U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 1996 Hawk Boulevard
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chesapeake   State VA   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 23322-2124

County   Chesapeake City

Telephone (757) 421-4295   Fax

Web site/URL http://www.HickoryHawks.com   E-mail   Amber.Dortch@cpschools.com

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

                                                            Date
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. James Roberts   E-mail jim.roberts@cpschools.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Chesapeake City Public School District   Tel.   (757) 547-0153
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. C. Jeff Bunn
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.

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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   28 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   10 Middle/Junior high schools
                                  7 High schools
                                  0 K-12 schools

                                  45 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
   [X] Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	198	223	421
10	219	223	442
11	233	204	437
12 or higher	200	241	441
Total Students	850	891	1741

4. Racial/ethnic composition of
   the school:

   0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
   2 % Asian
   7 % Black or African American
   7 % Hispanic or Latino
   0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
   79 % White
   5 % Two or more races
   100 % Total

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 6%

   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 *to* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	34
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	63
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	97
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	1742
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.056
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
                                                       18 Total number ELL

   Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
   Chinese, Yue (Cantonese), German, Hindi, Icelandic, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Urdu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6 %
   Total number students who qualify: 96

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
                                                      230 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.

14 Autism	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deafness	86 Other Health Impaired
0 Deaf-Blindness	113 Specific Learning Disability
4 Emotional Disturbance	0 Speech or Language Impairment
3 Hearing Impairment	1 Traumatic Brain Injury
5 Mental Retardation	0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
4 Multiple Disabilities	0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

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	5
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	81
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	36
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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   22:1

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

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	98%	98%	97%	98%	97%

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 2016.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	430
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	58%
Enrolled in a community college	28%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	6%
Joined the military or other public service	4%
Other	2%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes _   No X

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.

Hickory High School's mission is to prepare all students to attain their full potential as lifelong learners and productive members of the global community.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Hickory High School is located in Chesapeake, Virginia, roughly five minutes from the North Carolina border. The area began as a sprawling farm community, but has seen residential and commercial growth during the past ten years. Multiple single-family home subdivisions have grown out of what was once farmland, and the area has gone from having a paucity of national business presence to the construction of a large retail center with restaurants, shopping, and movie theater complex. Recently, the first apartment complex in the school zone opened and the Planning Commission and City Council approved the building of another 675 new single-family homes in Hickory High's school zone.

As of 09/30/16, Hickory High School had a total student enrollment of 1,724. Hickory High School's student ethnic makeup is, in descending order of representation, 78.59% Caucasian or White, 7.31% African American or Black, 6.50% Hispanic, 4.87% Two or More Races / Ethnicities, 2.26% Asian, and 0.35% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.12% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Approximately, 6% or 103, of Hickory High School's 1724 students are categorized as Economically Disadvantaged. Furthermore, 10.56% of Hickory's students are identified as having a Military Connection, meaning that at least one parent or guardian is active duty military, a member of the Reserve Forces, or a member of the National Guard.

Hickory High School earned both the 2015 and 2016 Board of Education Excellence Award as part of the Virginia Index of Performance Awards. The Board of Education Excellence Award is the second highest honor awarded to schools in the Commonwealth, and is earned by meeting all state and federal accountability benchmarks and making significant progress toward goals set by the Virginia Board of Education for increased student achievement and expanded educational opportunities. During the 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16 school years, Hickory High School was recognized as a W!SE Blue Star School for our students' ability to achieve a 75% passing rate on W!SE test, have the majority of students in the 11th grade take the test, and for those who tested achieve an average score of 80% or higher. Furthermore, Hickory High School has won the coveted Claudia Dodson Virginia High School League Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Award. The 2015-16 award was Hickory's eighth consecutive win. Finally, Hickory High School was awarded the Wells Fargo Cup from the Virginia High School League for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years.

The faculty is invested in the education of the whole child. Almost every faculty member sponsors or coaches one or more sport or extracurricular activity. We offer thirty girls' and boys' varsity and junior varsity sports in a robust athletic program overseen by a full-time Athletic Director. Many of our sports programs, including softball, baseball, boys' and girls' soccer, cheerleading, cross-country, and wrestling have been recognized with regional titles. The school also offers almost fifty special interest clubs, service clubs, and honor societies in which students may participate. We are especially proud of our music, theater, robotics, literary magazine, culinary arts, and yearbook programs. All of them have been recognized on the state or national level for their achievements.

