U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal <u>Mrs. Arlene Wallace</u>
                 (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name <u>Mayo High For Math, Science & Technology</u>
                 (As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address <u>405 Chestnut Street</u>
                 (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City <u>Darlington</u>   State <u>SC</u>   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) <u>29532-5211</u>

County <u>Darlington County</u>

Telephone <u>(843) 398-2650</u>   Fax <u>(843) 398-2647</u>

Web site/URL <u>http://mhs.dcsdschools.org/</u>   E-mail <u>Arlene.Wallace@darlington.k12.sc.us</u>

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*<u> Dr. Timothy Newman</u>   E-mail<u> Timothy.Newman@darlington.k12.sc.us</u>
                 (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name <u>Darlington School District 01</u>   Tel. <u>(843) 398-5100</u>

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 <u>Mr. Warren Jeffords</u>
                 (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, leave blank.

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.

5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.

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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

1. Number of schools in the district   10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   4 Middle/Junior high schools
                                        4 High schools
                                        1 K-12 schools

                                        19 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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
   [X] Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

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	44	58	102
10	36	65	101
11	27	39	66
12 or higher	34	36	70
Total Students	141	198	339

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
   the school (if unknown, estimate): 2.9 % Asian
                                      32.1 % Black or African American
                                      2.1 % Hispanic or Latino
                                      0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                      55.5 % White
                                      7.4 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 2%

   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 *to* the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	316
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

   Spanish, Japanese, Mandarin, Tigrinya, Urdu, Gujarati

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

                                                    11 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

   Total number students who qualify: 339

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %

                                                            11 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

1 Autism	0 Multiple Disabilities
0 Deafness	0 Orthopedic Impairment
0 Deaf-Blindness	2 Other Health Impaired
0 Developmental Delay	7 Specific Learning Disability
0 Emotional Disturbance	0 Speech or Language Impairment
0 Hearing Impairment	0 Traumatic Brain Injury
0 Intellectual Disability	1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 21

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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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   15:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	98%	96%	95%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	99%	100%	100%

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 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	64
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	84%
Enrolled in a community college	12%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	4%
Other	0%

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

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.   2013

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

The mission of Mayo is to achieve excellence through a challenging curriculum with high expectations in a safe, positive environment to develop future leaders.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

For the 2020-2021 school year, we used three models. We opened with virtual/online, moved to a hybrid model, and are currently completely in-person.

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

Mayo students are selected according to test performance, grades, teacher recommendations, and a personal essay. Each criterion is given a different numerical value, and a minimum score must be obtained in order for the student to be deemed eligible for the random selection process. The selection of candidates is based on the number of available slots in each grade level.

PART III - SUMMARY

Our school provides a challenging curriculum with high expectations in a safe, positive environment to develop future leaders. Our school is a countywide public magnet secondary school with a STEAM focus in math, science, arts, and technologies and enhanced courses in the humanities. We offer driven students strong academic and extracurricular opportunities to achieve. We have a 100% graduation rate, with 97% of the Class of 2020 pursuing a post-secondary degree. Between 2017-2020, graduates received $47.7 million in scholarship offers. Our student achievements are also our school successes as we have been ranked fifth in the state with overall SAT scores and first in the state with graduation rate and report card ratings. We have also earned national and state accolades that include rankings among the top high schools in the nation according to US News & World Report, America's Best High Schools Bronze and Silver Awards six years in a row, a 2013 National Blue Ribbon, and a 2018 Palmetto's Finest School Award.

As we are located in a mostly rural school district with our economic base consisting of various agricultural resources including soybeans, cotton, and tobacco. Other employment opportunities for our school's population range from trade to government to fast food to manufacturing.

Although the students have diverse backgrounds and economic challenges, our faculty values every child and remains committed to individual student educational success. To deepen their commitment to education, the majority of our twenty-two teachers pursued advanced training beyond initial certification. Almost 85% hold advanced degrees. Seven teachers hold Advanced Placement endorsements and four obtained National Board Certification. We also have four former/current District Teacher of the Year and one State Honor Roll teacher.

While students come to our school from economically challenged and diverse environments, they are surrounded by a faculty committed to the educational success of each child. Among the twenty-two classroom teachers, almost 85% hold advanced degrees. Four teachers are National Board Certified and seven hold Advanced Placement endorsement. One faculty member is a State Honor Roll Teacher, and four are former/current District Teachers of the Year.

