

**East Ramapo Central School District  
Application in Response to the  
School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003(g), RFP# GC16-015**

**Program Narrative**

**School: Chestnut Ridge Middle School**

**Intervention Model: Innovation and Reform Framework**

**Pathway 1: College and Career Readiness School Design**

**Educational Partnership Organization (EPO): International Baccalaureate Organization**

**I. District-level Plan (20 points)**

**A. District Overview (--)**

*(District Commitment and Capacity to Implement – The LEA must demonstrate a commitment to success in the turnaround of its lowest achieving schools and the capacity to implement the model proposed in its Priority School in this application. This is an overarching standard, which is met by achieving an overall application score that is at or above the minimum score for a fundable application.)*

The East Ramapo Central School District (ERCSD), located in Rockland County, New York, is an urban/suburban local educational agency (LEA) responsible for the daily education of 32,000 students in grades Pk-12. The District serves the Towns of Ramapo, Clarkstown, and Haverstraw. Classified as a high need/low resource LEA by the State Education Department (SED), the ERCSD currently manages 14 public schools (ten elementary, two middle, and two high schools) in addition to 168 nonpublic schools. The majority (23,500) of East Ramapo students attend nonpublic schools, while the remaining, 8,500 are enrolled in public schools. This has been a long-standing situation for the LEA; a 1997 New York Times noted that the ERCSD was one of only five school districts across New York State where more students were enrolled in private schools than in public schools based in order to meet religious requirements.

Historically under-served ethnic groups represent 94% of the District's public school population. Of that audience, 50% are Hispanic; 39% are African American and 5% are Asian, Native American or Hawaiian. East Ramapo serves large numbers of students from low-income households; 84% of its pupils are eligible for free and reduced-rate lunch. This statistic is significant in light of the achievement gap experienced by minority and low-income students. These pupils often lag behind their non-minority, more affluent peer groups academically, placing them perpetually at-risk of persistent academic failure and of becoming high school non-completers. With respect to other student populations served by the District, 31% are English language learners (ELLs) and 20% have disabilities. With regards to the ERCSD's other high-need populations, 31% are English language learners (ELLs) and 21% have been classified as students with disabilities.

The ERCSD has a significant and growing immigrant population, serving students from 47 different countries outside of the United States. In particular, East Ramapo serves a large population of Haitian immigrants, many of whom arrived in the region as native French speakers with children who were subsequently classified as English language learners. Moreover, East Ramapo currently hosts the third-largest Haitian-Creole population in the nation, ranking behind only New York City and Miami, Florida. The District's public and nonpublic enrollment has increased steadily over the last decade, compelling District leaders to place a greater emphasis on securing commensurate instructional resources. That urgent task has been severely impeded by the reality that less than 25% of East Ramapo students attend public schools.

East Ramapo, under the leadership of newly-appointed Superintendent, Deborah L. Wortham, Ed. D, has a strong commitment to reforming its lowest performing schools. In February, 2016, the ERCSD was re-identified by the State of New York as a Focus district. Eight of the district's 14 schools (including the Chestnut Ridge Middle School to be served by the proposed School Improvement Grant) have been identified by the State of New York as Priority or Focus schools. In order to effectively turn around those buildings, the District has completely embraced the federal School Reform Model and that paradigm is reflected, systemically, in related governance documents which include comprehensive education plans, attendant action plans (as well as related tenets) at the school and district levels. The ERCSD's leaders work diligently to ensure that strategies delineated in the School Reform Model are fully aligned with the District's mission, vision and values.

In line with the ERCSD's strong commitment to whole school reform, the proposed SIG's design takes into consideration each relevant tenet articulated in the CEPs for the entire District as well as the targeted Chestnut Ridge Middle School. To that end, particular emphasis will be placed on school leadership as it relates to Principal practice and cultivating cohorts of teacher-leaders. The Chestnut Ridge Middle School is already working towards some of these outcomes; under the leadership of Principal Maria Vergez, teams of teachers will begin this school year working together in a professional learning community intended to improve instructional practice and yield improved student learning outcomes. Also reflected in the SIG design is East Ramapo's intent to improve lines of communication and collaboration with all of its schools, placing an emphasis on the ERCSD's nine priority and focus schools. At the District level, a Core Planning Team will be composed. This group will include teachers, students, school and district leaders, community members, parents, business leaders, and school board members. Among other tasks, this group ensuring that SIG and District resources are marshalled to ensure that students achieve and succeed.

Based on findings listed in the SED's most recent DTSDE Review, the District actively works with each school to ensure a curriculum, fully aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that provides 21st Century College and Career Readiness skills that will allow graduates to compete and excel in a complex and demanding global workforce. In pursuit of that goal, the ERCSD works to ensure that planning and preparation, classroom environments, and instructional practices are reflective of systemic priorities (i.e., CCLS-aligned learning targets, actionable feedback to students, and collaborative conversations) 85% of the time by citing evidence as indicated on the Learning Walkthrough tool. Movement towards those outcomes is measured in many ways, including application of the Danielson Framework (in line with Education Law §3012-

c), along with the collection, aggregation, and analysis of summative and formative student performance data.

To further strengthen its effort to effectively reform its Focus and Priority schools, the ERCSD will implement a variety of new measures intended to improve teacher practice during the forthcoming 2016-2017 academic year. Among other innovations, the Superintendent, working closely with the District's Office of Personnel will hire an Assistant Superintendent for Professional Development. The responsibilities vested in this key administrative position will include ensuring that the ERCSD's curricula and instruction are in total alignment with the state's CCLS. This title will also take a lead role in developing a systemic professional development plan which ensures that teachers across the District are thoroughly conversant with the rubric expectations of the DTSDE. That plan will be informed, in large part, by DTSDE Review Data, student performance data and teacher professional development need as identified by principals and self-reported by ERCSD educators.

There is sufficient evidence that ERCSD's overall administrative and instructional infrastructure is substantial enough to support the SIG's stated goals, objectives, benchmarks, and outcomes as stated in the sections to follow. With respect to executive-level staffing, the District's public schools are managed by a complement of 14 principals; 8 assistant principals; 79 other professional staff and 99 paraprofessionals. East Ramapo's instructional composition is sound. Each of the District's 592 teachers are certified; none are teaching outside of his or her area of certification, and only 4% have less than three years' experience. East Ramapo teachers are themselves well educated; 69% hold a Master's Degree plus 30 (or more) hours towards a Doctoral Degree. Overall, ERCSD teachers provide instruction to 1,866 classes daily; a figure that includes 1,266 classes in core content areas (e.g., reading, math, science and social studies). These figures denote the District's ability to build and sustain a solid teacher pipeline capable of facilitating long-term, systemic change in East Ramapo's elementary and secondary schools.

East Ramapo's District Leadership Team consists of 22 distinguished educational administrators that are each dedicated to reversing this LEA's standing as a Focus District. The ERCSD's Core Leadership Team, as described earlier in this section, will play a significant role in the SIG plan's implementation. As of this submission date, none of those buildings are Title I SIG recipients under categories 1003(a) or 1003(g). Accordingly, this application represents part of an ongoing, coordinated effort to bring into the District funding and other resources needed to successfully transform its lowest performing elementary and secondary schools. To that end SIG activities will be informed by relevant portions of the DCEP as they relate to whole school reform, while also seeking to expand and/or enhance those elements. That performance target will include incorporation of a three-year strategic plan, created by the ERCSD in consultation with an external consulting group. That plan's overarching goal is to focus and align district initiatives and operations while addressing data-based student and community needs. This plan will be driven by New York State's DTSDE review, Office of Civil Rights resolution, Title III Corrective Action Plan, Fiscal Monitor's Report and Monitor's Report.

#### B. Operational Autonomies (4 points)

*The LEA must provide operational autonomies for Priority Schools in exchange for greater accountability for performance results in the following areas: 1) staffing; 2) school-based*

*budgeting; 3) use of time during and after school; 4) program selection; and 5) educational partner selection. In addition to providing quality responses to each element requested in this section of the Proposal Narrative, the Priority School must have school-level autonomy in at least two of these areas for an acceptable rating in this category. Applications that provide quality responses and that are granted anywhere from 3 to 5 of these autonomies will receive a rating of exemplary for this category.*

*1) staffing-* With appropriate support and oversight provided by the ERCSD, the Chestnut Ridge Middle School will be afforded sufficient operational autonomies needed to ensure that all project goals, objectives and outcomes are met. In the area of staffing, Coordinator for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program, compensated with SIG 1003(g) funds, will serve as a liaison between Chestnut Ridge and the District. That position will work in close collaboration with the building's administration, school leadership team, faculty and other key stakeholders to accomplish the MYP's mission inside of the prescribed timeline and within the approved budget. In line with the District's firm commitment to transformational leadership, Chestnut Ridge's Principal has been granted the operational autonomy to direct school administrators and select faculty, and external partners that will play key roles in the MYP program, and has already chosen some of those entities. For example, under Principal Maria Vergez's guidance, CRMS' two assistant principals (Laura Dobson and Madeline Paneto) will expand their involvement in the school's transformation into four interdisciplinary teams in order to create a stronger, more effective professional learning community. The design has allowed Chestnut Ridge' administrators to think creatively and expansively about the building's needs and how best to meet these requirements within the broader context of Whole School Reform. In order to advance this building's reformation, school leaders look to use SIG and other funding to infuse CRMS with new human resources to include ESL coaching in the classroom; content area specialists that teachers can access immediately; in addition to social workers (some of whom will be bilingual) to address the needs of homeless students and their families.

*2) school-based budgeting -* Schools in the ERCSD have some but limited autonomy regarding school-based budgeting at this time. However, as part of the operational autonomy afforded Chestnut Ridge through the Priority School designation (and in line with research-based best practice in school administration), school administrators will be expected to play a lead role towards ensuring that project funds are efficiently and effectively applied towards meeting planned goals and objectives. In that capacity, Chestnut Ridge's Principal and assistant principals will be responsible for tasks which include leveraging existing resources as well as evaluating student needs on a continuous basis, aligning and/or realigning expenditures accordingly. The school leadership will also be expected to work with the District and community to identify additional financial, material and human resources that can be used to support the program. As recommended by SED, the CRMS' Principal will play an important role in budget planning activities which ensure sustainability, while also making sure that planned goals and objectives are accomplished on time and within the parameters of ERCSD's approved SIG budget.

*3) use of time during and after school* There exists within CRMS an urgent need for extended learning time (ELT) programming since this Priority School is in the fairly unique position of having 90% of its student population testing below the standards in ELA and math. Moreover, this school's high-need populations of immigrant and ELL students likewise make a clear,

compelling and persuasive case for delivery of extracurricular support. To that end, the District's reform plan aims to optimize the use of time with regards to instruction offered during the regular academic day as well as extended day programs. By leveraging multiple existing and future funding sources, the District has made a strong commitment to supporting improving student learning outcomes through the collaborative sponsorship of progressive ELT programs.

Research-based strategies, as documented by the National Center on Time and Learning, will be used to ensure optimal use of instructional time during the regular school day. In a 2011 report titled, "Making Every Minute Count," that group articulates a host of steps that elementary and secondary schools can take to help teachers make more efficient use of classroom time. These strategies include, but are not limited to, a) engaging school leadership teams in an assessment and discussion of how well the school is currently using time; b) making every minute count in class by strengthening core instruction and improving "bell-to-bell" teaching strategies; and, c) making high-profile changes in school routines, rules, and norms which signal a firm commitment to maximizing learning time. The Center's approach has two basic guiding philosophies: a) nearly all schools can identify existing time that can be better used; and, b) the best extended learning schools carefully re-think their entire schedule, rather than simply tacking on additional time.

Additionally, the National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL) has developed a number of unique tools which districts and school leadership teams can use to maximize instructional time. These resources include a Quality Time Analysis (QTA) Tool that breaks the average school day into pair of separate master categories, i.e., Purposed Time and Non-Purposed Time. Inside those master headings, time is calculated the following three sub-categories, i.e., Academics, Non-Core Academics and Other. Under Purposed Time, academic activities include content area instruction and student support services. Scholastic activities listed under Non-Purposed Time include in-class transitions and multiple interruptions. Compiled under the heading of "Other" (which is actually a sub-set of Purposed Time) are school activities such as lunch, Recess, homeroom, study hall and transition between classes. As an example of how the data from this tool can be used, one high school surveyed by the NCTL added 1,800 minutes – or 30 total hours – of instructional time to their academic year by simply reducing student passing time between classes. Through the SIG plan, Chestnut Ridge's Principal and SLT will use the NCTL's tool to determine how the building's instructional time, during the regular school day, can be optimized using similar strategies.