Hickory High School's record of excellence shines brightly. More than 75% of students who earn a Standard or Advanced Diploma from Hickory High School enroll in an institution of Higher Education within 16 months of graduation, a matriculation rate that is 8% higher than the district average and 13% higher than the state average. Our on-time graduation rate for the 2015-16 school year was 98.4%, the highest in the local area, 7.1% above the Commonwealth average and in the top 6% of all public high schools in Virginia. We administer more than 700 Advanced Placement tests a year, exceeding the national average for pass rates in every subject area. We also exceed the national average on the SAT Critical Reading, Math, and Writing tests. Our students' achievements and potential have been recognized with more than $4,876,815 in first year scholarships offered in the last three years and $6,144,000 and $5,440,000 in four-year scholarship offers for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years respectively.

We are dedicated to creating a culture of academic excellence that challenges all students to maximize their potential. To this end, we offer a wide range of core and elective courses, including Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment, vocational, and special education courses to ensure that a wide variety of student needs,

interests, and goals are accommodated. To engage students in Hickory High School's mission, the administration implemented a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports system utilizing the acronym "SOAR," which stands for Safety, Ownership, Attitude, Respect and responsibility. Our motto, "We are Hickory," reminds students that they are members of a school community, and are all responsible for ensuring that Hickory High School's environment provides all of our Hawks opportunity for success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Hickory High School is staffed by approximately 150 employees. Five are administrators, each of whom has instructional responsibilities coordinated by the Assistant Principal for Instruction, and the entire curriculum is overseen by HHS's Principal. The curricula of all courses offered have been developed, evaluated, and revised by Chesapeake Public Schools teachers and administrators to align with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL). Additionally, the curricula of the 23 different Advanced Placement courses offered at Hickory High School align with College Board Guidelines. Dual-Enrollment curricula align with the standards designated by the Virginia Community College System integrated with the Virginia SOL.

Hickory High School provides a range of reading/ English language arts courses, from Transitions, which focuses on the basic skills in a small group setting; to Academic, which covers the standards, to Honors, AP, and Dual-Enrollment College Composition, which cover the standards and also offer additional rigor. The curriculum is divided into broad categories, including Speaking and Collaborative Work, Reading, Writing, and Research, resulting in courses which address multiple modalities, workplace skills, and ethical use of technology in addition to standard reading and writing skills. Teachers collaborate vertically and horizontally to ensure alignment and teacher ownership of every part of the curriculum. Struggling students participate in a tiered remediation program which occurs during the school day and is staffed by the entire English department. A robust electives program (Public Speaking, Debate, Journalism, Creative Writing) supports the core standards in a focused approach which aligns to student interests and career aspirations and frames the curriculum in a real-world context. These include writing and speaking projects which pair students in electives with special education and elementary school students to encourage civic engagement.

The Mathematics Department also offers a range of course choices from Algebra Foundations to AP Calculus B/C. The department incorporates all modalities of learning, creativity, rigor, and technology to ensure that essential knowledge and skills are mastered. Co-teaching for Algebra Foundations and Algebra 1 "parts" classes (one-semester courses that are offered in two semesters for select students) utilizes the expertise of both math and special education teachers and provides small student:teacher ratios. Teachers also use technology to gather learning data, provide immediate feedback, and inform instruction. Test data is used as the basis for tutoring and remediation programs offered after school. The department holds course-level teacher meetings to collaborate and discuss best practices and monthly department meetings to discuss innovative methods and vertical alignment of math courses.

Science Department course offerings include Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics; AP courses in Chemistry, Biology, and Physics; and elective courses in Anatomy/Physiology, Meteorology, and Marine Biology to spark student interest in science-related career fields and the local ecosystem. The courses emphasize critical thinking via an inquiry-based approach. Students gain technology-based skills and learn real-world applications in the field of science through the use of data collection using Vernier probe ware. Vocabulary is a major focus; students learn and apply it within interactive activities. The department determines student weaknesses through pre-assessments to ensure that instruction is efficient and struggling students receive support.

The Social Studies Department offers a variety of history, geography, and government courses, ranging from academic to AP levels to meet diverse student needs. A strong electives program, including Psychology, Sociology, and World Religions courses provides students opportunities to explore a wide range of interests. The department's methodologies and practices reflect the progression of skills as the vehicle through which engaging lessons are planned and taught. Such skills-based lessons utilize maps, graphics, and audio/video aids to promote greater understanding of content and concepts by diverse learners.

