

U.S. Department of Education
2020 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 Mr. Doug Andrew Payne
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 13250 Kirk Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Olive Branch State MS Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 38654-8481

County Desoto County

Telephone (662) 890-2490 Fax (662) 890-2458

Web site/URL http://www.chhs.desotocountyschools.org E-mail doug.payne@dcsms.org

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Cory Uselton E-mail cory.uselton@dcsms.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name DeSoto County School District Tel. (662) 429-5271

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Milton Nichols
(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.

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

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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. 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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the 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	141	148	289
10	128	134	262
11	131	114	245
12 or higher	114	107	221
Total Students	514	503	1017

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 40.5 % Black or African American
 - 7.2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 50 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 6%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	43
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	60
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	1017
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

Arabic, Hindi, Spanish, Chinese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
27 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36 %

Total number students who qualify: 364

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

108 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.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>24</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>21</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>46</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>6</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	54
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 19:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	93%	92%	93%	93%	93%
High school graduation rate	93%	92%	91%	95%	93%

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 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	242
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	50%
Enrolled in a community college	35%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	10%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
Other	3%

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.

Our school is committed to providing each student with meaningful experiences in a safe environment that enhances a lifelong love of learning, promotes a positive self-concept, encourages responsibility, creativity, individuality, and good citizenship, and regards high expectations of all students as the standard.

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

To borrow from literature,

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair”. Charles Dickens

--those words describe the beginning of Center Hill High School (CHHS) as well the current crisis in our world today...

In 2006, an experienced middle school building principal and a brand new assistant principal along with a number of “green to golden” teachers and staff had the opportunity to build a new school. The community had strong ties to a long established and successful high school already in the Olive Branch area. Desoto County was one of the fastest growing areas in the southeast if not the country. Several publications including “Bloomberg Business Weekly” named the city of Olive Branch, Mississippi the fastest growing city in the nation over the last 20 years. A new high school needed to open to give access to the growing number of residents in the eastern most part of the county and district. There were already five large high schools in the county—four of the five with long and storied histories. There was evidence of resistance to a new school by some of the “old guard” in the area. There was also a desire for a new school by many of those who were moving to this newly developing area of the county. The decision was made to open a school that would serve grades 6-10 the first year with additional grades to be added each year until a middle school was built. That school was the beginning of Center Hill High School. It was not until the 2009-2010 school year that Center Hill High School was indeed a school housing only grades 9-12.

The families represent a wide variety of economic, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. Students and staff have had the opportunity to help set traditions, culture, and climate that expresses our community. We follow the mission of our district, which is to pursue academic excellence in a safe environment and provide for the growth of the “whole” child. This is built into our DNA as a relatively new high school in our district. Expectations are high for all students as they enter high school and this is encouraged at our feeder schools.

“Building Champions for Life,” “Respect The Hill,” and “Be Better Today Than Yesterday,” are all phrases that are consistently spoken and kept in front of students and staff. These phrases lead us all to strive toward excellence and growth on a daily basis. Our staff embrace these ideas in their daily interaction with students, on both an academic and personal level. Identifying our low performing and at-risk students, then pairing them with a mentor is one way that we encourage excellence for all.

Academically, our teachers are relentless as they look for strategies, methods, teaching tools, and resources in order to reach every student. They are also willing to share with each other in order to give all students the best chance for success. It is not uncommon for teachers to work together across content areas to ensure the best opportunities are in place for all students. Fostering collaboration among our teachers has led them to offer after school tutoring and make-up sessions for all students, not just those in their class.

We promote citizenship and engaging with our community for the greater good in many ways. Clubs encourage participation in events/drives such as “Toys for Tots,” “Habitat for Humanity” builds, “Field of Dreams,” “Special Olympics” and many others. Our student/athletes take the opportunity to welcome elementary students in to school from the car rider lines. Students volunteer to help with elementary events such as Grandparent night, STEM night, and Pajamas and Pawns to name a few. Seniors visit the middle school and share secrets for Center Hill High School success with 8th grade students.