Once students qualify with test scores, grades, teacher recommendations, and a personal essay, they enter our lottery with final acceptance based on the number of available slots per grade level. With academic growth a priority, we foster academic success through data team analysis of formative/summative assessments and longitudinal data from all 9-11th graders' results on PSAT and Pre-ACT. Our strongest qualification is how the faculty works together for the success of all students, no matter their level/ability. While applicants have been successful in math and science, there is no English/Reading subtest requirement. Some students read below grade level; however, individual improvement plans, tutoring, formative skills-building, and best practices in scaffolding information enable student growth.

We foster student success through two innovative programs. In Academic Advising, each teacher advises/mentors one student group from their 9-12th grade. The second program, Phoenix Phocus, provides tutorial strategy sessions/practice for ACT/SAT, real-world sessions stressing life/career skills, and Digital Citizenship modules promoting safe digital practices.

There are also approximately 25 different clubs and organizations available for students to join. Student-athletes can participate in their attendance zone school. We maintain our connection to the community through events like Community Thanksgiving/Christmas luncheons, food and blood drives, Earth Day clean-up campaign, community garden, career fair, Veteran's Day ceremony, breast cancer awareness and Relay for Life fundraisers, SPC Credit Union Reality Fair, and band/choir performances.

Students, parents, staff, and the community work together to create a positive school community committed to the development of the whole student. We promote positive behavior with our school dress code and recognize our students in the announcements for their good deeds. Our honor code instills such trust in the student body that they leave unattended backpacks and pocketbooks in our courtyard during assemblies. New during COVID-19 is our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program, using confidential surveys and

teacher referrals to provide students with coping mechanisms for the changes brought on by the pandemic.

When COVID-19 hit, we left school on a Friday and in 48 hours converted to a full virtual platform. Though challenged, staff and students completed the school year, anticipating a new year where we could gather together, business as usual. However, COVID-19 brought a new normal with three different teaching platforms this year: completely virtual, hybrid, and face-to-face instruction. Students and teachers now viewed class through computer screens or safety shields on tables and desks. Required masks inhibited speaking and performing arts skills while the need for sanitized equipment affected everything from labs to PE activities. Undeterred, teachers established uniform practices in our online learning management system. "Best practices" staff development sessions became "Best Online Practices" tutorials. All school employees, students, and parents learned how to participate in video conferences. It became business as usual, COVID-style. To say we were thinking outside the box is an understatement. No one would willingly step onto the Titanic knowing the outcome. However, when our teachers and administration found ourselves on what could have been the educational Titanic, we became educational engineers who reinvented instruction while continuing to invest in the whole student and supporting each other during this trying time.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

All students must take a class in the core curriculum subjects for all four years. The English college prep (CP) curriculum covers world literature plus American and British literature with test preparation for a state English II end-of-the-course test and ACT/SAT their junior or senior year. Honors students follow the same curriculum on an accelerated schedule, freeing them to take Advanced Placement (AP) English Language or Dual Credit English for college credit their senior year. Math follows a similar CP pattern with Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Algebra III, or Probability and Statistics. Honors classes finish with AP Calculus or Dual Credit College Math. The Social Studies Department sequence is the same for CP and Honors with appropriate differentiation: Geography, World History, U.S. History, and Government/Economics. Honors students can take AP U.S. History. Our science department supports our STEM focus with offerings for both CP and Honors students: Physical Science, Biology I and II, Chemistry I and II, Physics I and II, Anatomy & Physiology, Environmental Biology Dual Credit, and Aerospace Engineering.

Prior to March 2020, teachers used a mix of paper and online assignments for formative and summative assessments. Teachers used MasteryConnect to house data that informed instructional decisions. Lessons focused on End-of-course (EOC) or ACT/SAT preparation. Teachers used online applications that refined standards-based assignments. Since March 2020, faculty members have adapted to online learning, addressing student growth and promoting college/career readiness and scholarships. We have used three different operating schedules since September 2020-completely virtual, hybrid, and now full-time face-to-face. Each schedule required various adaptations. While fully virtual, teachers met with students daily via Zoom to provide instructional content. While hybrid, many teachers taught students face-to-face and via Zoom during the same class period. Through Zoom, teachers conducted whole group learning and small group breakout sessions. We even used Zoom meetings for parent conferences.