The Chestnut Ridge Middle School currently offers a robust extended learning time (ELT) program to be expanded and enhanced through the District's SIG plan. In its current format, CRMS' extended learning program features separate academies in ELA and math. Students to be served by the ELT program are identified as below level as determined by the STAR Renaissance benchmark as of May 2016. For the 2016-2017 school year, 90% of CRMS' student body meets that criteria. Chestnut Ridge will ensure that 50% or more of the identified students attend by offering them transportation home after ELT programming has concluded. Other incentives are currently being considered by the SLT to increase student participation. Chestnut Ridge's ELT instruction is offered in two distinct segments. The first portion consists of academic remediation designed to address student skill gaps in the aforementioned core content areas. The second segment includes test sophistication skills (i.e., "high stakes" testing) workshops which provide

Chestnut Ridge middle school students with a preview of the more challenging exams (e.g., Regents, PSATs and SATs) to be encountered in high school.

Chestnut Ridge's existing ELT program exposes students to potential college and career pathways by giving students with ongoing access to Naviance and through collaboration with the SED-funded Liberty Partnerships Program. Also, during one month (March 2017) in the upcoming spring semester will be dedicated to educating students on college life and promoting the opportunities college affords through college speakers and presentations. To further support these activities, the ERCSD will afford the school leadership with considerable autonomy in applying SIG resources (e.g., IB Middle Years Program and support from Nicole Eschler of the Gene Systems Group, Inc.) to achieve college and career readiness goals established by the School and District.

A portion of the SIG's extended learning time activities will consist of professional development offered outside of regular school hours. This goal is consistent with East Ramapo's CEP for the 2016-2017 academic year; which requires that teachers and school leaders work together to ensure that planning and preparation, classroom environments, and instructional practices are reflective of systemic priorities (i.e., CCLS-aligned learning targets, actionable feedback to students, and collaborative conversations) no less than 85% of the time. This outcome will be assessed through analysis of data cited on the Walkthrough Learning Tool. It is anticipated that much of this PD will consist of online and in-person workshops facilitated by staff developers as well as representatives of the IB Middle Years Program and Nicole Eschler of the Gene Systems Group, Inc

Accountability mechanisms already established by East Ramapo, as articulated in school and District CEPs for the 2016-2017 academic year, will be used to measure overall effectiveness of Chestnut Ridge's ELT activities. The CRMS will assess students three times during the school year using STAR Renaissance in reading and math. These benchmark assessments will provide real-time data on each of the students' mastery of skills and their gaps in learning. Teachers will review class reports and individual student reports to create differentiated lesson plans for the learning skills identified as areas of weakness. Teachers will utilize the data to deliver differentiated instruction on needed skills. This data will be used to make adjustments to instruction and modify lessons, creating a process where reflective practice is used to inform a process of continuous improvement during the ELT and regular school day.

*4) program selection* - CRMS' operational authority with respect to the SIG began in the program development stage and will continue across the project's lifetime. Once a decision to apply for SIG funding was made, the District consulted with Chestnut Ridge's Principal (Maria Vergez) before selecting a program model to solicit the host school's opinion on which approach would most favorably and immediately impact student learning outcomes. Acting in concert with CRMS' school leadership team (SLT), which consists of teachers, administrators and a parent representative, Principal Vergez endorsed selection of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP). Chestnut Ridge's approval of this approach also reflects consultations with Dr. Daniel H. Shanahan, East Ramapo's Director of Funded Programs and Interim Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Curriculum & Instruction and with Dr. Charlene Jordan, Superintendent of the Rockland County BOCES. Once the SIG has been implemented, CRMS'

operational authority will include playing a pivotal role towards ensuring that planned activities are in full alignment with school and district priorities as well as goals and objectives stated in the building's school comprehensive education plan (SCEP) for the 2016-2017 academic year.

*5) educational partner selection - 5) Educational Partner Selection – As part of Chestnut Ridge's input into the program design, Principal Vergez identified Dr. Nicole Eschler of the Gene Systems Group, Inc. as a Consultant well-qualified to provide professional development to teachers participating in the SIG. Dr. Eschler has a distinguished history of working with the CRMS, as she recently collaborated with its faculty and administrators in completion of the building's SCEP. During that engagement, Dr. Eschler evidenced deep insight into the Whole School Reform Model and worked well with all key ERCSD and CRMS stakeholders. Through the operational autonomy afforded Chestnut Ridge in the SIG, Dr. Eschler would collaborate closely with school leaders in the execution and evaluation of instructional practices (both in general and as they relate to the IB MYP), professional development, parent outreach and student learning outcomes as indicated by benchmarked data analysis.*

#### C. District Accountability and Support (4 points)

*The LEA must have the organizational structures and functions in place at the district-level to provide quality oversight and support for its identified Priority Schools in general, as well as specifically for the school identified in this application.*

The district's organizational structure is designed with accountability in mind. The Superintendent oversees all operations and meets very frequently with her Cabinet, comprised of Assistant Superintendents and Directors from Curriculum & Instruction, Professional Development, Finance, Transportation, Funded Programs, Special Education, and Human Resources. Principals meet with the Superintendent and Cabinet at least once a month to review student progress, implementation of programs, and to share new ideas and concerns throughout the district's schools.

The Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent for C&I evaluate the principals using the Multidimensional Principal Performance Rubric. Principals rated developing or ineffective are counseled, put on a Principal Improvement Plan, and provided additional supports where needed. In the case of Chestnut Ridge Middle School, the Superintendent has worked closely with the Principal of CRMS to collaboratively determine a system of supports to help turn around the school and remove it from Priority status. These supports include mentoring and coaching beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, with the goal of developing the principal's capacity to:

1. Identify, develop and monitor goals to address critical areas of student academic need;
2. Identify, develop and monitor goals to improve instructional pedagogy for teachers of all content areas, specifically regarding the adoption of a district-approved, research-based instructional frame and professional development as per the school-wide turnaround principles for Priority schools and School Improvement Grant (SIG 7);
3. Use the Danielson rubric and observation process to provide actionable, Standards-based feedback to teachers to enable them to improve their teaching practices;
4. Narrow the scope and focus of building-based initiatives to those that will have an immediate and positive impact on student achievement;
5. Respond with urgency to directives and/or recommendations from her immediate supervisor(s) and to communicate these directives and/or recommendations to all staff with

accuracy and expediency indicative of flexibility and a receptivity to suggestions as well as a dedication and commitment to student progress and high performance;

6. Lead the implementation of a whole school reform model with fidelity to ensure the success of all students.

The district has committed itself to raising student achievement levels in all its schools, with special emphasis on CRMS and the district's other middle school - Pomona Middle School - a newly identified Focus school.

#### D. Teacher and Leader Pipeline (4 points)

*The LEA must have a clear understanding of the type and nature of teachers and leaders that are needed to create dramatic improvement in its lowest-achieving schools. In addition, the LEA must have a coherent set of goals and actions that lead to the successful recruitment, training, and retention of teachers and leaders who are effective in low-achieving schools.*

Administrator professional development aims at sustaining effective school and district leaders and in building the capacity of leaders to move their schools closer to levels of high achievement. The district's efforts include developing instructional and leadership capacity to assume a variety of formal and informal leadership roles in the schools. ERCSD is a strong proponent of distributed leadership throughout the district - a practice that enables all staff and stakeholders to assume fluid and flexible leadership roles with the goal of building a cadre of leaders in each school.

Through the institutionalization of varied collaborative decision making bodies (e.g., committees, think tanks, advisory groups, and councils) the district seeks to realize its goal of nurturing and sustaining a culture of trust, growth, and high expectations. School and district leaders are provided a supportive and safe space to consider, design, and implement innovative approaches to learning, instruction, and assessment. An example of this is the movement toward student centered classroom instruction where school and district leaders organize school-based groups of teachers to plan out implementation and assessment strategies. Further, through cognitive coaching strategies school leaders build teacher capacity not only to think critically about their own practices, but also to identify the most promising methods of classroom instruction that will meet student needs.

Under our new Superintendent the district has placed new emphasis on matching the school need with the most appropriate staff. This includes administrators as well as teachers. By establishing a culture of "all hands on deck" the district has prioritized raising student achievement in its lowest performing schools. The submission of this grant application, with its content of rigorous and ambitious reform design, is one example of forward thinking and movement. The district is in the process of reviewing staff placement to ensure that the highest needs schools receive the most and best support possible. This includes placement of newly recruited high quality teaching staff and additional professional development supports.

#### E. External Partner Recruitment, Screening, and Matching to Priority Schools (4 points)

*The LEA must have a rigorous process for identifying, screening, selecting, matching, and evaluating partner organizations that provide critical services to Priority Schools.*



The East Ramapo Central School District partners with outside agencies that receive grants to work in public schools. The District and its schools determine if a particular program is a potential match by examining the content of the program and evaluating the degree to which the program is aligned with school goals (e.g., college readiness). The LEA also obtains grants to bring partner organizations on board to work with the schools in the District.

Identifying, screening, selecting, matching, and evaluating partner organizations to provide critical services to District Priority Schools is often done as a collaboration between Central Administration staff and the applicable School Principal. Administrators from the District's Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Office of Funded Programs, and the Priority School meet to review and discuss various programs and partner organizations. The decision is then reached by consensus.

In addition, the School Principal has the autonomy to reach out to organizations. A previous example of this was an opportunity to collaborate with Wellcore to provide an Extended Learning Time Program for Chestnut Ridge Middle School. However, the program ultimately was implemented in the District's other middle school because it was designated as a Focus School, whereas Chestnut Ridge Middle School was neither a Focus School nor a Priority School at the time.

A particularly successful collaboration with a local partner organization is the Liberty Partnership Program with Rockland Community College. This program primarily takes place at the Priority School's site. Students meet with tutors for academic assistance; mentoring meetings with guidance personnel are also provided. Another aspect of the program to help achieve the goal of college and career readiness is the matching of students with professionals based on students' potential career interests, such as medicine. Visitations to colleges and job sites are also parts of the program, in order to foster students' interests.

There are multiple other affiliations with partner organizations aimed at providing critical services for the Priority School. Collaborations with the local public library include workshops for parents as part of the EPIC – Every Person Influences Children Program, mentorship programs for adolescent girls, and technology opportunities for the middle school students. Partnerships with other organizations, as well as teacher volunteers, provide programs for students in the areas of nutrition and exercise (“Let’s Move”), crafts (RSVP), and natural environment (“Roots and Shoots”). The Jack and Jill Foundation has adopted Chestnut Ridge Middle School for the upcoming school year. This organization focuses on college readiness for minority students and provides materials, clothing, and food for students in need. There is even a “Dr. Who’s Day” meeting once per week after school, where a teacher and students review movies with a “critical eye” in order to strengthen focus and critical thinking skills.

Support from community members is also evidenced by collaboration with a local nonpublic school that provides incentives to students who meet certain criteria of attendance, effort, and behavior. These incentives include scholarships for the Priority School's students to attend summer camp. Some of the students then go on to paid counselor positions at the camp.

There is always ongoing evaluation of the various programs with the partner organizations to determine their effectiveness with the Priority School's students. Evaluations of effectiveness are done at the school level and the District level. Programs that are deemed to have positive effects on student outcomes are continued the subsequent school year. Revisions to programs are made, as needed.

F. Enrollment and Retention Policies, Practices, and Strategies (2 points)

*The LEA must have clear policies, practices, and strategies for managing student enrollment and retention to ensure that Priority Schools are not receiving disproportionately high numbers of students with disabilities, English-language learners, and students performing below proficiency.*

The East Ramapo Central School District has zoning borders for all of the schools in the District. Typically, students whose home residences are located within the borders for particular schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels attend those schools. There are a few exceptions of specialized programs located within certain buildings. The District has found from past practices and experiences that the proportions of students in the various subgroups are evenly distributed throughout the District schools. As such, no other policies are currently in place in order to combat disproportionate figures. The District has a firm commitment to providing students with high quality education in appropriate settings. If at any time the District determines that there are disproportionately high numbers of students in various subgroups attending particular school buildings and dramatically affecting ratios, the School District will implement new procedures to ensure greater proportionality within its schools.

G. District-level Labor and Management Consultation and Collaboration (2 points)

*The LEA/school must fully and transparently consult and collaborate with recognized district leaders of the principals' and teachers' labor unions about district Priority Schools and the development and implementation of the plan proposed for this specific Priority School.*

The East Ramapo Central School District has a firm commitment to all of its constituent groups. To that end, there has been consultation and collaboration with the presidents of both the teachers' union and the school building administrators' union. Discussions included the need for this innovative project to create significant reform at Chestnut Ridge Middle School, the District's Priority School; the instructional changes involved; and the professional development for the school staff, instructional and administrative alike. Support of this project has been enthusiastically expressed by both presidents.