Achieving excellence is a work that involves everyone; our staff, our students, and our community are all a part of the success of Center Hill High School. Teachers and students are recognized monthly, clubs interact within our community, coaches support classroom learning, connections are made with our feeder schools, and community entities provide speakers and workshops in several curriculum areas. Center Hill High School expects the best of its family and engages with everyone possible to see that happen.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

The core curriculum at CHHS is based on learning standards. These standards drive the instruction in all curriculum areas. This approach ensures that all students are working toward the same learning goals across the curriculum no matter how the learning is acquired. Our population is quite diverse which requires a diversity of approaches. Teachers use differentiation, direct instruction, real world connections, problem-based learning, performance-based learning, SPED inclusion, “teacher swaps,” and technology-based learning to name some of the methodology at work in the building. There are often opportunities taken to work together with other teachers, both in the same content or across contents in order to make the learning more accessible and meaningful for students. Teachers from each department along with counselor and administrative representatives meet to look at student data for the whole school—identifying low performing students and communicating with all teachers concerning these students—finding ways to close their learning and performing gaps. Teachers also rely on data to drive instruction, utilizing Benchmark assessment data, anecdotal classroom data, classroom performance, and other assessments in a formative sense throughout the term. State testing and final exams provide summative data that is utilized to measure success as well as highlight areas that need attention in the following year or course. This data is reviewed, discussed, and used throughout the year in each content department. District specialists also help teachers understand and apply data in monthly planning meetings.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Standards are in place for all ELA courses. The teachers in the ELA department employ a variety of strategies in their classrooms. The standards are reviewed and used to direct instruction. A remedial freshman English course has been added to provide more instruction in a more intentionally foundational level for those students identified as reading below grade level entering high school. The majority of all sophomores take a year long English class to assist in preparing them for the end-of-year (EOY) assessments while not rushing through the pacing of the standards at the expense of test prep. Planning is done holistically along grade lines, but with vertical attention as well. Pacing is determined at the district level, but daily planning, methods, texts, etc. are left to each teacher. Data is gathered through Benchmark testing, reading proficiency assessments, informal classroom assessments and daily classroom interaction. Our district ELA specialist meets with classroom teachers throughout the year to assist with struggles, questions, adjustments, provide observations, teach example lessons and provide a variety of resources for teachers of all ELA contents. This relationship is a key piece in student and teacher success. New and emerging teachers especially benefit from this relationship, and they attribute it to their growth. Within the entire ELA department there are common focus points, which bind the learning together over all the levels and subjects. Writing is strongly emphasized in all classes by daily writing prompts and creative journaling. Teachers use texts with varying degrees of difficulty in the textbook and provide additional texts for students to read at an appropriate and yet challenging level. For several years, the ninth grade students have read “Night” accompanied by having a holocaust survivor speak. This opportunity vividly brings real life correlation to the literature being read. Teachers include supplemental texts and pair them with extended text to further analysis skills and critical thinking. Within a single unit of study, teachers include a variety of genres, such as primary nonfiction paired with fiction, to enhance learning. Tag team teaching is employed within the department to offer students varied instruction in order to reach all learning styles. Cross curricular teaching is used with the Advanced Placement (AP) Language course utilizing primary documents while reading "The Crucible" to further understanding of The Red Scare/McCarthyism. In the last several years, AP Literature and AP US History were team taught by an ELA and a US History teacher. This served to enhance the learning of the students as well provide a different environment and format for learning. In the Public Speaking, Journalism, and Spanish classes, listening and speaking are widely utilized both in the learning and the assessing portions of the course.

1c. Mathematics

Again, standards are in place for all courses and these are paced out for each course in a way designed to optimize learning. The math department utilizes the College Preparatory Mathematics curriculum for all contents. This incorporates the eight mathematical practices. Their approach to teaching and learning mathematics is based on the three pillars of Problem-Based learning, Collaborative Learning, and Mixed-Space Practices. This curriculum was chosen because it aligns with the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards, promotes literacy in math, and allows for productive struggle. Our Math Department has historically worked well as a team. Teachers have volunteered to move to different contents, to teach remediation courses, to adjust classroom size, and other measures to accommodate the best learning environment for all students. This is one of the strengths of their department. Students work collaboratively in a hands-on-learning environment where learning is student-centered and problem-based. Students are guided through focused questioning that brings old knowledge into connection with new knowledge. Using real-world scenarios also pushes students to make connections and gain deeper understanding for new concepts. This approach fosters the idea that students will gain mastery over time and improves understanding. Students are instructed and assessed in all courses at the same level, regardless of their identified ability. Adjustments are made for extra time, alternate delivery style, etc. with the idea that all students are working to move to the next level, not just sustained at their current level. This approach works toward equity for all. Daily closure is used to assess and confirm the learning for the day. Students use interactive notebooks which help students at all levels summarize the day's learning and create a concise set of notes that can be used as a reference as they progress in future math courses. It is compiled with student input and in the student's language for clearer understanding. Data is used early and often within the math department. Benchmark assessments, weekly assessments, questioning, observation, student presentation and interactive teaching all provide opportunities for formative assessments. This is used as a current measure and way to plan for instruction. Algebra Nation is a resource that tracks mastery by standard, so it is used to give teachers in Algebra and Geometry a "temperature check" on the mastery level of their students. Summative assessments are formatted in the same mixed-space way, assessing foundational skills as well as students' ability to apply math in the real world. Feedback is given in a way that promotes a growth mindset, focusing on the positives that can be improved upon rather than the negatives of inaccuracies or inadequacies.