Furthermore, teachers regularly incorporate current events and lessons related to civic awareness to promote students' development into citizens who are productive, discerning, socially aware, conscious of multiple viewpoints, and prepared to enact their civic responsibilities. Teachers analyze department and state assessment data to aid in the closing of learning gaps in student achievement. This data also serves as a

foundation for remediation efforts and tutoring programs.

College- and career-readiness skills are embedded throughout the core curriculum. A range of rigor and focus in the course offerings of each department ensures that individual student needs can be addressed. Hickory also has seven full-time guidance counselors who ensure that students are guided on a path of academic rigor and/or technical training that is attuned to individual student goals. Students are assigned to these counselors alphabetically to ensure that each student has a consistent mentor-advocate throughout their four-year journey who monitors their academic and socio-emotional progress. Finally, individual teachers incorporate college and workplace skills into lessons in multiple ways, including integration of real-world applications of content, field-related career exploration, collaboration, technology skills, time-management skills, and study skills. Certain English courses also include lessons on how to fill out college and job applications, complete college essays, and participate in interviews.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Hickory High School offers a range of fine and performing arts courses in theatre, music, and visual arts. A majority of our students participate in one of our programs during high school, with a significant number taking multiple courses. The curricula are designed with the diverse needs of all learners in mind, and include adaptive courses specifically designed for special education students. The department's instructional model accepts that some students who have academic challenges in their core classes may excel in the arts, which provide a locus of control in the educational opportunities of its students and outlets for the "artistic soul." Students are expected to contribute to the class's performance goal and engage in decision-making, media exploration, process aesthetics, historic knowledge, and exhibition presentation skills. Teachers also incorporate differentiated instruction and problem-solving. For example, Theatre Arts students utilize multi-tiered instructional processes and problem-based learning in the preparation of each theatrical performance, using STEM to construct sets, build costumes, and design complex lighting/sound plots. The Music portion of the department utilizes auditory assessment, with immediate feedback throughout each course. Beginning or intermediate music students are tasked to collaborate with advanced students to gain guided assistance with performance techniques, music theory, and sight-reading. The thorough study of music theory, music composition analysis, interpretation of poetry/text, and application of all of these into a performance setting results in the department's high performance level in local, regional, and state assessments.

Hickory's Health, Physical Education, and Driver Education Department utilizes a variety of instructional approaches to meet the needs of the 9th and 10th grade students taking its required courses and the upperclassmen enrolled in electives. Differentiated instruction is employed in both the gymnasium and weight room for individual physical abilities. Students engage in 20 or more minutes daily of fitness workouts. This training allows students to consistently see and feel success at their own individual levels, thus improving fitness levels of classes. Problem-based learning is used with the Health and Driver Education curricula. Teachers also use the Welnet program as a technology-based support that compiles data regarding student fitness. This software allows teachers to track and close gaps for students where they need emphasis and motivates students to compare and compete with their own scores, gaining ownership in their own success.

Our Foreign Language Department offers levels 1 through 5 and Advanced Placement courses in Spanish, French, German, and Latin. Seventy percent of our students complete at least three foreign language courses during high school. Due to the 4 x 4 block scheduling, students have the opportunity to excel through any upper-level language course as well as learn more than one language. Daily lessons incorporating the 5 C's of the Standards for Learning Languages (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) are delivered with a thematic approach. Through the use of thematic units, students practice oral communication, auditory skills, and written expression. Additionally, these themes provide students with vocabulary and grammar suitable for each level of proficiency within modern day scenarios. Finally, the Foreign Language Department at Hickory High School provides a cross-curricular education. Many of our lessons incorporate history, language development skills in English, and literature.

Hickory's Career and Technical Education, Business, Family and Consumer Science, Marketing, and Technology departments offer a variety of courses designed to expose students to related career fields and

skills. Teachers utilize similar differentiated instructional strategies as the other departments with an emphasis on real-world applications and differentiated instruction, and teachers focus on the quality of work rather than quantity. Many students earn industry credentials that may be utilized in a post-secondary career. The courses also teach skills that generalize to support college and career success.

Our core and other curriculum programs offer our students an exemplary and well-rounded education. More than two-thirds of the students in our most recent graduating class earned an Advanced Diploma. Additionally, more than two thirds of our students earned at least one Virginia Department of Education Seal of Achievement for their diploma and one-third earned two or more. These seals recognize exemplary performance in a number of areas, including college-level coursework (Governor's Seal), academic achievement (Board of Education Seal), Career and Technical education, Advanced Mathematics and Technology, Excellence in Civics Education, and Biliteracy.