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme will be a dramatic collaboration amongst teachers of various subject areas. No longer will the subjects be taught and learned in disjointed isolated manners; interdisciplinary teacher networks will be formed to enhance students' engagement and understanding of the interconnectedness of learning and aspects of life, in general. Having the support of the teachers' union regarding these innovative changes is instrumental to the success of the program's implementation.

The shift in mindset of the administrative staff is also incredibly important to project success. While the school principal had researched the IB Middle Years Programme and determined it to be an excellent fit for her school and its needs, it was important to confer with the president of the

East Ramapo Building Administrators (ERBA), who represents all of the school building administrators. His enthusiasm for the program and the related professional development for the school administrators was palpable.

This process will necessitate ongoing communication throughout the Grant implementation. Whilst there has been consultation regarding the development of the proposed plan, collaboration with key parties both at the inception of the proposal concept and throughout the various stages of the multi-year process is paramount to keeping all parties informed, receiving constructive feedback, and ensuring the collaborative environment amongst the LEA, the Priority School, and the unions.

## **II. School-level Plan (60 points)**

### **A. Assessing the Needs of the School Systems, Structures, Policies, and Students (4 points)**

*The LEA/school must demonstrate a critical and honest assessment of structural/systems gaps and needs, as well as student achievement gaps and needs that are identified as the result of a systemic analysis process.*

The Chestnut Ridge Middle School (CRMS) is a designated Priority School as identified by the State of New York. Chestnut Ridge students enter the building in grade 7 and exit at the end of grade 8. The building serves 580 students, 85% of whom are economically disadvantaged as determined by their eligibility for free or reduced-rate lunch. More than a third (34%) of CRMS pupils are ELLs, and 17% are students with disabilities. Students of color make up 96% of the school's enrollment; of that total, 54% are Hispanic, and 47% are African American.

In line with CRMS' standing as a Priority School, the vast majority of its students are poor academic performers. For many, this status starts on their very first day on campus; 93% of incoming grade seven are performing at Level I in the NYS ELA and Math assessments. This standing makes those students eligible for Academic Intervention Services (AIS) immediately upon entering the school. All CRMS subgroups failed to meet AYP in the 2014-2015 academic year; figures for the 2015-2016 school year are not yet available.

The lack of desperately needed instructional and student support resources has made it difficult to elevate CRMS students poor academic standing, making the acquisition of SIG and other funding all the more necessary. For example, efforts to improve student reading ability has been undermined by the fact that Chestnut Ridge lacked the Title I status needed to hire reading teachers. However, it is anticipated that two reading teachers will be hired during the 2016-2017 school year. Despite the school's substantial ELL population (which grows each year), Chestnut Ridge does not currently have a bilingual education program in place. However, many of the building's administrators are bilingual and have been able to compensate, at least partly, for that deficit. Additionally, there has been only minimal support for CRMS special education students, a situation which will soon be addressed by hiring a Special Education ESL Teacher.

Attempts to reverse CRMS' Priority School status have also been stymied by lack of the professional development resources needed to propel an effective Whole School Reform effort. As a direct result of past cuts in the school budget, Chestnut Ridge lacks the department chairs

needed to deliver staff training. Also of note, while CRMS serves a sizeable population of homeless students and families, there is insufficient funding to hire the social worker needed to provide commensurate support services to that high-need, at-risk population.

As with all East Ramapo schools, CRMS has a systemic analysis process for determining student, parent, teacher and administrator needs. This process takes place on a continuous basis and used to inform key documents such as SCEPs and Action Plans. In Chestnut Ridge's current schema for analyzing building-wide data, the Guidance Department reviews progress reports (mid-quarter and end of quarter), and the school configures individual action plans for the students, sent home to parents to change the trajectory. Included in the plans are attendance issues, behavior issues, tips for study and organizational skills, and provides information on extra hours available for tutoring and mentoring sessions, including after-school programs and some appropriate clubs. Once pupil needs have been identified, school administrators meet with teachers that have multiple students in danger of failing, make decisions on moving a student, or calling case conferences for pupils to meet with groups of teachers. On a regular basis, the School Leadership Team reviews the SCEP, collects and analyzes data on goals achievement and administers self-reflection surveys to all staff to garner their input. The SLT meets frequently with faculty (at least six times per academic year) to resolve outstanding issues; a separate set of meetings are held at times when a SCEP for the upcoming academic year is being prepared.

#### B. School Model Selection and Rationale (4 points)

*The LEA/school must propose and present the chosen SIG model as a plausible solution to the challenges and needs identified in the previous section, as well as the appropriate fit for the particular school and community.*

In light of the school and district needs indicated in the previous section, ERCSD and its partners plan to implement the SIG's Innovation and Reform Network Model at the Chestnut Ridge Middle School. This selection is based upon a number of clear, persuasive, and compelling factors. Specifically, the CRMS' Principal was recently rated as "Effective" by the Superintendent, thus, there is no need to replace that key stakeholder. Additionally, the building's 42 grade seventh and eighth grade teachers have been assessed of sufficient enough quality that replacing half the school's instructional staff is not warranted. As an example, 76% of Chestnut Ridge teachers hold a Master's Degree plus 30 or more hours towards a Doctorate; an incidence that far exceeds the District average. Furthermore, 100% of CRMS teachers are certified; 95% have three years' or more classroom experience. These statistics strongly militated against the SED's Turnaround and Transformation Models. Clearly, the target building has strong, stable leadership and a faculty which demonstrates the potential, once properly trained and prepared, to sustain a successful whole school reform movement.

Additionally, after a comprehensive analysis of Chestnut Ridge Middle School's immediate and long-term needs, the ERCSD and all other key stakeholders (including the school leadership) have selected SIG Pathway 1 - College and Career Readiness School Design. This inclusive decision was made, in part, based on thorough research conducted on the IDE and College Board's Spring-Board Program. This model dovetails with both the District and CRMS emphasis on preparing students for high school, institutions of higher education, and ultimately, the world of work. In conversations held during the preparation of this application, Chestnut Ridge's Principal

mentioned as a priority preparing students for the high stakes testing (e.g., ACT, PSAT and SAT exams) they will encounter as they progress towards college entry. As the feeder school for ERCSD, two high schools, CRMS takes very seriously its responsibility to prepare their students to achieve and hopes that the District's proposed SIG plan will help accomplish that objective.

Thoroughly integrated into East Ramapo's SIG model will be implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program. This approach was selected with a complete appreciation of the profound academic deficits and challenges presented by CRMS students. There is, however, satisfactory, research-based evidence that the IB World Model has the potential for success when applied to students who progress would otherwise be undermined by the academic achievement gap and other formidable barriers to high academic achievement. An article appearing in Volume 71, Issue # 4 of Educational Leadership, titled, "Yes, Everyone Can Be College Ready," documented how a New York State secondary school (South Side High School in Rockville Centre) successfully implemented the IB model with a highly diverse population which included low-performing minority students, as well as non-minority pupils from more affluent households. In only two years after implementation, it was determined that the IB World Model had improved student learning outcomes among both populations. South Side attributed this success, in part, to the non-remedial support classes which low-performing students in International Baccalaureate English classes were mandated to attend. Furthermore, the IB's curriculum for Language and Literature dovetails with many CCLS standards and includes the study of informational texts along with literature.

Another factor that influenced this selection was a recommendation from Dr. Charlene Jordan, BOCES Superintendent. In addition, all key stakeholders, including parents, are in agreement that the International Baccalaureate (IB) World School's Middle Years Program is well-aligned with Chestnut Ridge's turnaround needs and will help elevate shared expectations for students and faculty. Consistent with the SIG's focus on improving teacher and school leader proficiency, the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program includes validated professional development strategies which can be used to improve student learning outcomes.

The delivery of enhanced PD to teachers and school leaders will play a prominent role in East Ramapo's SIG. In addition to the online and in-person workshops facilitated through the IB World Program, CRMS school leaders, teachers and other faculty will receive staff training, in areas to include (but not be limited to) leadership team building, response to intervention (RTI), and special education. Also, as detailed in the sections to follow, ERCSD staff developers will also conduct school leadership training workshops informed by the Wallace Foundation's highly-regarded collection of research-based materials. The SIG's intense focus on staff training reflects Chestnut Ridge's priority as discussed in Tenet 3 of its current CEP, i.e., School leadership and district personnel will provide monthly professional development to assist teachers with lesson planning and will provide suggestions for instructional strategies that are rigorous and aligned to the CCLS, including Instructional Shifts, using STAR Data to promote DDI, collaborative grouping, and utilizing summative and formative assessments to foster student comprehension and adapt to the changing needs of the students.

The SIG is expected to provide a long-term strategy where new and existing resources are pooled together in order to address administrative, instructional and student support service gaps, at both

the District and building levels, that have contributed to Chestnut Ridge's current status as a Priority School. As mentioned previously, first-time Title I funds awarded to the CRMS for the 2016-2017 academic year will allow a pair of reading teachers to be assigned to this campus. Those new staff, charged with the responsibility of providing academic intervention services (AIS), will be prime candidates for the enhanced professional development to be offered through the SIG effort, as it is hoped that their contributions will favorably impact student movement towards state-mandated AYP outcomes. East Ramapo expects that CRMS' new reading teachers will take on key leadership roles in the building's Whole School Reform efforts and that the SIG will provide these educators with the infrastructure and resources required to achieve that goal.

There exists satisfactory evidence that the IB Model can be successfully used to reform struggling and failing schools. In a February 2016 report titled "Community Schools: Transforming Struggling Schools to Thriving Schools," the Center for Popular Democracy detailed how the Evans High School located in Orlando, Florida used the IB Model in conjunction with other innovative strategies to reverse that building's failing status. Within a period of five years (2010-2015), Evans High School, which started their reform effort with a failing ("D") rating from the Florida Education Department, dramatically increased its enrollment while halving its disciplinary incidents; more than doubling its industry certifications; tripling its IB World diplomas and raising their graduation rate by 15%.

Application of the IB model is anticipated to significantly augment CRMS' current school-to-career activities. In the Evans High School model, IB courses were combined with a progressive Industry Certification program which included classes in Multimedia Technology, Engineering, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood Care, Digital Video Production, and Technical Theatre. Although Chestnut Ridge students may not yet be ready for such advantaged offering, certain components of this approach, i.e., unpaid internships and apprenticeships for pupils 14 years of age, may prove to be viable and valuable workforce preparation strategies.

The success of Evans High School's school reform model adds credence to East Ramapo's selection of the SIG's College and Career Readiness combination with the IB Middle Years Program. Grade levels and geographic variances aside, there are significant similarities between Evans High School and the targeted Chestnut Ridge Middle School. For example, both serve nearly identical populations of economically disadvantaged students (84% for Chestnut Ridge, 85% for Evans HS). Both schools have comparable percentages of ELL students (21% for Chestnut Ridge and 20% for Evans HS). In addition, both schools work with significant numbers of homeless students. Both campuses have relatively recent histories of their students not reaching the standards over a sustained period of time. Research indicating that an integrated IB/College and Career Readiness paradigm proved imminently useful when implemented at the Florida secondary school bodes extremely well for its potential for success when applied to the SIG proposed by East Ramapo.

There are other notable similarities between the proven Evans HS whole school reform model and ERCSD's School Improvement Grant plan. As with the Orlando, Florida approach, East Ramapo and the Chestnut Ridge Middle School intend to implement enhanced extended learning time (ELT) activities to ensure that struggling students meet the required AYP performance targets in reading, ELA, and mathematics. Chestnut Ridge's Principal currently utilizes the building's ELT

component to provide out-of-school-time academic support to students most at-risk of academic failure, and would like to use a portion of grant funds to provide pupil incentives such as snacks. Concerning professional development for teachers, the Evans HS model includes a partnership with a post-secondary school (University of Central Florida) to support high-quality teacher. In East Ramapo's SIG model, the District looks to expand Saint Thomas Aquinas College's current role in the provision of professional development to Chestnut Ridge Middle School teachers.

With respect to student ELA outcomes, ongoing teacher training also contributed to South Side's successful application of the IB model to all student populations, laying the groundwork for creating assignments that connect to both those and Common Core standards. That school's ELA courses focused on reading complex texts, completing varied writing tasks, and making oral presentations. Those practices were found to promote critical thinking and encourage students to examine texts from a variety of perspectives. In making literature a more challenging and rewarding experience, South Side students were immersed in an array of text ranging from traditional literature to contemporary essays, speeches, and blogs. The ERCSD and CRMS intend to replicate those proven strategies through implementation of their SIG plan.