1d. Science

As in all content areas, standards set the direction for learning. In the sciences we begin with Biology, then offer further courses that provide students the opportunity to pursue course work in several Biology related courses as well as some in Physics and Chemistry. With such a variety of course offerings, the approach is guided by the content and its standards. Our teachers and students have access to a Biology Lab and a Chemistry Lab as well as classrooms that contain demonstration tables. Biology classrooms are focused on student-centered learning with classrooms set up with teams of four to five students for small group discussion. Hands-on review stations and games are done weekly in Biology classes as part of state test preparations. Physical Science class includes many hand-on outdoor activities that bring real world application to the standards. Some of these activities include rocket launchers, hula hoops, corn hole, and trebuchets. A Science Literacy class is offered that works on improving ACT scores by focusing on charts and using practice tests and questions. The Mississippi State Extension department has partnered with our Botany classes and sent a wonderful speaker to enhance the daily instruction. Health and nutrition, Child Development and Biology teachers communicate frequently for cross-curricular content, such as ecology, ecosystems, mitosis, sexual and asexual reproduction, childhood defects genetics and biochemistry. Data is regularly reviewed and used to show areas that need more attention. This data comes from Benchmark and classroom assessments, observation of student work, presentations, and lab work. In the Biology classes which are state tested, teacher made assessments contain formatting that will be seen on the EOY state test. At the end of the semester, a boot camp type approach is used to give students an all inclusive review of the standards assessed on that EOY test.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

All courses in this department have standards in place as well as pacing guides. This puts all students and teachers on the same path and pace. Multiple learning strategies are used in each classroom. The teachers are autonomous in decision-making, but they all have the same goals for their student learning. Technology is utilized in all classrooms in some form. This is one way teachers address all learning styles. Recently, the department has had several younger teachers. They have been very innovative with technology and have taught some of their peers in the department to use some of these programs. Teachers collaborate in several ways. Swapping classrooms to teach in an area of strong content knowledge, providing different points of view on subjects, meeting to discuss standards, working to prepare for the next content in the context of the current content, are all examples of this. The use of primary documents in conjunction with AP English classes strengthens student understanding of these difficult texts. In all courses, students are held accountable to work through the Constitution and to be able to identify the states on a map. This helps to tie all the social studies classes together as a study of history and geography. Civil engagement is encouraged and developed by having students work on projects involving voter participation, voter responsibility, media bias, and party platforms. Students who are of age are given the opportunity here at school to register to vote. They are strongly encouraged to register and then to exercise their right in the next election. This content is sometimes thought of as old and stuffy, but our teachers work to make it engaging, interesting, and challenging. Students often leave these classes with a new appreciation for the connection between the present and the past.

1f. For secondary schools:

This area of development, college and career readiness, is approached on several avenues here at Center Hill. We do have a new course designed to help students navigate many common areas of concern after exiting high school. This course will be a required course for all students in the 2022 graduating class. It is designed and focused on helping students explore all post-secondary educational options and for learning essential life skills for transitioning in to the real world. Some of the components of this course include: writing resumes, filling out applications, preparing for the ACT, preparing for interviews, budgeting for living and educational costs, and many other skills. In all of our content areas as well as our other curriculum areas, teachers work to help students gain an understanding of life after high school. ACT style questions are used as bell work in many classes. In all Geometry classes and our Science Literacy course, students have opportunities to work on improving their ACT with the use of practice tests and reviews. We also offer a competitive PSAT class that addresses high performing students that show potential to become National Merit Finalists. CHHS is an ACT testing site and our district provides all juniors with an opportunity to take the ACT at school at no cost. Our district has two career technical campuses in place. Students at CHHS have an opportunity to apply for study in Logistics, Health Science, Law and Public Safety, Industrial Maintenance, or Informational Technology. These are all two year courses and provide students with opportunities to prepare for internships, engage in clinicals, receive various certifications and explore these options for their future.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Center Hill High School offers a variety of non-content courses that give students the ability to follow interests and talents outside the tested areas. Our Fine Arts department includes several choral groups, marching band, a concert band, drama classes, and art classes from beginner to AP levels. These classes are all part of the regular school day with the choral and band classes meeting all year. Our marching band has consistently scored well enough to participate in the state competition each year. This past year placing at the highest rank in school history. The band program has grown to include Indoor Winds Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Color Guard Team, and Winter Guard Team. Our choirs have expanded to include beginning choir, advanced mixed choir, a men's choir, and a select women's choir. Their drive toward excellence is unmatched. This year our Select Women were selected to perform at the American Choral Directors Association Regional Conference in Mobile, Alabama. They were selected as one of 20 choirs chosen from over 100 applicants. This is only the fifth time a Mississippi high school has been selected for

this honor. They were also selected to perform at the 2015 and 2019 state conferences as well as at several other state conferences. The drama classes learn about and perform at least one production each year. Each year the students and/or director have been nominated for The Allie Awards in DeSoto County, competing with all area schools and local community theaters. The visual arts classes at all levels develop the talent of our students. Some students progress to AP classes, submitting portfolios for college credit. The artwork of students is often on display in the halls, the library, and even adding inspirational murals in the restrooms of the school. Our PE classes provide opportunities for students to become more fit and our athletic classes provide opportunities for students to pursue a variety of sports at the high school level. Within each sport, coaches and players work to achieve a championship mentality through hard work, dedication, sacrifice, and team play. The benefits of a strong athletic program reach further than the participants and on to all of the student body. In our young tenure of competition, our teams have won a number of state championships in a variety of sports, including Basketball, Dance, Golf, Soccer, Tennis, Track, and Volleyball. In our Health, Food/Nutrition, Resource Management, Child Development, and Family Dynamics classes, the focus is on practical application of lessons for daily living now and as adults. In the Child Development class, there is a component known as the “Baby Project” which allows a student to take home a simulation baby for one night to learn a little more about parenting. Our Health and Child Development teachers cooperate to teach an abstinence-based sex education curriculum. In our Food/Nutrition and Resource Management classes, students learn about farm to table beginning with our CHHS farm. On our campus, these classes feed, water, and harvest all types of produce grown in greenhouses and outdoor gardens. The instructor has written numerous grants and has been recognized locally, regionally, and nationally as a leader in her content area. She brings all of these resources together and gives students truly hands-on lessons from tending crops, to caring for the small animals also located in our garden area, to cooking and serving meals. She incorporates the science behind nutrition and consistently models and encourages sound ecologically productive practices. She was selected as our Teacher of the Year for 2019-2020. Our foreign languages are included in our ELA department. We offer a Technology Foundations course that is required for graduation in which students learn to key as well as explore the Microsoft suite. Yearbooks and a daily news segment are produced in media classes and are another way that students learn, access, and use technology. All of these courses are viewed with the same perspective as academic content courses. The expectation for excellence is apparent in the planning, the teaching and learning, and in the product, which is well rounded young people prepared for their future.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

When 8th grade students begin making course selections for entering high school, the counselors, appropriate administrator and pertinent personnel review students' grades, scores on standardized testing, and teacher input for those students not performing on grade level. As other new students enter CHHS, attention is given to incoming transcripts, records and input from the student's current school. These “gate keepers” help schedule students in classes designed to assist the struggling learner when appropriate. We have changed the course progression in three of our content areas to address our concern for students that are performing below grade level. We have added a compensatory English class to precede English 9. Most 10th grade students take a yearlong set for English 10. We have utilized a foundational course to precede Biology and a compensatory course to precede Foundations to Algebra to address this concern. Data also gives teachers insight in to the deficits that may cause their students to struggle. Teachers are encouraged to differentiate instruction, seek outside resources, utilize the district instructional specialists, and provide extra time and attention to those students that are working to gain ground, academically. Opportunities are provided for after school tutoring and time to make up work. Peer tutors are also used to assist struggling learners. A team including an administrator, counselors, and a cross section of teachers meet to look at data points and behaviors that may help us to understand how to grow these struggling and at risk learners.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Again, when students enter CHHS as freshmen or in other grades, attention is given to their grades, transcripts, test scores, performance levels, and teacher input to provide those students who are performing above grade level with appropriate and challenging opportunities. Accelerated and advanced classes are

