENL teachers work in close consultation with core content area teachers to provide accommodations, preview and review concepts with an emphasis on vocabulary and language structure, and support both conceptual and linguistic development. This program typically serves English Language Learners (ELL) students from many different home/primary language backgrounds whose only common language is English and therefore cannot participate in a bilingual program.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

As a learning organization, we pride ourselves on being responsive and adaptive to our students and the world around us by fostering curiosity and innovation in students and educators alike. We aim to honor the whole child which is why we have developed opportunities throughout the day and after school to support the student academically and socially. During the school day, we've created an enrichment program to further enhance students' content expertise by using the skills of the discipline to solve an authentic problem. These classes include World Geography, Coding, Engineering, Forensic Science, International Music and Film, Dance, and a Civic Readiness Capstone project. Students have enjoyed deepening their knowledge and finding their intellectual passions. Students can continue to engage in tapping into their interests through our robust after-school program. Students can participate in co-curricular clubs, activities and sports. Some choices include performing, making art, and civic leadership activities. Some activities allow students to compete in various local, regional and national competitions, where they can become inspired and challenged by other students. Our after-school program is designed to mirror our values in developing a well-rounded student.

Just as we encourage our teachers to take risks, we encourage the student body to take risks. This year, members of our Student Council were empowered by this belief and committed to developing a greener campus by establishing a Litter Less Lunch program. Throughout the spring semester, our Student Council designated Litter Less Lunch days to educate students on the impact recycling and composting has on our environment. Students were encouraged to utilize reusable water bottles, lessen the trash generated by their lunch, and avoid using single serve plastics.

As true advocates for their academic needs, our students expressed a desire to have a place where they can work and help other students with their homework and projects. As a result we have instituted a weekly homework help desk after school. The library is a buzz with students collaborating and chatting while working on their homework. To further enhance this program we have begun working with our high school National Honor Society who are assigned as peer tutors to support middle school students. This beautiful partnership not only provides academic support but allows for mentorship from an older student to encourage community and belonging.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We deeply value our strong partnership with family and community partners. School building leaders work closely with The Briarcliff Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to meet the needs of our students and foster a welcoming environment for students and families alike. Throughout the year we plan various events that allow for our PTA and families to come into our building to provide support to our students. One highlight of this partnership was when the PTA co-planned a heart health awareness day to encourage a healthy heart both physically and emotionally. Our parents organized and facilitated a heart healthy breakfast and joined us as chaperones on our school wide ice skating field trip later that afternoon which promoted positive relationships and physical activity. In addition to special events, we hold quarterly family workshops to address issues facing our student body. These Coffee and Conversation workshops have explored topics such as; parenting in the digital age, finding a balance between academic and after school activities, and having difficult conversations with pre-teens. The parent workshop on difficult conversations was planned and co-facilitated with the Harbor Lights Foundation, a non profit organization that supports families, children, and teens coping with loss. Our family workshops evolve each year based on interest and need from the current student body and community.

BMS often partners with the Briarcliff Manor Educational Fund (BMEF), a non-profit community organization that enables our teachers to apply for grants to introduce new resources and tools into our classrooms. This year, we received three 3-D printers in our I.D.E.A. Lab. All students access these printers within their Project Led the Way Engineering classes. Most recently, our science teachers were recipients of Merge EDU cues to allow students to learn and interact with the world around them through augmented

reality. This BMEF partnership allows our teachers to become trailblazers when developing new projects and tasks to deepen learning and student engagement.

Engaging students, families, and the community expands beyond the school day. Our Library Media Specialist has developed a beautiful relationship with the Librarian at the Briarcliff Manor Public Library. Through their collaboration, they created an evening family book club. This reading group explores a variety of literary genres and authors for families to enjoy reading together, discussing the story plot, analyze characters, and foster a love of reading within the school and community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Professional development has always been and will continue to be a strategic objective for the district. We view professional learning as a way to build a teachers toolbox so that they can have more autonomy and foster creative thinking. Working with our district-wide Professional Development Committee (PDC), BMS develops professional learning communities for teachers and support staff to learn, explore, and develop skills and/or methodologies to grow as an educator and further student learning. The PDC issues a seasonal PD catalog, featuring courses led by teachers or outside consultants. These courses can be a one time event, a limited series, or a group that meets monthly. At BMS, we value the concept of teacher leader, and encourage our faculty to develop their own courses to teach others their best practices and strategies for strong instruction.

This year, our professional development focus has been to strengthen the relationship and work between departments and grade level teams. Departments created actionable goals to deepen their instructional strategies and practices. These goals informed our professional learning opportunities during faculty and department meetings, additional resources needed to support their instruction, and school wide initiatives. Department work was complimented by focused grade level meeting time where the grade level teams worked together to find common language, skills being taught, identify areas of interdisciplinary connections, and possible grade level events. This work reinforces the idea and culture in the middle school that our teachers are leaders and innovators within the classroom.