#### C. Determining Goals and Objectives (6 points)

*The LEA/school must determine and present broad goals directly aligned to the in-depth diagnostic review and model selection, as well as specific objectives that have been developed to guide key strategies in a time-specific and measurable manner. The LEA/school must demonstrate evidence of extensive backwards planning.*

The SIG's goals and objectives are fully aligned with District priorities, CRMS student needs, and the Innovation and Reform Framework selected by project stakeholders. The process of backward planning figured prominently in all aspects of the program design, including determining the required goals, objectives, and intended student learning outcomes. With a clear, complete understanding of Chestnut Ridge's current situation informing a "before" snapshot, all project stakeholders were asked to envision how the SIG would factor into an ideal "after" portrait where this school has been successfully transformed from Priority status to one in Good Standing with the State of New York. In this approach, project stakeholders considered carefully how the College and Career Readiness model selected, in combination with the IB MYP Program, would benefit CRMS students in the short and long term. Moreover, East Ramapo reached out to districts and BOCES that are currently executing the IB Model to obtain a clear, realistic perspective on how the "after" snapshot would actually appear. These steps helped the project stakeholders configure an organic set of goals and objectives consistent with the SMART (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Specific) paradigm used by the District. The backward planning approach also provided project designers with a strategic, realistic, and panoramic "roadmap" for SIG implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

The SIG's goals and objectives are, most importantly, student-centered, aligned with CRMS' mission statement and consistent with the Whole School Reform Model for Priority Schools. Relevant portions of Chestnut Ridge's SCEP are also reflected in the SIG's stated outcomes. Also embedded in the project's goals and objectives is CRMS' expressed priority to establish a learning community where students and families feel healthy, safe, supportive, engaged, and challenged. The unique SIG model proposed by East Ramapo takes an "inside-out" and "outside-in" approach

to Whole School Reform. By this, we mean that student needs are attended to by addressing the outer circles of instructional effectiveness and a supporting, empowering infrastructure. This strategic design is by definition intended to be flexible and idiosyncratic, informed by the assessed needs of the entire school community with priority placed on students and parents.

**The School Improvement Grant’s specific goals and objectives are as follows:**

**Goal 1 – Vertical alignment of curriculum:** The SIG is intended to have systemic, district-wide impact in the elementary and secondary grades. The program’s focus on middle school students is based, in part, on District priorities in addition to a thorough review of existing research. East Ramapo’s analysis of current data reveals that overall, students enter the District’s middle schools at acceptable levels of academic performance; Chestnut Ridge would be one of the few exceptions to that finding. However, district-wide, student achievement levels evidence a marked decline prior to the end of grade 7. For that reason, it is imperative that the ERCSD find a way to reverse this “learning loss” before these students advance to high school. This phenomenon is consistent with recent research stating that 70%-80% of America’s students become chronically disengaged in grades 7 and 8.

Using Chestnut Ridge as an epicenter, the vertical alignment East Ramapo envisions would travel in two directions, i.e., backward and forward, in terms of grades being impacted. At the SIG’s center, CRMS would benefit from the full range of benefits available through the IB MYP Model and other project resources. To prepare incoming Chestnut Ridge seventh grade students for the MYP experience, fourth fifth and sixth graders in feeder schools will be immersed in grade-level appropriate elements of the IB curriculum prior to elementary school graduation. At the high school level, which represents the “upper end” of our vertical curriculum alignment, pupils in grades 9-12 would participate in cohort-appropriate components of the IB curriculum. An overarching goal of this strategy is that additional ERCSD schools could become IB schools in the future; our vertical curriculum alignment strategy will prepare students, regardless of their academic standing, for those opportunities.

The proposed vertical curriculum approach will also be used to improve instructional practice of East Ramapo’s teachers, benefitting them regardless of whether or not their campus becomes an International Baccalaureate School. ERCSD elementary and high schools exposed to the IB approach through our SIG model could use this experience to drive a systemic process of curriculum reform. Of particular relevance in that regard is the IB’s focus on Areas of Interaction, that provide the MYP its unique core. Those Areas of Interaction consist of five core elements: a) approaches to learning; b) Community and service; c) Health and social education; d) Environments; and, e) Human ingenuity. An key SIG goal will be for participating teachers to master these areas; a task that will be measured through Principal observations and classroom observations.

Prior to graduation, IB MYP students will complete personal projects aligned with the project-based learning (PBL) activities to be offered through Chestnut Ridge’s ELT activities. These efforts will reflect the efficacy and integration with respect to areas of interaction in the school.. Through their personal projects, students will demonstrate approach to learning skills mastered



through the IB program while also focusing research and project development around at least one other area of interaction.

**Goal 2. Development of a professional learning community (PLC):** This goal will in large part be defined by the IB MYP. For the purposes of this application, a professional learning community (PLC) is defined as a group of educators who engage in professional learning that increases their effectiveness and results for all students. PLCs are committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment (Source: Learning Forward). To create an effective PLC, the project stakeholders must show evidence of a well-thought out, cohesive and coherent plan for determining which teachers are “most ready” for IB-related professional development. Selection of this population is of the utmost importance; once trained in IB-related techniques, they will then return to the CRMS and provide turnkey professional development to other faculty members. East Ramapo feels this is the most expedient and cost-effective way to guarantee that all CRMS educators receive IB MYP training. Building the PLC will be a linear, sequential process, starting with school leaders who already have substantial knowledge about the IB MYP Model. The next population to be trained will consist of teachers that have actively and enthusiastically embraced this transformational model. They, in effect, will become emissaries capable of swaying the opinion of colleagues that have been reluctant to participate in these trainings. We would expect that those who have not yet been trained in the IB MYP approach will then feel compelled to do so as a form of social and professional capital. In compliance with the IB MYP Model, all teachers will receive related training in their subject area, enabling them to particularly replace to content area specialists that no longer exist at Chestnut Ridge.

**Goal 3. Student achievement -** This goal has a twofold purpose: a) to improve student performance in the core content areas (ELA and math); and, b) provide a broad range of academic interventions for the vast majority of CRMS students would not otherwise be prepared for the building’s planned evolution into an IB MYP School. A broad range of SIG interventions will be used to achieve the aforementioned twin objectives. These will include, but not be limited to, extended learning (ELT) activities which have a project-based learning (PBL) emphasis; individual and group tutoring offered during the regular school day (e.g., during student lunch periods); and in an increase in staff to provide extra classroom support. These and other treatments as these will be used to create an IB culture at CRMS even before the campus has formally been certified as such. Regarding curriculum and instruction, we will strive to see better student performance in coursework; NYS standardized tests and the total number of courses passed. East Ramapo’s projected quantitative and qualitative outcomes for the anticipated five-year grant period are as follows:

- Grade 7 and 8 tests scores in ELA and Math improve by at least 10%-15% each year.
- Grade 8 Science tests scores will improve by 10%-15% each year. This objective is important because only 15% of CRMS students passed the eighth grade science test last year.
- Number of students not passing more than one course in grades 7 and 8 decreases by 20% each year.
- Lower by at least 20 the number of students who were IB participants in prior years not passing more than one course in Freshman and Sophomore years in HS (compared to CRMS graduates in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016).

- Increase by 10% per year the number of CRMS who take Science and Algebra 1 Regents exams in 8th grade

It is anticipated that much of the aforementioned student gains will be attributed to CRMS teacher and school leader immersion in IB MYP curriculum and related professional development. There are a host of compelling factors supporting East Ramapo's selection of this particular model. For one, student and adult learning are weighted heavily in the IB approach. The District's overall SIG plan is driven by the concept of adult learning in service of improved student performance. From a contextual framework, the IB model emphasizes the type of reflective practice upon which sound pedagogy is based. In the International Baccalaureate paradigm, teachers think about learning as a process facilitated, enabled, mediated and moderated by the teacher. This meta-cognitive strategy compels educators to examine their instructional practice on a continuous fashion to ensure that students reach the CCLS. Moreover, the IB methodology is linear, cohesive and connected across grade levels. This approach recognizes that students move from one grade to another as well as one school to the next. For those reasons, the IB MYP model offers an interdisciplinary curriculum that helps adolescents make a successful transition from having just a single teacher and classroom in the primary grades (the IB PYP Model), to multiple teachers in several different environments in the middle grades. This is a simple, but vitally important element often overlooked by other models as it features disciplinary concepts that allow adolescents to adapt to more transient and mercurial classroom situations without feeling undue stress.

**Goal 4. Leadership Skills** - The CRMS Principal, Assistant Principals, and SLT members must all evidence the skills needed to function as transformational leaders capable of adopting and growing the IB MYP Model. The CRMS Principal must, over the SIG's first three years, evidence increased mastery of the SED's Competencies for Determining Priority School Leaders. This outcome will be measured by Superintendent application of a unique, project-designed Rubric. The degree to which Chestnut Ridge assistant principals and SLT members have moved towards becoming transformational leaders will be assessed based upon a review of SLT meeting members as conducted by an external Consultant. Individual surveys will be distributed to this population twice yearly. This outcome is important since the District anticipates that the task of transforming CRMS to an IB MYP School may require leadership skills that may not yet exist in the school or district. An important project goal is to improve collaboration and communication between the ERCSD, Chestnut Ridge, and other key stakeholders. This goal will be achieved through district leader participation in workshops to be informed by related best practice as promoted by the Wallace Foundation. The movement toward this goal will be measured through individual surveys administered at the end of each session. Also, the Program Director will document district leader contribution to various SIG-related outcomes, e.g., encouraging teachers and administrators from other East Ramapo schools to participate in CRMS' journey towards becoming an International Baccalaureate School.

**Goal 5. Systemic Professional Development for Teachers and Other Staff** - The professional development rendered to CRMS teachers and administrators will be multi-layered, including content not only from the IB MYP, but from other sources to include the Wallace Foundation, CCSSO, and original training material jointly developed by ERCSD and Nicole Eschler of the Gene Systems Group, Inc. This strategy is imperative if the SIG overarching goal of Whole School Reform is to be achieved. The factors resulting in CRMS' current standing as a Priority School

are many, varied and intricately complex; therefore, a multi-faceted response is required. The District's main objective in this regard is to change key stakeholder's prevailing mindset as it pertains to teaching, learning, and school reform in general.

Also of note, nine of East Ramapo's fourteen public schools (65%) are in either Priority or Focus status. Reform in this LEA cannot by definition be confined to one building, it must be systemic. For that reason, ERCSD proposes the somewhat unconventional approach of implementing the IB method in a high-need middle school; most districts adopting this paradigm start with the Diploma. The fact that no student subgroup at Chestnut Ridge met AYP in ELA and math last year – and many arrived on campus with severe academic deficits – supports the District's planned vertical curriculum alignment where IB-related professional development extends “downward” to elementary grades 4, 5, and 6, as well as “upwards” to the high school grades. Over objective in this regard is to create a sound, longitudinal pedagogical model which supports the State's College and Career Readiness mandates. Where the IB MYP Model is concerned, East Ramapo's objective is to promote a metacognitive approach to teaching and learning that is deeply embedded in reflective practice. This objective is imminently achievable since the IB MYP has an instructional relevance over and above that of sound curriculum. This paradigm also emphasizes a total philosophy of learning, consistency in protocols and a modified approach on how subject area content is actually delivered. The ERSCD's objective in this matter is to cultivate within CRMS students positive “habits of mind” regarding scholastic pursuits that transfer to High School and College.

Equally important are planned trainings for school administrators, District leaders in particular. This professional development, informed in large part by Wallace Foundation-recommended best practice for Principal supervision, is intended to play a crucial role in achieving the SIG's Whole School Reform-related outcomes. East Ramapo has established several key objectives for this goal. As an example, we seek to change the existing dynamic where District oversight focuses mainly on oversight and compliance by creating a new construct that places an equal emphasis on coaching and mentoring principals, and where needed, assistant principals as well. This is significant in light of research which has determined that principals receiving frequent, meaningful coaching and mentoring are better positioned to become transformational leaders capable of heading successful school reform campaigns. It is hoped that improving District capacity in that fashion will help prevent situations where it becomes necessary to replace sitting principals in order to institute school improvement efforts.

**Goal 6. Foster collaboration with other LEAs** – In preparing this application, East Ramapo has connected with several other LEAs, including Rockland County, which have expressed interest in creating IB schools in their districts/BOCES or have already accomplished that task. With respect to the former group, ERCSD's SIG has the potential to serve as a Demonstration Project that would allow interested parties to witness, track and even participate in the transformation process in real time. Conversely, neighboring districts that have successfully implemented the IB model will be asked to provide East Ramapo with technical assistance in support of our efforts. In such a scenario, these LEAs will be invited to take a seat at the table throughout the program development and implementation process. Inter-visits between East Ramapo and aspiring IB districts will provide regular opportunities for the type of peer-to-peer professional development that drives successful whole school reform efforts. The Program Director will document all activities

associated with this goal, and report related progress to SED and other stakeholders and interested parties as appropriate.