3.   Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Hickory High School values and adapts to the needs of the individual learner. Teachers use a wide variety of formative and summative assessments to gauge areas of weakness before the next building block is put into place. Instructional methods are varied and differentiated to meet various student needs and learning styles. This includes direct instruction, project-based learning, technology-enhanced instruction, tiered instruction, and flipped classrooms. For instance, within the modern languages courses where target language communication is necessary, there are several different modes that the teacher has available for the students to display mastery. Students have performed cooking shows, fashion shows, and dating games within the target language. Many of Hickory's classrooms have a set of mini-white boards upon which students can quickly jot down answers to an "assessment." Small group or paired work also enhances student learning.

Teachers in all departments integrate technology into their lessons. Numerous software packages are utilized, including DuoLingo, EdPuzzle, Kahoot, Nearpod lessons, and Teacher's Planbook. Half of the school's classrooms are equipped with an in-focus projector and a document reader, and many have SMARTboards. These technologies provide access to countless instructional resources, many of which are interactive. Interactive websites such as Quizlet Live and Kahoot have also been integrated for student engagement, enhancement and team building exercises. Many of these technologies have built-in data gathering tools that teachers use to refine instruction, monitor student progress, and identify students who need extra help or more challenging levels of instruction.

All departments at Hickory High School utilize data analysis to measure student understanding of new and spiraled concepts and progress through the curriculum framework designed for every course. The data analyzed is obtained via both formative and summative assessments, including department common assessments, Virginia SOL End of Course Tests, and Advanced Placements Exams. Department common assessments which are correlated to specific standards are used by teachers to monitor teaching and learning and to encourage reflective teaching. Teachers meet to share assessment results, identifying and sharing best practices. Furthermore, teachers use assessment data to identify individual students who need remediation of specific skills and content. End of course SOL and Advanced Placement exams provide more global feedback which allows teachers to tweak curriculum and pacing to ensure that gaps are addressed. Finally, teachers use SOL Student Performance by Question reports to identify skill deficiencies specific to individual students, allowing them to tailor remedial instruction to individual needs.

A variety of intervention methods are used to ensure student success. Students may be identified for intervention through assessment data, grades, anecdotal evidence, or other methods. Students who are having difficulty in a specific content area attend tutoring or remediation in a variety of settings, which can include after-school, during-school, group "blitz," or one-on-one sessions. Students whose academic achievement issues are more generalized are recommended for our ESTAT (Enhanced Student Teacher Assistance Team) program, and are evaluated and monitored monthly by a team of teachers, counselors, and administrators. Students may also be recommended for the Child Study team, where they can be evaluated for special education needs.

Specifically, where significant achievement gaps exist between the general population and the test scores of any subgroup, teachers and administrators reflect on this gap and brainstorm solutions. For example, when the writing scores of special education students lagged, a grant was written to create and implement training for special education teachers on writing-specific content. The English and Special Education departments also held twice-monthly cross-training sessions during lunch on the writing test, writing curriculum, and strategies specific to helping students with disabilities, such as autism, sensory-processing disorders, and ADHD. As a result, the gap closed significantly that year, and preliminary test data from this year indicates that the trend continues.

Even in a high-performing school, there is constant pressure to maintain and improve. We continually monitor and adjust at every instructional level (student, classroom, course, and department) to ensure that we are meeting all students' needs and maximizing their achievement. Each teacher and department sets specific, data-driven goals which target areas of weakness, and works, with the support of administration, to achieve them. We constantly evaluate our available instructional resources (materials, staff, technology) and are flexible in their distribution to ensure that they continue to be used in the most efficient and effective ways possible.

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

At Hickory High School, we believe in fostering a fail-safe, rigorous educational environment where students are encouraged to take risks and be an active member of our overall school community. Each student at HHS has an individualized academic plan designed to challenge them academically, while focusing on their unique areas of interest. While HHS serves over 1700 students, each student is treated with personal care and works individually with guidance counselors to discuss post-secondary plans and select the courses that will not only prepare them to be competitive, but also provide them with advanced certifications and opportunities to earn credits prior to entering college.

We expect our students to rise to the high expectations placed upon them and excel. Our goal is to challenge students, tap into their individual talents, and arm them with the tools needed to for every opportunity beyond high school. Our school motto, "We are Hickory," speaks to the fully inclusive, family atmosphere that we have established at Hickory High School. Each student is encouraged to leave a legacy of excellence. We believe in recognizing positive behavior and highlighting exceptional character and have incorporated Positive Behavior and Intervention Strategies. Students receive "Hawk Shout Outs" for going above and beyond and modeling exemplary character traits such as kindness and integrity. HHS offers and strongly encourages participation in a wide variety of honor societies, special interest, service clubs and organizations whose mission is to identify needs within our global community and show students the value of paying it forward and giving back. We publish club pamphlets that describe each organization, as well as its goals, mission, and meeting times and locations. Student organizations are also highlighted on an expansive bulletin board in the hallways. There is a place for everyone at Hickory High School.