offered in all contents. AP classes are taught in US History, Government, English, Art, and Spanish, taking students to a deeper and richer understanding of the content while preparing them for the AP exam and the potential for college credit. AP courses in Science and Mathematics are available through an online course. Thanks to a partnership with Northwest Community College and Delta State University, dual credit courses are available. High achieving students can build college hours while meeting high school requirements in a variety of course offerings. Students take the PSAT in order to meet requirements for taking a PSAT class that is structured to advance learning and promote participation in the National Merit Scholars program. It is a rigorous course, co-taught by three teachers from different disciplines that is college preparatory in every way. We count a number of semi-finalists and finalists in our graduated students. Scholarship is encouraged with opportunity for students to be inducted in to a variety of honors organizations. We have active chapters of Beta Club, the National Honor Society, and Mu Alpha Theta. Mu Alpha Theta students compete in local and regional mathematic competitions. Honor graduates are recognized as Graduates of Distinction or Graduates of Special Distinction.

3c. Special education

An inclusion approach is used to accommodate students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Teachers push in to regular education classes to assist students as needed. The goal is to encourage general education teacher and special education (SPED) teacher relationships by fostering a co-teaching atmosphere. Inclusion teachers share classrooms with content teachers to facilitate this relationship. SPED teachers are included in departmental meetings as well to encourage this team approach to student learning. This style of partnership led to the recognition that a particular student did not perform well on a state test administered via technology, but tested better with a paper/pencil application. This student was afforded the opportunity as a retester to take the test on paper and was then successful. Last year, a math inclusion teacher held a “bootcamp” for IEP students prior to taking the Algebra state test. She collaborated with content teachers and provided students with small group test prep. This proved to be a successful idea. Working through a partnership with the Mississippi Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, we have exposed students with disabilities to an abundance of resources offered through the agency. These include opportunities for training and employment during and after high school. We strive for an “all-inclusive” environment that encourages acceptance of all. Our Interact Club members attend Special Olympic events with our community based students. We have school wide awareness days and theme dress days to heighten acceptance including Down Syndrome Awareness and Autism Awareness. Students with IEPs are involved in athletics, band, choir, drama, and many clubs and organizations on campus. Our video production teacher took a student under her wing, recognized a talent he possessed, and approved him to register for her class in video production. He will not graduate with a traditional diploma, but he will complete high school as a productive member of the graduating class.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