**Goal 7. Increase Parent & Family Involvement** – This goal aligns with CRMS’ focus on the whole child, stated desire to increase extant levels of parental engagement and cultural responsiveness among teachers and other faculty. Moreover, this goal takes into consideration the special needs presented by ELL students (in accordance with Part 154 of the Commissioner’s Regulations) and homeless pupils (in compliance with the McKinley-Vento Act). Principal Vergez has related that CRMS has in some cases three generations of immigrant families, many of whom are limited English proficient. While second and third generation immigrant families exhibit a willingness to become involved in school activities, more recent (i.e., first generation) new arrivals are often more reluctant to do so. This phenomenon may have any number of causes, ranging from immigration status to a severe lack of English language skills. The CRMS has successfully addressed the latter challenge; many of the school’s teachers and administrators are fluent in the languages (Spanish and French-Creole) spoken by ELL families. Through the SIG, Chestnut Ridge aims to offer intergenerational ELT activities, e.g., Saturday Family Academies, focusing on attracting first-generation parents and engaging them in school events. This will be a gradual, non-threatening process; ELL parents may be invited to volunteer at a school bake sale and, if comfortable with that experience, encouraged to join the school’s PTA. In the natural, linear progression of these events, first generation immigrant, LEP parents that were initially reluctant to engage in school events will go on to join Advisory and other decision-making bodies at CRMS. Thusly empowered and motivated, these parents may soon find themselves assisting children with final projects and attending related presentations.

East Ramapo expects that the IB MYP Model can be of great assistance in helping to improve the cultural responsiveness of teachers and other staff members. As stated in the “Creating Classroom Environments” section of the IB MYP Principles, the teacher’s role includes “[being] familiar with and responsive to the needs and interests of individual students, and aware of the cultural and social contexts in which they live and learn. In the learning environment, the role of the teacher is to facilitate connections between the student’s prior knowledge and the knowledge available through new experiences.” To that end, the District will encourage teacher attendance at IB MYP professional development sessions supporting that precept.

Chestnut Ridge’s population of homeless students bring with them a constellation of needs (e.g., for food and clothing) that the school has already begun to address through periodic donations from partner, nonprofit agencies such as Jack and Jill. The Program Director, as part of his/her assigned responsibilities, will over the course of the SIG seek to bolster such linkages by recruiting medical and mental health service providers that can resolve the human service needs of CRMS’ homeless students and other high-need audiences. The District has learned that SED may at some point later on this year release a Community Schools RFP for Priority and Focus Schools and would certainly be interested in obtaining these funds to bring a new range of desperately needed instructional and social service supports into eligible schools such as CRMS.

**D. School Leadership (6 points)**

*The LEA/school must have the mechanisms in place to replace the existing principal, where applicable, and select/assign a new school principal and supporting leadership that possess the*

*strengths and capacity to drive the successful implementation of the SIG plan. Please refer to, [“Competencies for Determining Priority School Leaders.”](#)*

The Chestnut Ridge Middle School’s Principal (Maria Vergez) was recently evaluated as “Effective” by ERCSD’s Superintendent, thereby eliminating any need to replace this key stakeholder. The strategic advantage created by the fact that strong school leadership is already in place at CRMS was a major factor in our selection of the Innovation and Reform Network Model. Building upon that asset, the SIG will offer a broad range of support services intended to foster within Principal Vergez and Chestnut Ridge’s Assistant Principals the skill sets expected of transformational leaders. For the purposes of East Ramapo’s SIG, that term speaks to the seven leadership characteristics formulated by Leithwood in 1994: a) building a school vision and establishing goals; b) creating a productive school culture; c) providing intellectual stimulation; d) offering individualized support; e) modeling best practice and important organizational values; f) demonstrating high-performance expectations; and, g) developing structures to foster participation in school decisions. The District is confident that cultivation of these skill sets in CRMS’ leaders when combined with other SIG supports, will be instrumental in remedying Chestnut Ridge’s Priority School status.

Although qualified leadership is already in place at Chestnut Ridge, these key stakeholders’ practice will also be informed and evaluated by the SED’s “Competencies for Determining Priority School Leaders.” East Ramapo feels that this strategy will help ensure that the building’s administrators possess the strengths and capacity to drive successful implementation of the SIG. Application of these Competencies will be provisional; in effect only until CRMS’ Priority School standing has been resolved. The District’s current plan is to convert these Competencies into a Rubric which can be used to evaluate school leader proficiency over the grant period. During the SIG, the Principal’s performance will likewise be assessed using the Danielson Framework in accordance with Education Law §3012-c. This strategy provides multi-dimensional “layers” of “checks and balances” capable of confirming CRMS administrators’ acquisition of transformational leadership skills.

In order to ensure that Chestnut Ridge administrators are able to lead an effective Whole School Reform campaign, the SIG will feature ongoing, rigorous professional development informed by school leadership best practice identified by the Wallace Foundation. This group has earned a reputation as one of the nation’s premiere thought leaders and policy influencers in a variety of categories relevant to the proposed SIG, including a) improving principal and assistant principal practice, especially as it relates to whole school reform efforts; b) enhancing collaboration between schools and districts; and, c) best practices for after-school and extended learning time programs. The Wallace Foundation’s repository of information in those areas is based on research which drew two important conclusions:

- *School leaders are second only to teachers with respect to the in-school factors which influence student success; and,*
- *There are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around in the absence of intervention by talented leaders. While other factors in a school also contribute to such turnarounds, leadership is the catalyst.*

The above findings clearly support ERCSD’s focus on cultivating effective instructional leadership through the SIG effort. This strategy will have a host of benefits for CRMS; e.g., improving student learning outcomes in core content areas to include ELA and math; helping to align school leadership priorities with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act; and, supporting CRMS’ transformation into an IB MYP School. To achieve these outcomes, the SIG will work to enhance District support and oversight of Chestnut Ridge’s Principal. This step is important in light of a Wallace Foundation-funded study, conducted by the Rand Corporation, which found that principals and other School leaders value their supervision and mentoring more when those support place a greater emphasis on their roles as instructional leaders. Accordingly, supports provided to CRMS’ Principal and two Assistant Principals will reflect the findings of a 2015 report, titled, “Modern Principal Supervisor Professional Standards,” prepared by the Wallace Foundation in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers, which takes into consideration the changing role of school leaders in today’s society. Principals and other school leaders, that study notes, are under a higher degree of scrutiny than ever before, as society places higher expectations on principals to be instructional leaders who improve student learning and achievement. Additionally, many LEAs, including East Ramapo, are looking to principals to stand at the forefront of implementing new college-and-career-ready standards, student assessments, and teacher evaluation systems.

In consideration of the Principal’s ever growing, ever changing role in the PK-12 schema, it has become clear that principal supervisors must play an even greater role in supporting these key influencers. Accordingly, the Wallace Foundation and CCSSO have constructed a framework that helps district superintendents and other principal supervisors transform their roles as ones that are based mostly on oversight and compliance to positions that offer more intense mentoring and coaching to school leaders. To that end, planned SIG professional development treatments will incorporate the Modern Principal Supervisor Professional Standards referenced in the previous paragraph. This framework three broad categories, each of which must be integrated into district leadership to provide comprehensive support to principals.

*The first category involves the work surrounding educational leadership. Since the primary role of the principal supervisor is to support and improve principals’ capacity for instructional leadership, it is the focus of four of the eight standards. These approaches, listed below, draw heavily on the University of Washington’s DL2 Principal Supervisor Performance Standards:*

**Standard 1.** Principal Supervisors dedicate their time to helping principals grow as instructional leaders.

**Standard 2.** Principal Supervisors coach and support individual principals and engage in effective professional learning strategies to help principals grow as instructional leaders.

**Standard 3.** Principal Supervisors use evidence of principals’ effectiveness to determine necessary improvements in principals’ practice to foster a positive educational environment that supports the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.

**Standard 4.** Principal Supervisors engage principals in the formal district principal evaluation process in ways that help them grow as instructional leaders.

*The second category involves ensuring the smooth and effective functioning of the district. Such work leverages the unique position of principal supervisors within a district and requires them to liaise between the central office and individual schools. By holding both central office and school-based perspectives, principal supervisors can inform policies and procedures to ensure they are efficient and effective. Related standards are as follows:*

**Standard 5.** Principal Supervisors advocate for and inform the coherence of organizational vision, policies and strategies to support schools and student learning.

**Standard 6.** Principal Supervisors assist the district in ensuring the community of schools with which they engage are culturally/socially responsive and have equitable access to resources necessary for the success of each student.

*The third category involves improving the capacity and effectiveness of the principal supervisor as a district leader.*

**Standard 7.** Principal Supervisors engage in their own development and continuous improvement to help principals grow as instructional leaders.

**Standard 8.** Principal Supervisors lead strategic change efforts that continuously elevate the performance of schools and sustains high-quality educational programs and opportunities across the district.

The above standards are entirely compatible with the selected Whole School Reform model for a variety of reasons. Specifically,, this approach places a strong focus on improvement-focused educational leadership, i.e., a style of school administration which pursues continuous improvement in all aspects of education in order to increase student learning and achievement. Moreover, CCSSO and the Wallace Foundation both posit that these standards can be used effectively to cultivate transformational education leaders. i.e., educational administrators (at the school and district levels) who identify a needed change, convey a shared vision to guide that change, and support and empower others as they help to enact the change and build their own capacity for leadership.

While this plan involves extensive professional development for the current school administrators to strengthen their leadership skills, the District always has procedures in place for recruiting, hiring, and assigning school personnel, including principals and other school administrative staff. Listings of job openings and criteria for consideration are posted online and in various print publications. The Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, the Superintendent of Schools, and other applicable school district personnel follow a process which includes reviewing potential candidates' credentials, including certifications and past experiences; conducting series of multiple interview sessions; and making recommendations of potential hires to the School District's Board of Education. All such placements must be approved by the School Board. These procedures ensure that qualified school leaders possessing the necessary strengths and capacities are at the helm, guiding the implementation of all aspects of school organization, instruction, and program implementation, including the SIG plan. If it becomes necessary to select/assign a new school principal and/or supporting leadership, these procedures will be followed.

E. Instructional Staff (6 points)

*The LEA/school must have the mechanisms in place to assign the instructional staff to the school that have the strengths and capacity necessary to meet the needs of the school and its students. This standard and the actions that accompany it are required regardless of the model chosen. If the Turnaround model is chosen for the Priority School in this application, responses to this section should be planned/proposed in the context of the requirements for that model, replacing at least 50% of instructional staff prior to the first year implementation. If the Turnaround model staffing requirement is not met within 30 days of receipt of the preliminary award letter, the SIG funding will be suspended immediately and the LEA will be at risk of having the grant terminated.*

Consistent with the operational autonomy afforded Chestnut Ridge through this grant, Principal Vergez has considerable latitude to assign teachers to components of the SIG that line up with those pedagogues documented strengths and meet the needs of the Innovation and Reform Network Model. As discussed earlier in this proposal, the vast majority of CRMS teachers demonstrate the professional qualifications needed to make meaningful contributions to East Ramapo's SIG effort. To review, 76% of Chestnut Ridge teachers hold a Master's Degree plus 30 or more hours towards a Doctorate; an incidence that far exceeds the District average. Additionally, all of CRMS teachers are certified, and 95% have three years' or more classroom experience.

The CRMS currently deploys a total of 42 grade 7 and 8 teachers, staffing that East Ramapo feels will be more than sufficient to meet SIG goals and objectives. With respect to competency, 98% of Chestnut Ridge's teaching staff was rated either "effective" (49%) or "highly effective" (49%) as per the latest figures available from the SED. Those numbers are on par with statewide averages for teachers; across all of New York State, 44% were rated as "effective" and 51% as "highly effective."

Chestnut Ridge's team-oriented approach to cultivating teacher-leaders dovetails nicely with the SIG's emphasis on creating professional learning communities. The building's faculty has already embraced, in an enthusiastic fashion, this strategy for improving school climate, culture, and student learning outcomes. Almost to a person, the CRMS faculty envisions the SIG as a welcome and much-needed asset in their current quest to re-fashion this Priority School. Moreover, CRMS teachers have been positioned in the building as de-facto content area specialists, a situation in keeping with the International Baccalaureate Model's emphasis on educators being thoroughly conversant in the subject areas in which they provide instruction.