We strive to ensure that all learning is personalized, relevant, focused on growth and reflect choice and voice. Each student in the Briarcliff Manor school district receives their own Apple device (iPad or MacBook Pro). Over the past few years, teachers and support staff have enrolled in Apple's Teacher Certification program, where they deepened their understanding of various Apple applications, nuances of the device, and how to utilize technology to enhance student learning. As a result, teachers have been able to create personalized tasks to reflect student choice and voice. Teachers customized digital notebooks that are interactive and display resources from a wide range of sources. We engage students through multiple modalities allowing them the autonomy to choose the ways they learn best and dive deeper into learning.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership philosophy is to lead by example; showing a disposition of empathy, admiration and respect for all. Collaboration is woven into the work building leaders engage in with teachers and staff to reinforce the expertise, trust, and autonomy among all. We believe in a team-approach to strengthen teaching, learning, and decision making. At the end of the academic year, the principal meets with each staff member to reflect on the year and determine if any changes need to be made with regard to school wide policy and procedures.

At BMS, the building level leadership team consists of one principal and one assistant principal. We have a middle school cabinet that is comprised of our grade level team leaders representing the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, and two representatives from the special services department. During our weekly cabinet meeting, our team explores grade level needs such as special events or activities, student concerns, and school wide initiatives.

With a strong value on curriculum and instruction, we have a total of eight curriculum leaders representing each department, who meet monthly with the principal and assistant principal to discuss instructional

practices, department needs, analyze student data, and discuss curricula cohesion. Our curriculum leaders shed insight into any shifts in state standards, look at student work through the lens of assessments, revise rubrics, and discuss potential programmatic changes in the master schedule.

Reflecting our focus on the social and emotional wellness and awareness of the whole child, the Pupil Personnel Services Team (PPS) meets weekly to discuss student related issues. This team includes the principal, assistant principal, school psychologist, school counselor and student assistance counselor. At times, our district Director of Pupil Personnel Services will join these conversations as an added layer of support and guidance. The team explores a variety of strategies and methods to use in supporting students' wellbeing and social and emotional growth. As a follow up to student concerns and interventions, the team works closely with families to bridge the gap between school and home.

To build and maintain a nurturing and safe environment, our Emergency Response Team (ERT) meets regularly to review roles and responsibilities, plan and prepare protocols for emergency situations, and engage in table-top conversations around current topics in school safety. Members of the ERT include the principal, assistant principal, school psychologist, school counselor, nurse, school safety monitor and 7 teachers.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

While unified behind the common goal of creating confident and capable students, it is important that faculty, staff, and families be cognizant of the diversity of thought and experience that exists among our student body and staff. By exposing students to a broad range of ideas and perspectives, engaging in respectful dialogue, and better reflecting the composition of school families, our staff is committed to engaging students academically, afford individual dignity, and are able to reach their academic potential. Three ways in which BMS ensures this is through professional development, curriculum, and student activities.

Earlier this year, many of our faculty and staff participated in a book study on *Cultivating Genius* by Dr. Gholdy Muhammed, facilitated by our district Director of Curriculum and Instruction. This professional learning group learned about Muhammed's Historically Responsive Literacy Framework and created an action plan to make changes to current and future classroom practices.

Our ELA department has been working for the past three years to introduce literature circles on all grade levels. Literature circles allow for students to choose and read books that reflect their backgrounds, interests, and/or abilities. Introducing literature circles has afforded teachers the opportunity to expose students to more diverse authors, characters, and cultures. Most importantly, students are able to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. This shift in teaching literature has resulted in students' higher levels of engagement and investment in class discussions and overall interest in reading.

Diverse cultures and backgrounds of the student body and staff are celebrated through student activities. Our International Club organizes an annual International Day to highlight the diversity within our school community. Students teach their peers about their cultures through traditional dance and music, parents volunteer to share stories about their family origins and offer a sampling of traditional cuisine, students listen to folk tales from an array of cultures, as well as view student created posters that share information about different countries. The day culminates with an International Film Festival with students selecting a film to view and enjoy with peers. We're proud our students design and lead a day that is rooted in respect for all.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

At Briarcliff Middle School, we designed a school structure that blends the comfort of the self-contained elementary classroom with the departmentalized high school program, which allows for students to take intellectual risks in a safe and nurturing environment. We believe the middle school model is an integral component to the success of our school. Using grade teams, in partnership with the clinical team, we support students to develop effective habits to be ready to learn within the classroom and foster positive relationships and friendships. This model allows for us to build a strong and positive community based on the belief that families and schools in partnership can support students in reaching academic success, foster personal growth, and develop skills for life-long learning.

At the heart of Briarcliff Middle School's effort to meet the learning needs of all students is the grade-level team. Our grade level teams consist of teachers, teaching assistants, related services providers, the school psychologist, school counselor, nurse, and building leaders. As a result of our small school population, we are able to schedule one teacher per discipline to teach all students on the grade level. This allows each grade level team to identify individual student's strengths and areas in need of growth, develop appropriate learning expectations for each student, and promote nurturing relationships between teachers and students.

Grade level teams meet biweekly to discuss the whole child, honing in on a child's academic and social and emotional progress. The team also identifies opportunities for cross disciplinary connections and plan special events to support and enhance curriculum. Our team approach extends to family partnerships, with team based conferences held weekly to address specific needs and concerns. Our grade level teams foster open lines of communication with families to highlight student success, good behavior, and citizenship.

We continue to focus on providing an academically rigorous program while supporting the wellness and development of the whole child. We strive to foster a shared sense of community; with high academic expectations for all learners while promoting healthy habits and mindsets. With teaching and learning being paramount in our school building, we encourage fun as often as possible. We hope to instill a love for learning among all.