

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Niya White

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

Official School Name Center City PCS-Congress Heights Campus

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 220 High View Place S.E.

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Washington State DC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20032-9998

County District Of Columbia

Telephone (202) 562-7070 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.centercitypcs.org E-mail nwhite@centercitypcs.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Russ Williams E-mail rwilliams@centercitypcs.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Center City Public Charter Schools Tel. (202) 589-0202

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

Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Russ Williams
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 77 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 13 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 21 High schools
 - 7 K-12 schools
- 118 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	15	8	15
K	15	8	23
1	10	16	26
2	8	18	26
3	12	13	25
4	15	12	27
5	12	10	22
6	14	12	26
7	11	9	20
8	10	13	23
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	122	119	241

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 100 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 0 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 0%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	241
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.000
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	0

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 89 %
Total number students who qualify: 214

8. Students receiving special education services: 7 %
17 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 0 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 1 Mental Retardation
- 3 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 2 Other Health Impaired
- 6 Specific Learning Disability
- 4 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 1 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	1
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 12:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	92%	91%	90%	89%	87%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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

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

To empower our students for lifelong success, by building strong character, promoting academic excellence, and generating public service throughout

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

Students are selected to attend through a lottery system managed by our city's government.

PART III – SUMMARY

CCPCS-Congress Heights is charter school in its eighth year as a charter school, as it was previously a Catholic School that converted into being a charter to remain open and continue to serve the families it served. Congress Heights four years ago was experiencing a mass amount of administrative, teacher, and student family turnover, which brought on extremely high suspension and expulsion rates, as well as very low student achievement scores where only 20% of the students in the building were proficient in Reading and 30% of the student body were proficient in mathematics, a high marker for closing the school's doors. Upon this administrative team and instructional staff entering the building, we worked quickly to establish building culture as well as addressing the instructional gaps. Instructionally, this team over the span of two years grew students achievement data from 20% to 48% and 30% to 48% respectively.

Our student demographics remain the same in serving at-risk students in southeast Washington, D.C. Within this community, students see and experience hardships that anyone of this age should not, which has caused students grow or mature far beyond their years. We have had to work to get students to see and believe in themselves and their abilities so that their data could shine and shed light on what they are actually capable of regardless of what they see and experience around them and the area in which they live.

With this mission and vision to educate and uplift students, we have maintained a 84% teacher retention rate as well an equal student family re-enrollment rate, accompanied by a massive decrease of suspensions from 151 suspensions prior to this team's arrival to 18 in all of the 2014-2015 school year.

Through our traditions of home visits, morning gatherings, morning meetings, and the use of our token economy and parent incentives, this team has been able to add stability to the building and the student-families it serves so that we have been able to become the only school in the city to take a Tier 3 school and turn it into a Tier 1 school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Center City’s academic program is designed to prepare students for high school, college and career. We fully subscribe to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics, the Next Generation Standards for Science as well as a set of comprehensive Social Studies Standards based on the Core Knowledge Sequence. Additionally, we believe in providing the most comprehensive education possible while maintaining the integrity of a small school program. Our students not only participate in the academic core programs of English Language Arts (ELA), Social Studies, Math and Science, they also engage in Physical Education, Art, Drama and Music as a regular part of their daily schedule. They also participate in a host of extracurricular and club opportunities after school as: Homework Center, Georgetown Tutors, Sports Programs (Flag Football, Basketball, Soccer, Softball), STEM Programs, Drama Club, and Extended Learning which incorporates opportunities for students to further their studies through computer and skill based tutoring.

English Language Arts (ELA)

Our ELA curriculum is deeply rooted in two simple beliefs: first, that scholars need significant “time in text” and second, that a true love of reading must be at the core of each and every classroom. Driven by these beliefs, we designed a curriculum that prioritizes the major shifts in instruction driven by the adaptation of the Common Core State Standards – scholars will spend a significant amount of time reading the right texts closely and analytically, as well as identifying the most effective evidence from texts to form strong analyses and arguments. In grades K-3, scholars are securing foundational skills and engaging in text-based discussions through the Core Knowledge Language Arts program (CKLA), while scholars in grades 4-8 will meet the demands of the Common Core by engaging with authentic, high-interest literature that increases in complexity across the year.