As stated in its SCEP for 2016-2017, Chestnut Ridge teachers are being asked to play a decidedly proactive role in upgrading instruction, an arrangement that should complement East Ramapo's SIG plan. For example, extended learning time activities are expected to be a substantial part of the targeted school's reform agenda. In line with that plan, the building's current SCEP notes that its teachers and SLT will use Google Docs and Survey Monkey to share ideas on how extended learning time activities can be more effectively used to improve student learning outcomes in the core content areas of ELA and math. An objective such as this will be supported by SIG which discuss maximizing teacher and school administrator use of instructional time.



F. Partnerships (6 points)

*The LEA/school must be able to establish effective partnerships to address areas where the school lacks the capacity to improve. The external partnership(s) may vary in terms of role and relationship to the governance of the school. If the model chosen for this school is a Restart, the LEA must provide in this application a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by both parties, which identifies joint-agreement and the scope of services of the EMO and the broad achievement outcomes for the school. The fully executed EMO-district contract, signed by both parties, in full accordance with Education Law 211-e must be received by NYSED within 30 days of receipt of the preliminary award letter. If the fully executed EMO-district contract is not in full accordance with Education Law 211-e, submitted and in place by the date identified, the LEA will be at risk of having the grant terminated.*

*If the model chosen for this school is Innovation and Reform Framework, the LEA must provide in this application a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by both parties, which identifies joint-agreement and the scope of services of the EPO and the broad achievement outcomes for the school. The fully executed EPO-district contract, signed by both parties, must be received by NYSED within 30 days of receipt of the preliminary award letter.*

East Ramapo has determined that the Innovation and Reform Framework is ideally suited to meet CRMS' Whole School Reform needs and has enlisted key partners in order to achieve the goals and objectives posited in this application. These entities will provide essential resources that currently do not exist in the ERCSD. As discussed throughout this precis, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Organization (IBO) will provide ongoing professional development to the main stakeholders throughout all five years of the SIG. Founded in 1968, the IBO is a non-profit educational foundation offering four highly respected programs of international education that develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world. Over the last 48 years, the IBO has earned an excellent reputation for establishing high standards of teaching, pedagogical leadership, and student achievement. The IBO works with schools, governments, and international providers to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. The ERCSD firmly believes, based upon a thorough evaluation of CRMS' urgent and unmet needs, that it would prove extremely difficult to achieve the goals and objectives discussed in this application without contributions from the IBO, making this group's involvement in the proposed SIG essential.

Nicole Eschler of the Gene Systems Group Inc. will be another key partner in the SIG. Ms. Eschler is a highly-regarded Consultant with an exemplary reputation across New York State. Of particular note, she presented at an SED-sponsored Focus District Institute held on October 6 and 7 of 2015. During that event, Ms. Eschler facilitated a pair of workshops; one titled "Getting Started," which was a Newcomer's Orientation to application of the DTSDE, and another called "Preparing for Reviews – the Self-Reflection Process and Trends from Reviews," designed to help schools assess their respective strengths and weaknesses prior to DTSDE review. These workshops are especially significant in light of the Monitor's recent findings that CRMS teachers lack total comprehension and fluency with respect to DTSDE concepts and terminology. Ms. Eschler is a known commodity to the CRMS, having worked well with its SLT in preparing the building's most recent SCEP, and her involvement in the SIG has been endorsed by Principal Maria Vergez. As cited in the attached MOU, Ms. Eschler's role in this project will include, but not be limited to, teacher and staff training covering Executive Coaching; Leadership Team

Building and Coaching; Professional Development, Training, and Presentations; and, Committee and Department Guidance/Coaching. The broad achievement outcomes related to those activities are a) increasing the leadership skills of CRMS' Principal and Assistant Principals; and, b) developing Professional Learning Communities amongst teachers and other faculty members.

G. Organizational Plan (4 points)

*The LEA/school must provide a sound plan for how the school will be operated, beginning with its governance and management. It should present a clear picture of the school's operating priorities, delegation of responsibilities, and relationships/interactions with key stakeholders.*

Chestnut Ridge Middle School's Mission Statement is directly aligned with that of the School District, "As a unified community, the East Ramapo Central School District is committed to educating the whole child by providing a healthy, safe, supportive, engaging, and challenging learning environment." To support the mission statement, the school has recruited school personnel/leaders and community-based organizations to help accomplish the five key aspects of this mission. Through the resources of this Grant, much needed professional development will be provided for the school to enhance school administrators' management skills and redesign the school's organizational structure to include professional learning communities through teaming. Members of the school staff, including and especially the school leadership, will receive training to effectively implement teaming strategies for collaborative planning, articulation, and how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. Teacher leaders will head each team; minutes will be recorded and submitted to administration for the purposes of informing and for recommendations. The school will learn how to best utilize already existing collaborative settings, as well as delineating new frameworks of responsibility and management, to strengthen relationships with key stakeholders and to foster a more positive and enriching learning experience for students.

To build leadership capacity, as well as to provide optimal teaching and learning conditions, the principal meets with the assistant principals before and after school to reflect on the needs of students and teachers and to address areas of concern. Learning walks, teacher observations, and the review of data are amongst the topics of discussion. As part of this Grant, the school administrators will receive professional development aimed specifically at developing their leadership skills and their abilities to monitor instruction, provide actionable feedback to teachers, and analyze data to inform instruction. Focus will be placed on reviewing and revising the delegation of responsibilities with the purpose of establishing accountability. The school will clearly organize its chain of operation, identifying each link and resource and making all key stakeholders aware of this organizational structure.

The Principal's Cabinet, consisting of the principal, the two assistant principals, the two guidance counselors, and, depending on need, the school psychologist, meets weekly to discuss and organize schedules needed to facilitate school events and student changes in schedules to provide a challenging and engaging learning environment for students. The Principal's Cabinet also supports its school community by addressing parental concerns, teacher concerns, and student concerns. The Grant will allow the school to continue in its ongoing efforts to meet the needs and address the concerns of the students, staff, and parents by establishing a transparent organizational framework that will be put in place, from the principal, to the two assistant principals, each with

their own identified tasks and responsibilities, to other staff members on the organizational structure. Information will be clearly conveyed to all constituents via e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face meetings to address issues as they arise, enabling the appropriate administrator to make timely decisions resulting in expedient resolutions. Information will flow from the principal to support staff and from the staff members to the administration. In this way, clear lines of communication will be open, everyone will know what his or her responsibilities are, and all key stakeholders will know with whom to communicate about specific issues and the resulting decisions. The response to the steps taken to resolve situations will be examined and solutions will be revised, as needed. Information about ongoing retooling will be disseminated to all key stakeholders.

Additionally, there will be scheduled frequent ongoing communication between the school building principal and the School District's Assistant Superintendent, K-12, as well as with the Superintendent of Schools. While the school will have many autonomous components in place, communication with District personnel is important to keep all parties informed and up to date regarding the transformative measures being taken at the school. Constructive feedback from District personnel will also be used to help continue to foster transformation in the struggling school and close student achievement gaps.

Engaging the students in rich learning experiences is critical to the growth and development of each child. The School Leadership Team, which meets 10-12 times per year, is comprised of key stakeholders, including building administrators, guidance counselors, subject area representatives (at least one faculty member from each subject area), and a parent (the Parent Teacher Association president). A primary function of the team this year was to create the School Comprehensive Educational Plan (SCEP), which includes all learning activities for the school year. Through this educational plan, the committee seeks to design engaging, challenging activities to immerse the students in thoughtful learning. Throughout the Grant period, the team will continue to review needs and will revise the SCEP to align with the various aspects of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme's student learning activities.

To further engage and support the student population, and to help create an inclusive climate and well-rounded atmosphere, there is a Student Council. These enthusiastic student leaders meet weekly with the Council's advisor. The Student Council's responsibility is to represent the student body and to petition administration regarding recommendations for changes in the school day or in school policies. The Student Council also participates in the organization of school events. While it is commendable that there are student leaders engaged in such activities, the school's goal is to engage all students. As part of the IB program, each student attending the Chestnut Ridge Middle School will be involved in a personal project in addition to team building experiences, thereby engaging each and every student in more meaningful personal and collaborative ways than have ever been implemented at the school before.

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) are also in place, as various teachers, including Special Education and General Education teaching staff; the school's Family Resource Coordinator, representing parent concerns; the guidance counselors; the school psychologist; and the building administration come together as members of the PBIS Committee. This committee promotes the four ideals of good citizenship ("Safe, Respectful," Responsible," and Cooperative")

and provides teachers with character education lessons to inform behavior expectations for students. Goals during this Grant period include increasing all students' involvement in various activities that will promote these character traits and positive behaviors. IB is ideally aligned with this goal, as it provides rich opportunities for student engagement in activities in which each student will have personal responsibility and also activities for students to work collaboratively with peers.

Safety concerns are prevalent in today's schools, and, to address such issues, Chestnut Ridge Middle School has created an Emergency Response Team that meets 3 to 4 times during the year. The team reviews the school's emergency response plan, selects dates for fire drills, and organizes a faculty meeting with the School District's Coordinator of Safety and Security to facilitate greater understanding of emergency evacuation procedures and lockdown. The team also schedules an OSHA "Right to Know" meeting for faculty and other staff. The purpose of this team is to maintain a safe environment for teaching and learning and to be prepared for any crisis situation. Similarly, health concerns have also been expressed. In its efforts to address all prevalent issues, the school created a Health Committee which meets quarterly to discuss health related issues, inform students and faculty about healthy nutrition, exercise, and good lifestyle habits, and to advise and partner with the Health and Physical Education departments.

There are multiple other committees in place to help identify and resolve concerns and issues at Chestnut Ridge Middle School. These will continue, and others might be formed as needed, in order to accomplish the school's goals. Very importantly, the clear chain of management, the delineation of responsibilities, and frequent communications and collaborations with key stakeholders will be implemented; in essence, the true, effective organizational structure that is so desperately needed will be put in place.

Chestnut Ridge Middle School looks at the whole child, and seeks to do whatever possible to support, engage, and challenge each and every student in a safe and healthy environment. The school administrators are seeking to retool their organizational framework via appropriate professional development in order to accomplish just that.

#### H. Educational Plan (8 points)

*The LEA/school must provide an educationally sound and comprehensive plan for the school. Components of this plan include: curriculum; instruction; use of time; data-driven inquiry/instruction; student support; school climate and discipline; and parent and community engagement.*

The educational plan for Chestnut Ridge Middle School stems from both the DTSDE rubric - which serves as the foundation for the School Comprehensive Education Plan - and the instructional parameters from the IB Middle Years Program (MYP). The educational plan consists of curriculum; instruction; use of time; data-driven inquiry/instruction; student support; school climate and discipline; and parent and community engagement. Goals for the whole school reform initiative proposed herein can be found in section C "Determining Goals and Objectives."

The instructional and curricular focus of the MYP program emphasizes the development of the whole child - affective, cognitive, creative and physical. The mission statement of CRMS and the

East Ramapo Central School District also is based on the whole child, as stated above. The Middle Years Programme provides a structure for a curriculum which allows students to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills they need to participate effectively in life in the 21st century society. Students engage in learning experiences that develop a genuine understanding of principles and an ability to apply these in new contexts, in preparation for further learning. Vertically the curriculum provides for increasingly deep exploration in the disciplines and a deeper understanding of how the disciplines are linked to one another.

### **Curriculum:**

Essential to a fully realized IB program is the development and implementation of an IB-informed curriculum. IB provides the parameters for classroom instruction and content organization; the school, through collaborative planning and development, creates the curriculum aligned to the NYS Learning Standards and responsive to district direction.

Students at the middle years age are experiencing a crucial period of personal, social and intellectual development, of uncertainty and questioning. According to the IB program, “the MYP is designed to guide students in their search for a sense of place in the natural and social environment.” Speaking to this, the MYP curriculum model locates the student at the center of the MYP curriculum model. Surrounding the student are the five “areas of interaction,” listed below. The areas of interaction are designed so that the student will become increasingly aware of the connections between subject content and the real world, rather than considering subjects as isolated areas unrelated to each other and to the world.

- Approaches to Learning (ATL) - the focus of ATL is on teaching students how to learn and on helping students find out more about themselves as learners.
- Community and Service - how a student engages with his/her family, classmates, and in the outside world as a member of these communities.
- Health and Social Education - students explore social structures, relationships, and health issues and learn how to make informed decisions that may relate to their well being.
- Environments - students learn how we interact with the world at large and the parts they play in their environments.
- Human Ingenuity - this area of interaction deals with the way human minds have influenced the world and how the way humans behave, think, interact, create, and problem solve.