Finally, we recognize that our students depend upon the support and dedication of faculty and staff. The administrative team utilizes a shared decision-making model, in which teacher input is valued and sought out. Our team consistently engages in formal and informal monitoring practices to identify areas of strength and concern and promote a constant cycle of school improvement. In addition, we work diligently to celebrate our staff and recognize personal and professional accomplishments. The administration and PTSA regularly send positive messages of praise, respect, and thanks to faculty and staff and frequently provide morale boosters to show appreciation for their tireless efforts in ensuring every Hawk succeeds.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

Forming strong, positive partnerships with families and community members is a crucial element of successful schools. The mission of Hickory High School was developed by a committee including students, parents, faculty, administrators, and community members and is "to prepare all students with the knowledge and skills needed to become productive, responsible, and innovative members of the global community by providing a quality education and extra-curricular activities within a safe learning environment through partnerships among parents, teachers, and community." Hickory High School strives to build meaningful relationships with all stakeholders, to increase student achievement and overall success. Prior to entering ninth grade, all rising freshmen and transfer students are invited to attend Freshman Flight, a transition program. This provides opportunities for new students to meet current students and faculty members, learn school expectations and norms, and discover strategies and tips to be successful at Hickory High School. Moreover, due to the high volume of military connected students, HHS has established a Student-to-Student program to aid in the transition of a new school setting.

Hickory High School is fortunate to have a strong, active Parent Teacher/Student Association that meets monthly with school administration to communicate essential information and goals, share successes, and identify needs that may exist within the school and/or community. Recently, the Hickory High School PTSA was awarded the National PTA School of Excellence Award. Our PTSA supports our entire school program by awarding grants to teachers to supplement our educational and extracurricular programs. In addition, they raise funds provide support for our overall athletic program. Hickory High School also enjoys partnerships with the local community through several Hickory Parent Associations (such as the

Hickory Band Parent Association), and the support of local businesses.

We also have many clubs and student organizations whose focus is civic engagement. These include a very active Student Council Association, which not only builds student leaders, but also engages in a "monthly philanthropy" project to benefit local and national non-profits, such as Wounded Warriors, Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters, the USO, and Relay for Life. Members of our chapter of the National Honor Society raise thousands of dollars for local charities and log thousands of volunteer hours each year with local charities, hospitals, military organizations, and nonprofits. Finally, we hold an annual ScholarFest, which features HHS athletic events, a community race, a Faculty-Student basketball game, and a Scholastic Bowl competition to raise money for local scholarships.

3. Professional Development:

Hickory High School conducts yearly needs assessments to identify areas in which professional development is most needed. These assessments take into account research-based strategies, best practices, and innovative trends, multiple measures of student performance data, teacher proficiency in identified areas, as well as teacher interest. In-house opportunities are provided to faculty and staff members based upon assessment results and staff members are encouraged to attend outside conferences in their subject area to stay abreast of current educational trends and research. Continual professional development is valued not only by our school, but also by our school division. Our district provides financial support and professional leave to teachers attending Advanced Placement conferences to ensure they are adequately prepared to teach the College Board course at the appropriate level of rigor to foster critical-thinking and students are well-prepared for AP assessments.

In an effort to stay current with the most recent technological advances and instructional programs, technology in-services are frequently presented. HHS has a dedicated Technology Integration Specialist whose primary function is to support our 21st century learning initiative as it relates to preparing our students and utilizing interactive technology to present information and increase student engagement. The TIS researches and presents creative and engaging methods of instructional presentation. In addition, the TIS works collaboratively with teachers to create lessons utilizing technology and co-teaches lessons at request.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) serve as another mode of continuous professional development. Each content area is charged with disaggregating formative and summative assessment data to determine areas of need and specific targeted strategies for addressing identified deficits. During PLC meetings, members are also tasked with sharing at least one best practice and/or strategy that has proven successful or a novel approach that is aligned to the curriculum. In order to facilitate collaboration among all teachers within Hickory High School, the master schedule is developed and implemented with an emphasis towards providing teachers common lunches with the their departments. This allows for vertical and horizontal Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting opportunities during assigned lunch periods. These common lunches also help to foster camaraderie throughout the department. Furthermore, subject areas are scheduled common planning periods, whenever possible, to create the opportunity for regular collaboration.