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum

Teachers in Pre-Kindergarten use the Every Child Ready (ECR) curriculum which includes ten thematic units that are explored throughout the year. This packaged program uses an attribute framework with checklists for each component. The framework ensures that teachers are knowledgeable about what to teach, how to teach, and how to determine if the teaching is being done effectively. Teachers at the Congress Heights location use Best Practice techniques to enhance the curriculum which enables students to meet and exceed the required benchmark goals. Students have opportunities to learn through play in classroom centers that are theme based and designed to meet the needs of individual students. In addition to classroom centers, small group instruction is incorporated throughout the day for a variety of Math, Literacy and Language skills. These groups are designed based on formal and informal data taken by teachers and the ECR Coach.

Students in Pre-Kindergarten are assessed 5 times throughout the year using the ECR Math and Language and Literacy tool designed by AppleTree Institute. Along with this, students are also required to use the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). After students have been assessed, the data is analyzed to determine growth/lack of and digression to form groups and differentiated instruction. The designated ECR Coach/Dean of Instruction at the Congress Heights campus, uses this analyzed data to hold Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings with the Pre-K teachers. In addition, teachers are given additional Professional Development designed to improve their instructional practices. They are also given opportunities to visit other locations for Pre-K Instructional Rounds.

Mathematics

Our Math curriculum prioritizes the major work of each grade level, as designated by the PARCC Model Content Framework, thus allowing significant time for scholars to engage in higher levels of mathematical performance – to persevere in problem solving, reason about various strategies and to reflect on mistakes, processes and solutions. Each unit is designed around a culminating performance task, which requires scholars to apply critical thinking skills to discern which new content knowledge or strategies are applicable to tackle a challenging mathematical task in an unfamiliar context. With a deep conceptual understanding of the content and daily opportunities to apply the Mathematical Practices, scholars are empowered to justify

their reasoning and critique the reasoning of others. The CCPCS curriculum has been created around My Math and Engage NY as primary resources.

Science

We designed a Science curriculum around the Next Generation Science Standards that embodies the dual nature of science: a body of deep content knowledge and the processes and practices used to add to that body of knowledge. Scholars will learn the key components of Earth, Life and Physical sciences while being challenged to solve real world problems, analyze data in context and share their findings with their peers. These particular areas of focus are sufficiently rich to allow scholars to understand systems and subsystems, the nature of interactions, and how humans interact with the living and nonliving world for positive and negative outcomes, while also building their literacy, mathematical reasoning and problem solving skills. Scholars learn early about the scientific process and are asked to apply this process of disciplined inquiry and experimentation to a science project of their choosing. All students in Pre-K through 2nd grade will work on whole class projects and students in third through eighth grade will work on group or individual projects. These projects are showcased for parents and visitors at the annual Center City PCS Science Fair.

Social Studies

Our Social Studies curriculum is built around the Core Knowledge Sequence, which describes which content students should know at each grade level throughout the course of their education. The Social Studies curriculum prioritizes the reading of nonfiction text in primary and secondary sources and requires accurate citation of visual and textual evidence within these sources. Our curriculum emphasizes the determination of central ideas, summarization, citation, inferencing, and analysis in order to build the critical thinking skills necessary for scholars to develop and defend historically accurate arguments in both written and oral response format.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Arts

All students participate in both a visual arts and music class. There are multiple opportunities throughout the school year where students are able to participate in school and district level performances where they display their talent or work.

Physical and Health Education

Students will have at least one period of physical education (PE) per week. At certain grade levels, health is also a part of the PE curriculum. Our PE program includes basic calisthenics and aerobics, as well as team and individual sports. We emphasize the importance of exercise, fitness, and healthy habits to help students develop a positive body image. We build teamwork and good sportsmanship and stress this in the context of several of the core values, including collaboration, compassion, cooperation, discipline, and respect.

Foreign Languages

Our students live in a city with representation of the nations spanning the globe. Student demographics in our schools indicate that our families speak more than 20 different languages. While we value all foreign languages, Center City PCS has chosen to teach Spanish because of the growing use of this language in our community and nation. Students participating in the Spanish program will receive weekly Spanish instruction.

Athletic Activities

Co-ed sports programs are offered to students throughout the school year. To participate, students must be in good academic standing. Parents/guardians must submit a completed registration form and activity fee, if applicable. Additional communication will be sent to parents/guardians regarding athletic activities offered and corresponding schedules.