The curriculum of the IB program consists of eight subject groups: **Language A (English, or in the case of newly arrived students their native language other than English); Language B (a second modern language); Humanities; Sciences; Mathematics; Arts; Physical Education; Technology.**

Curriculum units integrate the NYS Learning Standards with the IB-required aims and objectives in each subject group as determined by final achievement and projects for each course. The curriculum of CRMS' IB program will reflect locally-determined interim objectives and details of assessment practices that meaningfully address the aims, objectives, and requirements for each grade of the MYP subject groups.

Teams of teachers will collaboratively develop the IB curriculum units throughout the 5-year project period - an initiative that is aligned to CRMS' SCEP for 2016-17 ["All teachers will develop rigorous, coherent and CCLS aligned units and lessons for all ELA and math classes, as evidenced by a CCLS aligned lesson review tool such as the Tri-State rubric.]. Collaborative curriculum development time will be scheduled into the teachers' day, and will be offered at hours before school, after school, and on Saturdays. Teachers will be trained by the IBO in curriculum development and the components of the IB model, and in implementing the Personal Project that all MYP students create as a culminating learning experience.

### **Instruction, Data-driven Inquiry, and Assessment**

The IB program encourages the use of a variety of teaching and learning methods to produce a culture where students discover how they learn best in different contexts. Teaching and learning are centered on the Areas of Interaction and each subject area includes a particular dimension of each AoI. Teacher teams develop horizontally aligned lessons so that multiple dimensions of AoIs are learned across the subject areas. Likewise, instruction is varied and complementary, with different modalities of learning - reading, researching, collaboration, creative work - manifesting in different subject areas.

The CRMS SCEP goal for instruction centers on analyzing achievement and progress data to identify student learning gaps and inform methods of instruction. This goal is compatible with the aims and design of our IB reform model in that the IB model expects schools to structure curriculum, assessment, and instruction according to the needs of their students.

Our reform initiative will invest heavily in professional development for teachers to help them hone their teaching skills, build their teaching repertoire for 21st century classrooms, teach to mastery, and provide access to the curriculum for all students. Key to this latter goal - equitable access to curriculum - will be a particular focus of our model, especially considering the low level of achievement from many of our students. Teachers will learn to seamlessly engage students in active learning through multiple pathways.

Similar to instruction methods, the assessment strategies we will use will be varied and tailored to the curriculum goals, instructional methods, and evaluation purpose. There are no externally set assessments in the IB MYP program; teachers develop and carry out their own assessments based on their professional expertise and judgements. The only MYP requirements are that teachers ensure they assess students fairly using various measures and means so that students have adequate opportunities to show what they can achieve, that student work is assessed according to the subject group and personal project assessment criteria, and that teachers provide appropriate and actionable feedback regarding each student's performance..

The school leaders oversee classroom instruction through frequent walkthroughs, participation in subject area collaborative teams, and through lesson plan reviews. The school leader will also ensure all teachers have access to the data tools they need to continuously measure and record student progress in reading and math. These tools include eSchool, Achieve 3000,

### **Use of time**

Our use of time will easily meet the requirement of the MYP model for all subject areas (minimum of 50 hours for each subject area per year). For struggling students we will increase class time in Mathematics and/or Language A (English). In addition, we will offer after school instruction and Saturday Academies, based on but not identical to the MYP units of study.

### **Student Support**

Students will continue to get the support they need that is available to all students in the East Ramapo Central School district. In addition to the Title I and tax levy funded programs and AIS services at the school, CRMS has Cougar ROLL - a school level mentorship program, and is a participant in the Liberty Partnership, Promising Pathways program.

The district's Board-approved AIS plan will structure many of the supports for struggling students. The MYP program will add to the supports by offering block scheduling, increased after school and Saturday Academy opportunities, and a tailored differentiated teaching and learning experience. Teachers will provide the time, instruction, and encouragement needed to help struggling students meet rigorous standards and use high-engagement strategies stemming from the MYP playbook: independent research, collaborative learning experiences, multiple forms of assessment, and inquiry based instruction.

### **School Climate and Discipline**

One of the key pillars of the MYP model is creating a culturally responsive school culture. The AoIs, Learner Profile characteristics, and international focus of the curriculum all serve to promote a climate of acceptance, respect, and high expectations for behavior as well as academics. Supporting this program emphasis is the CRMS Multicultural Committee made up of staff and students, and the district's Code of Conduct that lays out a progressive discipline system that includes positive reinforcements and consequences. Our education plan includes a peer mediation program that will engage students in conflict resolution on both sides to supplement the school's DASA-aligned anti-bullying program, developed as a Tenet 5 goal in our SCEP.

### **Parent and Community Engagement**

Through a variety of communication tools that will be used by our school in the MYP program - tools that include the school and district websites, open houses, coffee hours with the Principal, flexible scheduling times for meeting with parents, and print communications, all translated into the students' native languages (Spanish and Haitian Creole) - CRMS will ensure that parents and community are fully engaged in the newly designed MYP CRMS. Our Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) that is funded through Title I, will support and grow our parent and community outreach program.

#### **I. Training, Support, and Professional Development (6 points)**

*The LEA/school must have a coherent framework for training, support, and professional development clearly linked to the identified SIG plan, model selection and student needs.*

The SIG provides a long-term mechanism for strengthening existing professional development activities at the building and district levels. As discussed in Section I, Part A (District Overview) of this proposal, the ERCSD will hire an Assistant Superintendent for Professional Development who will play a prominent role in helping to turn around the District's Focus and Priority schools.

In line with the Whole School Reform Model, the CRMS has embraced a systematic approach to teaching and learning. In that paradigm, the school has been restructured into five interdisciplinary teams for the purpose of building professional learning communities (PLCs). At the conclusion of the 2015-16 academic year, school administrators conducted a needs assessment to gauge teacher interests and to identify interventions to improve instructional practice across disciplines. The teaming approach selected pursuant to that process facilitates common planning, inquiry learning, and instructional rounds. During team sessions, staff will focus on data to identify student strengths and weaknesses that support the development of interventions and enrichment in support of student academic skills. Teams will participate in instructional rounds, cross-district, and cross-school inter-visitations as a means of improving professional practice. Voluntary peer coaching in the form of observations, co-teaching and one-to-one conferencing will take place between teachers within the same content areas. “Lunch and Learn” workshops and webinars targeting the elements of effective instruction will be offered to teachers seeking to fulfill the required district professional development hours once weekly. Teachers will attend professional workshops sponsored by Saint Thomas Aquinas College and Rockland County BOCES. At the LEA level, cross interdisciplinary team dialogue will be scheduled during Superintendent day workshops. Middle and high school guidance counselors will conference frequently to coordinate services and to ensure successful student transitions.

The delivery of intense, rigorous and ongoing professional development will play a prominent role in project operations. A significant portion of this effort will be related to Chestnut Ridge’s pending application to become an IB World Middle Years school - an outcome which is a primary objective of ERCSD’s transformation plan for the ERCSD. The process leading to IB World approval takes place over three academic years and requires intense teacher and school leader preparation. SIG funds will subsidize the majority of the professional development activities needed to facilitate CRMS’ transformation into an IB Middle Years Program School (please see the attached timeline). During Academic Year I (i.e., Consideration Phase) a Request for Candidacy will be submitted to the IB organization. During that time, a number of trainings (both mandated and strongly suggested by the IB Middle Years Program) will take place, in addition to a host of long-range strategic planning activities. Chestnut Ridge’s Principal will be required to attend a Category 1 workshop before a formal application for candidacy can be accessed and submitted. The recommended training activities in this phase will consist of: a) sending school officials and pedagogical leaders (including the SIG Program Director) to an IB Orientation Seminar; b) contacting and/or visiting IB World Schools offering the Middle Years Program; and, c) begin sending staff to IB-recognized professional development sessions.

During Academic Year 2 (i.e., Candidate Phase), the Request for Authorization process will start, and a trial implementation period for the IB Middle Years Program commences. In this phase’s compulsory activities, teachers, school leaders, and district administrators will work with an IB-appointed consultant for a two-day, on-site visit and 20 remote hours per candidate. Professional development for CRMS teachers will be facilitated, in part, by individual accounts on the IB Middle Years Program’s Online Curriculum Center. As part of this phase’s recommended activities, an in-school introductory meeting, called Launching the MYP, will be convened for all school and district personnel. Additionally, a portion of the workshops in the IB Organization’s robust catalog of professional development offering must be completed prior to formal submission of the Request for Authorization by August of that Academic Year. The IBO offers a series of



introductory, Category I workshops for schools that have decided to apply for IB authorization. During these sessions, attendees will learn about: a) the program's basic philosophy and curricula; b) program standards and practices appropriate to the participants' role; and, c) the appropriate framework for their program of choice.

The Category 1 workshops are custom-designed for teachers from candidate schools and schools interested in implementing the MYP. Educators are required to attend workshops related to their particular content area. During these sessions, participants explore effective teaching, learning, and assessment strategies in each of the MYP subject groups as they prepare for authorization. These workshops encourage participants to:

- develop an understanding of the structures and principles of the subject group framework and guidelines; and,
- prepare teaching, learning and assessment strategies and design tasks that will support the implementation of the subject group framework and guidelines; and, engage in relevant, significant, challenging student-centered environments.

A final set of pre-approval workshops will take place in Academic Year 3, referred to as Candidate Phase/Verification Visit. In this phase, all stakeholders will continue developing and implementing action plan culminating in IB MYP implementation. Feedback provided by the IB Organization in Academic Years 1 and 2 will be reviewed in preparation of that organization's Verification Visit. Prior to that event, at least one teacher per content area group and the staff member identified as MYP Coordinator must have attended IB Category 1 workshops. Also, all MYP teachers must have participated in an on-site general IB MYP workshop. With those activities completed, the District's Application for Authorization will be tendered to the IBO and the approval visit will take place.

East Ramapo expects that IB MYP professional development conducted in all three academic years will have a profoundly positive impact on teaching and learning at CRMS. For example, Category 1 workshops for the school's leadership will introduce CRMS' Principal and Assistant Principals to the philosophical, pedagogical and administrative implications of the IB MYP Program to assist them as they prepare for the verification visit. Through these sessions, workshop attendees will master the administrative skills and competencies required to:

- develop a leadership approach around collaboration and collegiality;
- transform teaching, learning and assessment practices through a concept-based curriculum that ignites inquiry, action, and reflection in global contexts;
- motivate their school community to innovate and take risks; and,
- align the school's educational beliefs and values to reflect those of the IB in order to implement a challenging international education program.

Separate Category 1 trainings, termed "Implementing the MYP Curriculum," will be offered to CMRS content area teachers to help prepare them for possible transformation into an IB MYP School. It is expected that these educators will be able to immediately implement some of the instructional best practice gleaned from these sessions as East Ramapo and Chestnut Ridge await

formal approval from the IB Organization. Introductory topics covered by those sessions will include:

- Language and literature
- Language acquisition
- Mathematics
- Arts—Visual and Performing
- Sciences
- Physical and health education

East Ramapo realizes that the IB Model includes some elements, such as service learning, that many teachers may not have implemented previously, and may have a certain degree of apprehension about. In response, Category 1 trainings include a Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) workshop that aims to cultivate teacher proficiency in that regard. Among other topics, this session will cover types of conditions and activities that are suitable when developing a meaningful CAS experience that promotes the idea of “thinking globally, acting locally,” in addition to the meaning of CAS for the wider school community.

Running parallel to IB MYP-related professional development in SIG Years 1-3, and continuing in Years 4 and 5, will be trainings which support the following project objectives: a) increasing capacity of the Principal and SLT; b) cultivating teacher-leaders capable of supporting a successful whole school reform effort; and, c) strengthening the partnership between the ERCSD and Chestnut Ridge Middle School. Other, general workshop topics will include: curriculum, instruction & assessment; special education; response to intervention, and financial efficiency. Also of note, in the most recent external review conducted on the ERCSD, it was determined that teachers were not conversant with DTDSE elements; accordingly, at least two workshops will be offered on that topic. These trainings will be conducted by the District’s staff developers and staff from the designated SIG Consultant, Gene Systems Group, Inc. SIG workshops will not duplicate or supplant professional development already planned by East Ramapo, but instead will address the student performance issues that have resulted in CRMS’ current status as a Priority School.

Professional development conducted in years 4 and 5 of the SIG will place a strong emphasis on fully integrating the IB MYP Model into the CRMS. The IB Organization will deliver a great deal of these trainings, and some will be delivered internally through turnkey professional development. At this juncture, the IB curriculum will be embedded in the school, and focus will shift to the Category 2 and 3-level trainings that aimed at teachers and school leaders that have become active practitioners in the model’s implementation. With respect to supporting school administrators, Category 2 workshops will be designed to help educational leaders in an IB World School reflect on and improve the quality of Diploma Programme (DP) delivery within their school. Considerable effort will be made to support the IB curricula’s seamless integration into the CRMS. Category 2 trainings will include Theory of Knowledge (TOK) workshops for teachers new to the DP at established IB World Schools. This workshop is designed to prepare participants to teach TOK in a manner that supports the IB mission statement and philosophy.