To adapt to online learning, additional technology resources have been used such as USA TestPrep, Quizizz, Quizlet, EdPuzzle, and Nearpod to engage students during distance learning while promoting formative online interactive participation and emphasizing prioritized standards. Schoology, our learning management system, now houses all student work and resources, and the faculty established uniform protocols for posting student work, resources, and links to assessments to avoid any confusion in the expectations on the virtual and in-person side. Assessments changed somewhat from prior years. Assessments with distance learning have focused more on students applying their knowledge rather than merely recalling information. For example, to address problem-based and collaborative learning virtually, science teachers replaced hand-on labs with virtual labs, and all subject areas used video breakout rooms for discussions. All teachers received training in EdPuzzle to convert explicit instruction, lectures, and slide shows into interactive videos requiring online student responses. Data from these formative activities inform weekly instruction. Data teams that meet bi-monthly to evaluate student progress and provide curriculum support for student growth.

All course instruction and assignments align with the South Carolina Academic Standards. AP and Dual Credit courses align with College Board standards or the college's provided syllabus. District benchmarks assess the EOC courses along with pre-and post-assessments for core courses. Essential Questions/objectives are posted daily in each classroom via whiteboard, projector, or Schoology and align with the South Carolina Academic Standards. Every teacher utilizes MasteryConnect, which provides trackers aligned with the state standards. These trackers are divided into quartiles measuring student mastery of skills or concepts. Non-EOC courses also have rigorous standards-based assessments in MasteryConnect. This pre-and post-test system allows the teacher and administration to track growth in the learning standards and adjust or personalize learning for students.

Faculty also analyze MAP reading and math scores and pre-ACT and PSAT data to design Phoenix Phocus tutorials based on the subtest score ranges. In a semester, students rotate through the sub-test areas for tutoring. Core and specialty area teachers work in teams and oversee tutorials for specific subtests, providing students with skills-building strategies/practice in order to grow. This also supports the school goal of having all seniors scholarship eligible.

Instructional approaches include the following. Differentiated instruction is in all content areas with practices that target skills level. Scaffolding and strategies are assigned based on students' individualized instructional needs. Higher-level assignments are assigned when mastery is shown. Students can return to teachers for additional help or tutoring daily before lunch or after school. Online students can also schedule Zoom conferences with teachers. Two honor societies offer math and writing labs as support as well. Math and Science address problem-based learning with construction apps, while Social Studies and English have "breakout" rooms similar to live escape rooms where students must problem-solve in order to leave the online area. Explicit instruction occurs during in-person and live zoom meetings and posted videos in Schoology serve as built-in resources that are accessible as needed.

Technology-based support for students and staff comes in a variety of ways. Our Digital Transformation Team (DTT) provides staff development to teachers for Google Basics, Schoology, MasteryConnect, Apple devices, and their applications, and other Ed-tech tools. Teachers implement these resources in daily learning and instruction in classrooms. Our tech wizard provides students and teachers with "help desk" support online and on campus.

Teachers use summative and formative assessments to analyze and improve student performance. Formative assessments include pop quizzes, quizzes, homework, Kahoot games, exit tickets, bellwork, discussion questions, surveys, reflections, science labs, music rehearsals, video or audio submissions of performance or foreign language skills for feedback, peer evaluations offering one thing to improve and one example of mastery, USATestPrep, Edpuzzles, Google Drive assignments, and MasteryConnect assignments. Summative assessments include unit tests, research projects, performance assessments, essays, final and mid-term exams, standardized tests, finalized student products in Computer Science and Media production, and science projects. For each unit, students complete pre-and post-tests to measure student achievement.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

