

**Millbury Jr/Sr High School**  
**Executive Summary: STANDARD 5:**  
**School Culture and Leadership**  
Presented and approved 71-0  
February 6th, 2018

Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School (MJSHS) maintains a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture, with high expectations for all students. MJSHS offers an abundance of meaningful programs that serve to promote and encourage exploration of our school's core values and to empower students to create their own educational and co-curricular experiences based on individual needs. As of the 2017-2018 school year, MJSHS offers over 40 co-curricular activities and athletic programs that involve students, teachers, coaches and parents. Many activities are accessible to both our junior and senior high school students.

As part of preparing our students for life outside of MJSHS, we strive to teach students a strong sense of responsibility in all aspects of their educational experience. We want students to be active stakeholders in many of the decisions that impact their academic career. Students meet with their guidance counselors in order to map out their coursework/pathway which will guide them from 7th grade through graduation. Students in grades 9-12 are presented with multiple academic opportunities and are allowed to augment their core coursework with a variety of electives including, but not limited to, Virtual High School (VHS), early college courses, internships, and externships. Students are encouraged to meet with their guidance counselors and teachers before school, during Common Directed Study (CDS), and after school which provides additional opportunities for academic support and/or post-secondary planning.

MJSHS promotes high expectations for all students through both academic and co-curricular offerings. All academic courses, regardless of level (e.g., College Preparatory, Honors, and/or Advanced Placement) offer students rich, relevant and rigorous curricular experiences. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves academically and are allowed the opportunity to request any course offering provided any applicable prerequisites are met. Students may access their grades and assignments via the Aspen/X2 portal and are encouraged to use this management (SIMS) tool to track their academic success. MJSHS prepares an updated Program of Study annually which reflects any changes to course offerings and departmental pathways. Beginning with the class of 2020, MJSHS has adopted the MassCore graduation requirements which are clearly outlined and identified within the pages of the Program of Study. Most departments introduce new course offerings annually in order to create diverse offerings for students.

MJSHS uses a rotating schedule that has 7 classes per semester. Five classes meet daily and two periods are dropped daily ( 5 drop 2 schedule). The following day begins with the two dropped classes from the previous day. The rotation of the schedule benefits both students and teachers as student performance can be impacted by alternating meeting times. Four of the five class blocks are 57 minutes in length and one 72-minute block anchoring the lunch period. The longer block allow teachers to diversify lesson plans, promote group work, and conduct science and math labs and project-based learning opportunities.

MJSHS maintains rigorous and challenging academic expectations for all students and maintains sensitivity to our diverse learners. Students with specific learning needs and/or particular social emotional vulnerabilities are provided support services within their schedules. Services include but are not limited to: learning strategies courses, English Learners (EL) support services, intervention-based classes, alternative education programs, and various student-based groups that work to support the social-emotional wellness of our students.

MJSHS provides students with many opportunities to make meaningful and genuine connections with staff and peers. Students in grades 7-11 begin each day with a 34-minute Common Directed Study (CDS). High School teachers “loop” with their CDS group over the course of students’ 9th through 11th grade years. Junior High teachers “loop” with their CDS groups during students’ 7th and 8th grade years. Looping allows students to form authentic relationships with teachers and staff during their time at MJSHS.

Throughout the school year, students engage in many activities that promote a positive school climate. Students participate in class activities with class advisors which benefits peer-to-peer relationship building and fosters relationships between students and staff. The 21st Learning Expectations targeted during these activity blocks include: Communicate Effectively, Demonstrate Motivation, Collaborate with Purpose and Exhibit Adaptability and Tolerance. As a means to strengthen relationship building, MJSHS has added a new program called Freshmen in Action. Beginning with the Class of 2021, this formalized program is designed to communicate MJSHS’s 21st Learning Expectations with a focus on community service, leadership, and teamwork. These 21st Century Learning Expectations are also carried outside of the classroom and into MJSHS athletic teams and co-curricular activities through competitions at both the district and state levels.