Deeper immersion in the IB curricula over the course of years 4 and 5 will require teachers and school leaders to cultivate mastery of related assessment approaches. In response, Category 3 IB

workshops will focus on subject area specific disciplines to include math, geography, English “A” and English “B” (the latter is offered in Spanish), in addition to History. In line with the SIG’s emphasis on enhancing school and district leadership, Category 3 offering will include a Pedagogical Leadership workshop. Targeting subject area leaders and school administrators, this training aims to broaden understanding of the philosophical and pedagogical impact of implementing the IB DP. Attendees will study how assessing schools against IB standards and practices supports the planning, implementation, and improvement of the DP. Moreover, participants will also discuss the importance of developing a collaborative school culture to bring about systemic and sustained change and examine how the diverse ways people think, learn and work affect how their learning communities function.

**J. Communication and Stakeholder Involvement/Engagement (4 points)**

*The LEA/school must fully and transparently consult and collaborate with key education stakeholders about the school’s Priority status and on the development and implementation of the SIG plan.*

The District is firmly committed to communication with key stakeholders. To that end, the District and the school have consulted and collaborated with key stakeholders. I

In the spring of 2016, the District’s Superintendent of Schools sent a letter out to all of the parents of Chestnut Ridge Middle School students notifying them of the school’s Priority status. Reflective of the home languages of many of the school’s families, this letter was translated and sent out in English, Spanish, and French Creole.

As the school improvement initiative was developed, consultation and collaboration took place with Parent Teacher Association members, including the current President of the District’s P.T.A. Council and the Immediate Past President. There was tremendous enthusiasm for the planned project and the collaborations with the International Baccalaureate Organization and the professional development to be provided by Dr. Nicole Eschler of the Genesystems Group.

Support for these initiatives was also garnered from the Presidents of the District’s Teachers’ Union and School Building Administrators’ Union. The School Principal herself was very excited to plan and ultimately to implement this school improvement program.

Collaborations with key stakeholders included phone conferences, face-to-face meetings, and e-mail communications. Feedback and input from stakeholders was used in the development of the SIG plan, as aspects of the programs were outlined and revised.

Importantly, communications with key stakeholders will continue throughout the five years of the program implementation and beyond.

**K. Project Plan and Timeline (6 points)**

*The LEA/school must provide a project plan that provides a detailed and specific, measurable, realistic, and time-phased set of actions and outcomes that reasonably lead to the effective implementation of the SIG plan. The plan must include activities designed to build capacity of instructional staff and school leadership, as well as reinforce sustainability of overall school improvement efforts beyond the timeframe of the five-year funding period.*

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<p>International Baccalaureate (IB)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with school board, IB and other relevant authorities</li> <li>• Feasibility study based on information obtained</li> <li>• Official notification to IB of intention to seek authorization --</li> </ul> <p>The School will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit the <u><i>School information form</i></u> online</li> <li>• Investigate IB philosophy further (The school researched IB as part of the grant application process.)</li> <li>• Analyze programme requirements as outlined in the <u><i>Guide to school authorization: Middle Years Programme</i></u></li> <li>• Gain further support from teachers, school district/board and students</li> </ul>	<p>IB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued contact with the IB</li> </ul> <p><b>Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation of a steering committee</li> <li>• Production of a plan of action</li> <li>• Appointment of grade level and area leaders</li> <li>• Preparation of administrative and supervisory material for community service</li> </ul> <p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial staff training</li> <li>• Intensive training of the staff assigned to teach <b>MYP Year</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study of the school's curriculum (years 1-5) in relation to MYP subject group objectives</li> <li>• Integration of the areas of interaction with educational activities and identification of interdisciplinary activities</li> <li>• Development of assessment</li> </ul>	<p>IB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application for an IB authorization visit</li> </ul> <p><b>Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of the work of the steering committee</li> </ul> <p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intensive preparation of the staff assigned to teach <b>MYP Year 2</b> students</li> <li>• Continuation of staff training</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration of the areas of interaction with educational activities and introduction of interdisciplinary activities in year 2</li> <li>• Development of Assessment material using MYP criteria</li> <li>• Authorization visit --</li> <li>• Submit <u><i>Application for authorization</i></u></li> <li>• Review feedback and prepare for the verification visit (see <u><i>Guide to school authorization:</i></u></li> </ul>	<p>IB</p> <p><b>Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As third year</li> </ul> <p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As third year, substituting <b>MYP Year 3</b> for <b>MYP Year 2</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As third year</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Professional Communities meet to achieve common goals - now with greater autonomy than the previous year and primarily under the guidance of the school leadership, with support from Nicole Eschler</li> </ul>	<p><b>Structures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As fourth year</li> </ul> <p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As fourth year, substituting <b>MYP Year 4</b> for <b>MYP Year 3</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As fourth year</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Professional Communities meet to achieve common goals - now with greater autonomy than the previous year and primarily under the guidance of the school leadership, with support from Nicole Eschler</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate a coordinator</li> <li>• Develop an action plan to ensure successful implementation</li> <li>• Attend a category 1 workshop (head of school and others will attend applicable I.B. training)</li> <li>• Prepare <i>Application for candidacy</i> after receiving access from the IB Americas regional office</li> </ul>	<p>material using MYP criteria</p> <p>--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation of the programme</li> <li>• Set-up teacher accounts to the Online Curriculum Centre</li> <li>• Develop systems for teachers collaborative planning and reflection</li> <li>• Further develop the action plan</li> <li>• Develop supporting documents related to policies, scheduling, subjects offered and curriculum development for the <i>Application for authorization</i></li> <li>• Prepare <i>Application for authorization</i> using the <i>Guide to school authorization: Middle Years Programme</i></li> </ul>	<p><u><i>Middle Years Programme</i></u>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue developing and implementing action plan</li> <li>• At least one teacher per subject group and the MYP coordinator must have attended <u><i>IB category 1 workshops</i></u> (in person or online)</li> <li>• All MYP teachers must have participated in an on-site general MYP workshop</li> </ul> <p>Upon acceptance of the <i>Application for authorization</i>, a visit to the school will be carried out to verify the school's claim that it has taken all the necessary actions and is prepared to become an IB World School. The purpose of the visit is to ensure that the educational principles, standards and practices on which the IB programme is founded will be maintained and furthered.</p>		
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<p>Partnership with Nicole Eschler of The GeneSystems Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with School Principal to plan the Professional Development Series for the School Leaders and Teachers</li> <li>• Begin training schedule for School Principal, Assistant Principals, and other participants of the school leadership team – tasks will be done under the guidance and with the direction of Nicole Eschler</li> <li>• Begin implementation of intensive coaching for the School Principal and members of the leadership team – tasks will be done under the guidance and with the feedback of Nicole Eschler</li> <li>• Begin training Teacher-leaders to work with members of their departments to provide support to other teachers, under the guidance and direction of Nicole Eschler</li> <li>• Establish interdisciplinary</li> </ul>	<p>Partnership with Nicole Eschler of The GeneSystems Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Professional Development Plan for the School Leaders and Teachers with the School Principal and revise, as needed - the focus this year is on accomplishing tasks with more autonomy, aimed at sustainability, with great feedback from Nicole Eschler</li> <li>• Continue Professional Development sessions for School Principal, Assistant Principals, and other participants of the school leadership team, with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with more autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> <li>• Continue implementation of coaching for the School Principal and members of the leadership team with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with more autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>Partnership with Nicole Eschler of The GeneSystems Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Professional Development Plan for the School Leaders and Teachers with the School Principal and revise, as needed - the focus this year is on accomplishing tasks with greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability – the goal will be now on the Principal taking greater ownership of the needs of the staff and students, still with guidance and feedback from Nicole Escher, but with the focus shifted to the School Principal arriving at and implementing solutions along with her leadership team</li> <li>• Continue Professional Development sessions for School Principal, Assistant Principals, and other participants of the school leadership team, with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> <li>• Continue implementation of coaching for the School Principal</li> </ul>	<p>Partnership with Nicole Eschler of The GeneSystems Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Professional Development Plan for the School Leaders and Teachers with the School Principal and revise, as needed - the focus this year is on accomplishing tasks with greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability – the goal will be now on the Principal taking even greater ownership of the needs of the staff and students, still with guidance and feedback from Nicole Escher, but with the focus shifted to the School Principal arriving at and implementing solutions along with her leadership team</li> <li>• Continue Professional Development sessions for School Principal, Assistant Principals, and other participants of the school</li> </ul>	<p>Partnership with Nicole Eschler of The GeneSystems Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Professional Development Plan for the School Leaders and Teachers with the School Principal and revise, as needed - the focus this year is on accomplishing tasks with greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability – the goal will be now on the Principal taking full ownership of the needs of the staff and students, still with guidance and feedback from Nicole Escher, but with the focus shifted to the School Principal arriving at and implementing solutions along with her leadership team</li> <li>• Continue Professional Development sessions for School Principal, Assistant Principals, and other participants of the school leadership team, with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> </ul>
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<p>Professional Communities under the guidance and direction of Nicole Eschler</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue training Teacher-leaders provide guidance, feedback, and support to other teachers with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with more autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Professional Communities meet to achieve common goals under the guidance and direction of Nicole Eschler, but with greater autonomy than the previous year</li> </ul>	<p>and members of the leadership team with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue training Teacher-leaders to provide guidance, feedback, and support to other teachers with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability - now with greater autonomy than the previous year and primarily under the guidance of the school leadership, with support from Nicole Eschler</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Professional Communities meet to achieve common goals - now with greater autonomy than the previous year and primarily under the guidance of the school leadership, with support from Nicole Eschler</li> </ul>	<p>leadership team, with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with even greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation of coaching for the School Principal and members of the leadership team with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with even greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> <li>• Continue training Teacher-leaders to provide guidance, feedback, and support to other teachers with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with even greater autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue implementation of coaching for the School Principal and members of the leadership team with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with autonomy, aimed at sustainability</li> <li>• Continue training Teacher-leaders to provide guidance, feedback, and support to other teachers with the focus toward accomplishing tasks with autonomy, aimed at sustainability - now with greater autonomy than the previous year and primarily under the guidance of the school leadership, with support from Nicole Eschler</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Professional Communities meet to achieve common goals - now with greater autonomy than the previous year and under the guidance of the school leadership</li> <li>• Nicole Eschler will coach the school administrators and school staff to</li> </ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary Professional Communities meet to achieve common goals - now with greater autonomy than the previous year and under the guidance of the school leadership, with support from Nicole Eschler</li> </ul>	<p>work independently for the upcoming school year. By the end of Year 5, the school will be functioning with the internal capacities that have been built throughout the grant period.</p>
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Sustainability of all of the strides made during the five-year implementation of the School Improvement Grant is key to long-term success. By developing the leadership skills of the school administration and the self monitoring capabilities of the school staff as a whole, the school will be able to continue the processes that have been put in place during the grant period, long after the grant period ends. Five years' worth of professional development specifically geared toward attaining this internal system of leadership, implementation, evaluation, reflection, and revision will build competency and capacity that will not just dissipate at the end of Year 5. Additionally, school teacher-leaders will mentor new incoming staff members, help monitor their achievements and struggles, and provide valuable guidance, feedback, and support. All this will be done under the expert leadership of a highly skilled school administrative team, headed up by a principal who has been coached and guided herself by an expert in the field, Dr. Nicole Eschler of the GeneSystems Group.

The principal, the assistant principals, and the teaching staff will all have also participated in extensive IB training and will have five years of experience in implementing the IB Middle Years Programme under their belts. As the success of this program becomes clear through the process of evaluating and monitoring student achievement utilizing data from various sources including standardized test scores, grades in classes, participation in personal projects, and increased success as students transition into the high school, Chestnut Ridge Middle School will continue the IB model with District support. At that point, the expenses of sustaining the IB program will be dramatically reduced from previous years, as the vast majority of the teaching staff will have been trained in the program, greatly decreasing professional development costs, and fees such as the Application Fee and the Candidate Fees will no longer apply.



The school community is not only eagerly anticipating strengthening the school's leadership capabilities, fostering collaborative and teaching capacities of staff, and increasing student success during the grant funding period, but, perhaps even more so, the school is looking ahead to the continued impact this initiative will have in the future. Decades of students will ultimately benefit from this grant initiative as the lasting effects will extend far beyond the "five years."