Finally, we utilize our scheduled in-service days to provide in-house professional development, most often with content that is developed and delivered by our own administration and faculty. In this way, we make use of the talent and expertise within our own building, while spotlighting best practices and teaching excellence.

4. School Leadership:

The Hickory High School administration utilizes a shared decision-making model to empower teachers and to promote a sense of unity and personal involvement in the vision and mission of our school. It is our belief that empowered teachers have a higher self-efficacy and therefore are in the best position to positively impact student achievement. The principal serves as an instructional leader and resource to her staff, providing instructional strategies and innovative opportunities for professional development,

collegiality, and collaboration within and between departments. Open, two-way communication is essential in order to establish authentic and honest relationships built upon mutual respect and trust. Administration communicates to teachers that their knowledge, experience, and dispositions are valued and essential to the overall success of our educational program.

The Hickory High School administration strives to cultivate teacher leaders who are reflective practitioners; our teachers are able to disaggregate various assessment data and identify areas of need, providing tightly aligned instructional activities to increase student mastery and decrease achievement gaps. The leadership team is comprised of administrators, department heads, and key stakeholders and meets monthly to analyze current data, share instructional strategies, and discuss school-wide initiatives.

This year, our strategic goals center around decreasing achievement gaps through personalized instruction, building genuine relationships with students, and increasing enrollment of underrepresented subgroups in honors and AP courses to ensure equity for all students. Our leadership team has identified which subgroups are typically underrepresented in advanced courses. Course requests for the 2017-18 school year were compared against student transcripts to identify students who may be capable of a more rigorous academic plan. The administrative team met individually with select students to encourage students to step outside of their comfort zone and include at least one honors or AP course for the upcoming school year.

Monitoring instruction, both formally and informally, is a critical component of instructional leadership. To that end, the HHS administration frequently conducts formal evaluation and informal classroom observations. Administrators are an integral part of PLC and departmental meetings, both participating in and serving as contributing members, and ensuring alignment with the overall school goals and objectives. Moreover, the master schedule is developed each year bearing in mind teachers' strengths and preferences, while prioritizing student needs. Assessment data, teacher observations, and feedback from students and parents are taken into consideration when determining optimal course placement.

At Hickory High School, we recognize that high achieving students are in the best position to have successful futures. We take a holistic view when defining "achievement", and therefore structure our total educational program to encourage excellence in academics, leadership, school involvement, and community engagement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Hickory High School's administrative plan for continuous improvement utilizes a system of student, teacher, and administrative level data disaggregation to create and modify a matriculation pathway for every student, measure the effectiveness of both student and teacher schedules, examine the compatibility of teachers with course assignments, and determine the impact of positive behavioral interventions and supports on student grades, test scores, and on the reoccurrence of discipline referrals. The disaggregation of the data has proven to be a valuable tool in maintaining and increasing the levels of Hickory High School student academic success as measured by final course grades, standardized test scores, on-time graduation rate, and dropout rate.

Although data disaggregation is a tool utilized by the administration and teachers of Hickory High School, Hickory's students, parents, guardians, faculty, staff, and community members are always viewed as people rather than being seen as the results of an equation. In order to maintain a student-centered perspective, Hickory's school counselors are assigned students by alphabetic placement, which allows counselors to provide consistent guidance to students during their time at Hickory. Furthermore, Hickory faculty members act as mentors for students who are experiencing academic or behavioral challenges. The administrators of Hickory High School all have responsibilities to monitor the academic success and behavior of students based on their grade level. Additionally, the Assistant Principal for Instruction tracks the academic success of students on all grade levels and meets with them to discuss their choices for course requests from year to year. Students who have experienced consistent success in academic level courses are encouraged to increase their choice of course rigor by moving into honors level classes. The same holds true for students who have experienced consistent success on the honors level, they are encouraged to enroll in Advanced Placement courses.

The level of Hickory High School student success in the classroom, on the field, and in the community is well documented. All stakeholder groups consistently work together collaboratively to foster a sense of ownership which creates and is created by a constant multidirectional flow of communication between administration, students, teachers, parents, guardians, and the community at large. This communication flow, along with the emphasis placed on the calculated and purposeful assignment and allocation of academic resources, and the personal outreach of the faculty and staff of Hickory High School to its students places Hickory's students in the best possible position for success.