The leadership at MJSHS endeavours to create a climate of collaboration and professional growth while also maintaining collegiality. Staff members are afforded opportunities to participate in a multitude of professional development opportunities, both inside and outside of the district. Administration encourages staff members to share their professional development experiences with other members of the faculty. Since 2016, MJSHS staff members have participated in district-wide Professional Development focused around curriculum mapping, data-driven instruction, social emotional learning, and common assessment development. Administration has developed a 2-year teacher mentor program that supports new staff members in the district. New staff members at MJSHS, including certified teachers and other educational professionals, attend a two-day introductory workshop before the beginning of the school year for professional development and an introduction to the school’s culture.

The principal, in conjunction with other building leaders, regularly provides instructional leadership that is rooted in the school’s core values, beliefs, and learning expectations. The principal works closely with the assistant principals and the department leaders. The Principal, Assistant Principals and department leaders work as instructional leaders, facilitating the communication of best practices to all staff. Since 2013, MJSHS has used Teachpoint, a comprehensive evaluation system designed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), to evaluate staff members. As a means of developing leadership skills, building administrators participate in a variety of professional opportunities, including workshops, conferences, councils, and committees.

MJSHS fosters an interactive and collaborative partnership with parents, students and educators to best support our students’ academic and social emotional needs. The principal and professional staff regularly engage in a variety of professional endeavors designed to improve student learning. Examples include professional discourse, accessing resources outside of the school, formal time to implement professional development, and opportunities to apply the skills, practices and ideas gained to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Direct feedback is gathered through a variety of sources including, but not limited to: monthly meetings of the School Council, which is comprised of staff, students, and parents; the Principal’s Roundtable meetings, ED Camps, PLC meetings, faculty meetings, interdisciplinary meetings, and informal feedback surveys sent to stakeholders for input on various school topics and initiatives.

MJSHS staff regularly engage in a variety of professional efforts designed to improve student learning and success. Each department meets together as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) 3 to 4 days, per 7-day rotation. Teachers exchange best practices; analyze data; align curriculum; and collaborate on common

assessments. Professional staff meet for faculty meetings after school bi-monthly. A portion of each faculty meeting agenda is devoted to recognition of staff.

The MJSHS Principal, Millbury Public Schools Superintendent, and Millbury Public Schools School Board have an ongoing collaborative and constructive relationship that is focused on ensuring that all students achieve the 21st Century Learning Expectations. School Committee meetings are held twice a month. District-wide leadership meetings, involving administrators from all three Millbury schools and the Superintendent, occur every month. Additionally, administrators participate in periodic Learning Walks throughout the district in order to calibrate their evaluative practices and to improve district-wide teaching and learning.

The School Committee and Superintendent provide the Principal with sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. The School Committee and the Superintendent regularly communicate with the Principal about how they can help her best lead the school. The Principal communicates the needs of the school throughout the process of developing the school-wide budget, and the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Both the annual budget and the SIP align with the District Improvement Plan (DIP). Once presented to the School Committee, all necessary stakeholders participate in the successful implementation and roll-out of these items.

Based on the Rating Guide for the Standard, Millbury Junior Senior High School judges their adherence to the Standard as **EXEMPLARY**.

### **Strengths:**

- There are many school initiatives and extracurricular activities/clubs that enhance the school culture and foster school spirit.
- MJSHS has a history of encouraging and including parents, community members, teachers, and students in decision making.
- The administration provides for numerous professional development opportunities throughout the year.
- New staff members participate in a 2-year teacher mentor program that supports their professional growth and connection to the school community.
- The School Board and Superintendent communicate frequently with school administrators concerning how they can best lead the school.
- The rotating schedule ensures that each class meets at a different time of day throughout the 7 day rotation.
- The schedule and organization of time allows for a legion of opportunities for professional collaboration.

### **Needs:**

- Administrators need to utilize the data from feedback surveys in a constructive manner which would promote collaborative decision-making within the school.

- Administrative initiatives to be incorporated at a slower pace so that staff can be more proficient with its resourcefulness before another initiative is introduced.
- Implementation of a Mentoring/Advisory program during CDS.

Respectfully Submitted,

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