Technology Instruction

Students are provided with instruction around technology through various avenues so that they learn how to be technologically savvy in proactive ways. Students are shown how to use all of the basic features of technological use initially, and now we are building on their abilities to use "Prezi," all google features, and

the use of an interactive writing forum that allows students to become actual literary authors and illustrators with their written work.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

There are a number of instructional approaches Congress Heights includes on a daily bases. Instructional staff utilize various inclusion teaching models such as: parallel, station, and alternative models. With these models Congress Heights is able to provide sound and differentiated instruction for individuals of all abilities. To support problem, project and technology-based learning, Congress Heights implements a numbers of scientific-based interventions that support reading and mathematical discrepancies for students with disabilities, advanced students, and everyday students. In understanding that students need additional supports to stay competitive, as well as additional supports to further advancement, we offer the following:

Instructional Protocol and Practice Time

The current protocol calls for a myriad of time disbursements through an ELA block. To ensure that students are indeed consistently building their reading stamina and comprehension not only have supporting teachers been given specific groups and skills to work on, elementary grades 3-5 will dedicate 50% (55 minutes of their class time to reading and class discussion around their novels). The other 55 minutes is reserved for student application (projects, activities, writing pieces). The entire school uses the online programs Achieve 3000 and Lexia in order to attain targeted intervention skills at their level based on monthly lexile evaluations.

Morning Math Questions

These will continue, but have grown to become targeted and more aligned with teacher action plans and planning calendars to serve as a daily and second lens set to student proficiency and instructional needs throughout the remainder of the year.

Saturday Success Academy

Based upon the success of the students who attended Saturday Academy, we evaluate data to re-calibrate and determine additional students that must be added to this group as it caters to our high proficient and advanced students. The program runs from 9am to 12pm and students are provided with high level reading materials, projects, and high order thinking, with regards to Reading. In math, students are given word problems to where they collaboratively or independently, arrive at their problem solutions with support of additional practice from Mclass, ANET, Ten Marks, and No Red Ink sites.

PARCC Practice:

Each class has a schedule of their rotation through a computer area where they will practice once a week math and reading questions that are written in PARCC format from the common core standards to better them an idea of how the test will look, how to navigate the assessment features, and question.

Lexia/Lexia Core 5 and Achieve 3000 On-Line Interventions:

Students use this on-line intervention to grow their foundational skills around phonics usage and overall comprehension, while on-grade level and advanced students, get to work towards reaching higher heights for their own personal learning.

Homework Center and GUMSHOE:

In our partnership with Georgetown University, students drive over two days a week to meet with students on a 3 to 1 ratio to receive homework help or assistance with a specific concepts or skill.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

With a shift to college and career readiness being the focus of school based assessments and the Common Core State Standards, students, now more than ever need daily practice and manipulation of computers and computer programs. All assessments given to Congress Heights students are now computer based, district wide benchmarks and statewide assessments. Currently, students are assessed on the NWEA MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessment, the mClass Beacon assessment and the PARCC assessment.

With the addition of start of the art technology, the Congress Heights Campus expects to maintain its Tier 1 status.

District Wide Assessments used for assessments and instruction:

NWEA MAP-Reading

This adaptive benchmark assessment, assesses grade level standards and is given three times a year (beginning, middle, and end).

MClass Beacon

This standards based assessment has been calibrated to follow the scope and sequence of CCPCS' curriculum so that teachers and supporting instructional staff know the overall effectiveness of their instruction within a unit. Based on student performance, teacher develop plans to reteach standards, spiral them in a small way to keep students abreast, as well as standards that just need to be reviewed through homework or do now opportunities.

How the assessments are used

Within the Beacon assessments, teachers often create their own assessments to track student mastery with overall concepts and skills within standards, in addition to other self made assessments. These assessments are two-fold in that they help shape and modify teacher instruction, as well as give students insight, on how they are performing and what areas they need to give an extra focus towards to experience more success.

All data, reading, math, mission, and management is shared, reviewed, and analyzed at PLC's weekly. The data is shared and discussed with the staff during planning sessions on Wednesdays after the student's have 2 hour early dismissal, for more intentional planning and cross curricular collaboration.

Students are immediately informed of their data and achievements. Before every assessment, students get a one on one review of their previous data points and what they need to do or how they will have to perform in order to accomplish and reach their goals. At the end of every assessment, students receive a one on one check-in to review whether they reached or surpassed their goals, whether they remained the same or unfortunately showed regression. Students go immediately into goal setting to detail what they need to continue, stop, or change to experience more success. Parents are also brought into this mix as they go through beginning of the year class and individual data goal setting with their teacher. Data is shared with parents after every testing administration, along with tips that students must utilize or maintain to see growth in all areas.