We have a number of English Language Learners in our student body. Several languages and ethnicities are represented, but Spanish and Arabic are the leading languages of origin. Recently our district began offering an EL class for identified students and we have two yearlong sections taught at CHHS. Students are identified for this class through the Home Language Survey completed at registration. Often these students are the primary English speakers in their families, so communication is difficult. Our district also has on staff several translators to assist in school/family communications. In the EL class, students work toward language acquisition for academic classes as well as personal use. Students are also screened and assessed yearly to determine the progress they are making in all four domains of language development: listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as comprehension. The EL teacher works with these students in small classes to assist, instruct, develop and prepare them for their course work as well as daily life. Collaboration with classroom teachers is paramount to the students’ success as they work to assimilate here in this new place, new home, new environment, new school setting, etc. A good number of our current students have recently moved to America and/or Mississippi which presents a daunting set of challenges. This class and the willingness of teachers and students to work together with EL students is helping them to be successful. Just recently, one of our young men, newly arrived from Yemen, was named as the student of the month. One of the factors in his selection was his obvious willingness to help other EL students understand “the ropes” that he had already mastered.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At CHHS, it is all about relationships. Students are greeted each morning by a variety of staff throughout the building, teachers greet students at their door at class changes, and teachers see students out of the building each day. We work to be a close-knit community that has great structure in place to enable stability and growth for all. Our students help each other regardless of background, differences, and disabilities, which is not the norm at all high schools. Students are recognized each month as the Student of the Month; this selection comes through teacher nominations for students who go above and beyond in a variety of ways. A number of clubs that encourage participation in activities and interests include chess, photography, STEM, school spirit, journalism, government, career exploration, travel, Physics, and community service. An Honor Roll breakfast is held each nine weeks to honor students for academic success. We currently have over 20 athletic teams. The coaches and sponsors of these teams build lasting relationships with students. Coaches encourage and support academics with strong policies on academic progress. One or more student/athletes is recognized each month for outstanding performance in their sport. Meet The Mustang events introduce student/athletes three times each year. Students are recognized each year at Awards Day programs for their accomplishments in academics, citizenship, and attendance. Students who score a 30 or above on any section of the ACT are honored by having their name painted on a prominent wall display in the main commons. Students who are recognized as National Merit Semi-Finalists and Finalists have their senior portrait hung in a main hall. Each year seniors apply and are selected to be in the Hall of Fame. Bronze plaques, bearing each year's recipients, are hung in a main hall. All of these elements work together to produce an environment that is about students. This is shown with two clear examples. Our current staff includes several CHHS graduates students who have chosen to become educators and have chosen to return to their alma mater to impact students as they have been impacted. The second example is the number of former students who come back to CHHS to visit, get moral/emotional support, report their successes, catch up with former teachers, introduce their families, get academic help for college, and just to let us know the impact we have had on their life.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

CHHS recognizes the importance of the larger community of parents, families, industry, local business, institutions of higher learning (IHL), and more. Beginning with entering freshmen, communication is established with our Freshman Orientation night. Early in the fall, all upcoming freshmen and their parents are encouraged to attend this event that serves as an orientation to CHHS. Student Council members give tours and helpful hints. Administrators hold sessions to set the tone for a successful high school career. Counselors and academic area teachers provide sessions about course selections, expectations, parental concerns, graduation, and daily life for a high school student. Communication continues with parental access to the grades, attendance, and discipline information for their student via PowerSchool. Teachers have the ability through School Status to contact parents through text, phone calls, and email. An auto dialing system allows the school to send important information out in a quick manner. Our school webpage is up-to-date and accessible with information, teacher webpages, contact information, athletic schedules, and recognition of students. Parent volunteers provide assistance at athletic events, fine art events, school wide drives, and always answer the call when needed. Each year, we recognize a "Parent of the Year" to thank a well-deserving parent for their efforts here at CHHS. Local companies sponsor different athletic teams and are recognized for their support with banners and "Sponsor Appreciation Nights." Partnerships with nearby institutions of higher learning bring college recruiters on campus regularly to encourage and assist students. Get2College comes to campus and sets up Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) days to assist parents in that process. Recruiters from several branches of the military also set up on campus to assist and encourage students. Our local Army National Guard recruiters are very active with our students and help to administer the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) for interested Juniors each year. The Science Club has an ongoing recycling project that is environmentally sound and allows them to contribute to a local recycling center. Outstanding seniors are recognized at monthly Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce meetings. Through involvement in clubs, our students volunteer with several non-profits, including Field of Dreams, Ronald McDonald House, St. Jude, DeSoto Grace and other entities. The Interact

Club started Mighty Mustang Meals-providing “take home” meals to student families in our community that are in need. Our Twitter presence is strong and has quite a large following. #RespectTheHill is “our” hashtag and it frames our culture.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

CHHS develops professionally through collaboration. Teachers readily help their coworkers in their area of expertise. Departments meet for Professional Learning Communities to reflect, review, and respond to student needs. Department Chairs work together to assist in bridging gaps across the curriculum. Technology teacher helps peers who struggle in that domain. Art teachers help when events, classrooms, and projects need an artistic hand. These examples of collaboration occur within the regular daily life of CHHS. Each summer, our teachers prepare a New Teacher Orientation for incoming teachers. Teachers who are brand new, or who are new to Center Hill spend most of a day with seasoned teachers who engage in sessions about expectations, tips, procedures and more to begin building community. These new teachers are assigned at least one mentor teacher who will be able to guide them as they navigate their first year here at the Hill. Scheduled “check-in” meetings allow the new teachers to ask questions and receive feedback in small non-threatening environments. Every month a teacher is named “Teacher of the Month” by the administrative team. Each year, all teachers vote to select the “Teacher of the Year.” These recognition opportunities build professionalism and encourage teachers. The administration seeks input from teachers throughout the year on a number of topics. Staff meetings include professional development themes including parent communication, classroom expectations, discussion of the code of ethics, and other topics that identify professional behaviors. The belief that teachers are the single most important factor in a child’s educational success is spoken often. This fosters confidence and pushes teachers to excel. School wide support days for teachers who are actively going through radiation/chemotherapy treatments have been organized by teachers. Potluck staff meetings encourage a positive staff interaction. Prayer requests for teachers going through difficult times indicate sincere concern for one another. By creating a family, we create a professional culture that is strong and will support coworkers through any hardships they encounter.

4. School Leadership:

School administration supports teachers and staff, which raises morale and productivity. Administrators set high standards for themselves, teachers and students. Hard work is recognized, and if mistakes are made, help and resources are made available to create a learning experience, which makes for even stronger staff. Administrators listen to teachers. When concerns are brought forward, discussions take place. Administrators seek input from departments about decisions that directly affect the learning/teaching/productivity of the department before making major decisions and changes. Current teachers are often included in the interview process. Teacher input is valued. All teachers new and seasoned are supported, cultivated, and developed. Administrators are available to talk through both academic and personal issues that are affecting performance and/or morale. “The support the administration provides (in my opinion) is one of the most amazing parts of working at this school. I am not scared to try, because if I mess up, then I won’t be belittled, but instead taught how to do things correctly and set back on my feet to try again.” This quote from a current CHHS teacher indicates the level of support extended to the staff. By making teachers feel that they can reach for the stars, confidence is gained, and teachers are successful at affecting student achievement. Several teachers are also leading in their fields. Several have led ACT prep workshops in other districts. One has spoken at a national conference. Several have participated in writing test items for state tests. Some have also served on various committees at the district and state level. Administrators are available to students as well. At least one administrator is in attendance at the vast majority of school athletic, fine art, and academic events. Students recognize this presence and are encouraged to know the administrators care about them. Administrators seek input from students as well. The Student Council and the principal work very closely to make decisions about student life. Spirit day themes, selection of the cover for the student agenda, scheduling pep rallies, graduation dress code, and other decisions include student input. The administrators are “present” during the school day in the halls, commons, cafeteria and at the buses. Administrators give comments at induction ceremonies, athletic signing events, Honor Roll breakfasts, and other events that recognize student achievement. The administrative team sets expectations high and works to support teachers and students as they strive toward those expectations.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Center Hill High School encompasses a diverse population. Students come to us with differing abilities, educational backgrounds, ethnicities, socio-economic status, motivation, interests, and potential, but we embrace that in our community at the Hill. We accept it as a most worthy challenge. It sounds so simple, but we repeatedly make decisions based on “what is best for students” and that has led to our school’s consistently outstanding performance. It has been in our DNA from the beginning as a grades 6-10 school: we ran three different bell schedules, divided the grades by wings, and managed two different athletic schedules for our population...because that was what was best for students. We meet the students where they are, then team up and work together to deliver what they need. We are a family and we bring the students into our family no matter how they come to us. We do not seek always to follow the crowd. We are driven by our desire to make a difference and prepare students to be productive and successful after graduation, no matter what path they choose. It is not about the curriculum, the method, the technology, or the strategy. It is about the mentality and expectation that all of our students deserve our best efforts. We build relationships. We “see” our students, which helps us to “know” our students, which helps us make decisions, and act in a way that benefits them. We had a teacher leave unexpectedly during the year. The teachers worked together to provide lessons, learning opportunities, guidance, and support for a substitute teacher for weeks. In a class designed for re-testing students, it was recognized that they were being ill-prepared for their upcoming state test. Under administrative guidance, content teachers used their planning blocks to plan, teach, and provide resources for those students. They were successful on the state test. This effort for students’ success is a daily behavior. Teachers communicate early and often when students are struggling. Students communicate with staff when students are hurting. All of these behaviors point to the fact that we focus on student success and how to positively affect that outcome. #RespectTheHill is not just our hashtag. We have respect for all: cafeteria, custodial, and support staff, as well as teachers and administrators. Through this respect, we model for our students how to be respectful which builds a strong foundation for learning here at the Hill.