To remain a high performing school, we must continue to provide students with their data so that they can make sound choices for themselves, as well as include the parents even more so that they get to experience the assessment(s) that their child takes. This will allow the parents to further understand the lense of their child and the school and know how to better help prepare their scholar by having the same experience as the child.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

We engage and motivate from the onset of the school day. At the entrance of the building, students are greeted with a “good morning” and a fist bump. Students enter the building and sit in the class lines, reading their pre-selected books until we start our morning gathering process. In morning gathering, all students not only state and are reminded of their mission and honor code everyday, but they participate in getting or receiving a recognition. Students, teachers, and parents can give each other recognitions for making accomplishments in the character, their academic excellence, and their service to the school. Immediately following the morning gathering process that sets the tone for the students, all students go to their homerooms for morning meeting. Morning meeting is where students and teachers learn how to build a class community, learn conflict resolution, and get to know each other on a deeper level that severely minimizes any student to student, or student to teacher conflicts. Morning meeting and gathering allows for restorative conversations as well which greatly decreases our need to suspend or expel students.

Additionally we use a token economy system where students are rewarded for their decisions and actions for participation in class, caring for and protecting their environment, as well as additional academic and character positives. Students use their earned tokens and earnings for the school store and to participate in additional school wide activities such as field trip, staff vs. student sports games, and movie day opportunities.

The staff feels valued in this environment through the little notes of recognition left on their desks that let them know what awesome instruction and students management we just witnessed. Just as the students are recognized for their quarterly accomplishments, teachers are as well for their data growth and perfect attendance. Teachers are told explicitly how much they mean to the building and how the building cannot function without them, so they know to never leave.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The success of Congress Heights can be attributed to parent involvement. Thanks to the partnership the school shared with the Student Support Center (SSS), the campus was able to offer incentives to parents for attending parent nights that are held monthly. The center donated gift cards to Risse Brothers, the school’s uniform provider. Prior to the arrival of White and Dukes, having students wearing the basic uniform as a school wide concern and often led to negative student behaviors and outcomes. Parents also were eligible for gift cards to Safeway, which gave assistance to those families struggling to provide food for their families.

In addition to items for parents, the relationship with the SSS allowed the school to purchase items for the school store, which is a cornerstone of the school’s culture plan. During the day, teachers award students with tokens for good behavior, participation in class, submitting assignments on time or earlier, or students receive tokens for demonstrating the hallmark of Center City PCS, good character. With funds and assistance from the SSS, students are able to enjoy toys, school supplies, apparel and gift cards to their favorite stores, restaurants and/or movie theaters.

A final benefit of having a relationship with the SSS was having a school counselor intern that worked with our campus based counselor. This intern was given the task of assisting rising 9th graders with essay writing, financial aid support and preparation for high school interviews. This intern saw students be accepted to prestigious DC schools such as McKinley Tech, School Without Walls, and the Maret School.

There are data meetings held with the parents so that they can not only see student scores, but learn what they can do at home to help ensure that their scholar reaches their data goals throughout the year.

Additionally, we host monthly Joyful Markets where parents are invited to come in and pick up fresh groceries and learn how to cook healthy meals.

We also engage families through making home visits. These home visits are a way of pulling families into their scholar's academic lives even when they do not voluntarily take advantage of the monthly events or conferences.

3. Professional Development:

Center City is committed to professional development of its staff and leaders. We provide extensive professional development opportunities, including workshops, professional learning communities, and coaching to improve the quality of instruction.

Center City PCS Pre-Service- August 10th - 28th

Four days of these three weeks were district-wide dates dedicated to team/campus building initiatives as well as our two focus areas: school culture and instruction aligned to the Common Core. Six days were spent with staff at individual campuses with extension session on school culture and instruction as well as ample time addressing classroom environment. Center City had an additional week of professional development dedicated to Teach Like a Champion strategies, implementation, and norming around expectations and usage of the strategies.

District-Wide Full-Day Professional Development Throughout the Year

Center City has full-day professional development days as an organization, where we gather all six campus teams to disseminate organizational strategies, priorities, and provide professional learning community time (PLCs). There are seven full-day district-wide professional development days in SY15-16. Some of the themes that Center City focused on were:

SPED Growth and Compliance

Teach Like a Champion (TLAC) and GLAAD training

K-3 ELA Close the Achievement Gap by 3rd grade

School Culture: No Nonsense Nurturer, Character Education, Restorative Justice

These full-day sessions were divided into half-day sessions addressing the above topics. Each session provided teachers and leaders with new content and time in which to apply the content to their practices. Additionally, teachers of the same grade-level and/or content had professional learning community (PLC) planning time.

Campus-Based Professional Development (Weekly on Wednesdays from 3-4:30 pm)

Campus-based professional development extended the organizational priorities to campus-level with a specific focus on meeting the needs of all students at that particular campus. Additionally, some PLCs spent time addressing the data cycle of benchmark assessments. Teachers reviewed data reports, detailing class and individual student performance, and wrong-answer analysis. At the data meetings, teachers worked in teams to determine instructional takeaways and to create a plan for targeted re-teach and interventions.

Grade-Band Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Held once a week on the campus in grade-bands (PK-1st, 2nd-5th grade, and 6th-8th grade), the grand-band PLCs are the primary way of ensuring consistency and communication, and problem-solving between all members of a grade-band team. PLCs alternate to address specific student issues, reviewing student work, grade-band planning, PBIS systems, and pushing instructional practice. Consistency across the district was ensured by the use of standard meeting protocols. The grade-band meetings are facilitated by a school leader and/or a teacher-leader.

Observation and Feedback

The goal of observation is feedback that can positively influence teaching and learning and raise the bar for student achievement. Observations:

Provide helpful feedback on specific areas including: instruction, management, assessment, and discipline
Provide data crucial to instruction and help teachers become better teachers

Help teachers meet organizational and professional goals
Provide tangible data for annual reviews based on the CCPCS Evaluation System

All teachers within CCPCS will have at least 16 informal observations as well as at least two formal observations across the school year.

Teacher Leader Fellowship

Center City's Teacher Leader Fellowship (TLF), launched in SY14-15, provides professional development to participating teachers to improve their pedagogy as well as their leadership skills. It is one of our pathways to campus leadership. These teachers then take on additional responsibilities, such as mentoring new teachers and leading professional development and are paid a stipend for their work.

Principal and Assistant Principal Professional Development

Center City's principals and assistant principals also receive coaching and professional development that focuses on capacity building, instructional pedagogy, curriculum and Common Core-oriented observational skills, as well as a consultancy practice. Principals and assistant principals also engage in data analysis sessions, teacher feedback reflection, and collaborative strategic planning, on a bi-weekly basis.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of the leadership team is that we need to do everything possible to provide our students with options to be successful, options of the high schools they want to attend, so that they can have options of what colleges they will not only attend, but graduate from.

The structure in the building is so that the principal and dean can have an enormous amount of time to be in classrooms with students and coaching teachers. The principal, while responsible for the entire building, oversees the middle school, special education, and enrichment. The dean, while involved in all school matters are responsible for primary and elementary. Both the principal and dean meet every morning to norm and strategize on whose classes are to be seen, what should be expected with each observation. We talk about all students and parent highlights and concerns that we both know what the other knows. Throughout the course of the school day, there are certain classrooms that both the principal and the dean go into classrooms together to norm instructional expectations. We are in classrooms lending support to teacher as much as possible which helps strengthen the relationship with the staff because they see that we are not "office desk jockeys," and that we actually doing this work with them. We are centered around students achievement, which is why we are in classrooms so that we can push the instruction students need, the support of the resources that teachers use, and to provide feedback and model effective lesson delivery ourselves as the instructional leaders within the building. Through our consistent norming and presence our visibility keeps the focus on the instruction from all stakeholders.

Our leadership team meetings keep us grounded to the work and are used to make sure that decisions are made around sound details from our governing handbook, curriculum, scope and sequences, and instructional resources.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

What makes the school so successful is our Culture Plan and what we do to establish such a strong culture and climate within the building. This culture and climate allows for instruction to happen to further grow our scholars, as well as puts the students in a positive and receptive place. The morning gathering process has worked wonders for this building as it puts the students and staff in such a positive mind frame. It forces us all to leave our issues behind and concentrate on what the day. Our morning gathering and meeting process have shifted students from responding to each other in negative, aggressive ways. This causes and allows students to spend more time on task with regards to their work, drives student engagement because of the respect built for their teacher based on student-teacher relationship built from morning gatherings and meetings. This process is welcoming to the parents and makes them feel apart of the school which causes them to buy into the school's mission and vision. This trickles into their support of the school by seeing how welcomed and a part of the school they are and are invited to be.

Coming together to start off with, "I have a recognition!" "Recognize!" "I said...that I have a recognition!" This is most palpable to have the entire building rally around and praise another student for their birthday, an assessment score, for making huge growth personally or academically, to congratulate someone for being a new big brother or sister, and etc. That rally of intention and charge carries itself into the classrooms with students as they start their learning for the day.