Our curriculum supports college and career readiness. We offer Advanced Placement and Dual Credit classes that include Teacher Cadet, Ecology, Anatomy, Psychology, and English/Math. These courses provide students with college-level experiences and college credit. In addition, each year, at least 3-4 of our Teacher Cadets participate in the Teaching Fellows interview process. We also offer Aerospace Engineering in partnership with Boeing and Project Lead the Way. The senior internship provides seniors with opportunities to intern with local businesses. Since science and technology are the fastest growing industries, we provide STEAM-based instruction in relation to local industry. Our partnerships with local industries emphasize current trends and skills needed for the workforce and our partnership with the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics provides future engineering students. This provides students with field experience and connects them with local businesses. We also have a Model United Nations (MUN) that emphasizes global awareness and issues as our student group simulates diplomatic relationships for an assigned country by developing skills in public relations, critical thinking, research, conflict mediation, and information processing. Every two years, our Globetrotters take Europe by storm with summer trips through various countries, exposing students to global awareness and promoting cultural appreciation and global learning as they communicate and navigate new areas outside of our county. Reality Fair with SPC Credit Union is an informative economics session where seniors explore personal financing options as they visit various booths that tempt students to spend their funds and maintain a balanced budget. Additionally, all juniors participate in WIN testing, a standardized test of employability skills. Employers use WIN when hiring. Each year, our students earn WIN credit. Students meeting career and college readiness district standards earn a graduation honor cord.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Science Department, in partnership with the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, houses a supplemental college engineering program, ACCELERATE. Since classes are online, no COVID-19 adaptations were necessary. The department's Environmental Club sponsors a community garden and hosts an annual Earth Day clean-up event. Masks are required at these events.

Students must also earn one visual/performing art graduation credit, which supports our STEAM focus. Visual arts students compete in the state/national Beta Club competitions, and past students have won local Art in Business and district Christmas card competitions. Vocal students can participate in our extracurricular show choir and jazz band. Although COVID-19 prevents concerts/performances, past events include local performances, school concerts, and competitions. Drama students presented Veteran's Day and Black History programs and prepared annual student-led productions, one of which garnered a performance invitation to an Edinburgh international drama festival. To ensure COVID-19 safety protocols, the art teacher provided take-home art kits. All classes are socially distant for safety. During COVID-19, drama students used breakout rooms to perform improvised scenes.

Students earn one PE/Health Education credit for graduation with upper-level PE credits available. COVID-19 protocols prevent students from re-using shared un-sanitized equipment. So, individual sports, fitness skills, and group sports using individual equipment replaced team sports with shared equipment. Students learn rules and skills with a focus on personal health, fitness, and flexibility.

Graduation/SC colleges require 1-2 years of foreign language, although the department provides a 4-year program. Adapted lessons provide online practices through Quizlet and Quizizz vocabulary programs and proficiency-based skills in Mango Languages. They assess pronunciation/spoken performance skills through audio/video files. Students record their information at home due to school mask requirements.

We also emphasize career/technology education. Students are 1:1 with MacBooks, with all technology/career programs available online. COVID-19 did not affect the availability or use of these programs. Programs/activities include Digital Media, Fundamentals of Computing, Hour of Code, and Future Business Leaders of America. The recently added AP Computer Science offers college credit for students once they obtain the target scores on their computer science portfolio and standardized assessments. Our career specialist regularly provides students with tools/assessments to research careers. While generally designated for ACT strategies, Phoenix Phocus tutorials also include Digital Citizenship online modules. Tutorials also offer work and real-world workshops that teach students life skills such as email etiquette, interview skills, tire changes, laundry methods, and check writing protocol.

The school also has monthly extracurricular activities, clubs, and honor societies covering varied interests like knitting, chess, drama, and science fiction. Honor societies have service hour requirements/service projects. Extracurriculars include Class Ring and Prom Committees, Student Council, and Academic Challenge. The COVID-19 modifications included conducting virtual meetings, incorporating in-person and virtual students, using Schoology for all announcements, requirements, activities, monthly service hours electronic submissions, and modifying service requirements to include low/no contact participation such as health care worker thank you letters, food/clothing donation drives, and porch deliveries to shut-ins.

3. Academic Supports:

Our students do not come to the school at the same level or with the same abilities. While requiring successful math/science scores, there is no English/Reading subtest requirement. Some students are not at grade level; however, individual student improvement plans, one-on-one tutoring after school, formative assessments targeting individual weaknesses, and best practices in scaffolding information enable all students to achieve success. Online resources like IXL, USATestPrep, and MAP testing are used for advancement or remediation. Students performing above level pursue Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit courses.

Teachers continuously tailor teaching strategies to ensure that individuals reach their full potential. Knowing that every student learns differently, we customize our instruction to meet the students'

needs. Programs such as Phoenix Phocus groups and Junior virtual ACT workshops allow our students to receive extra testing strategies and practice. Support resources such as ReadTheory.org, NoRedInk, and Quill deliver outlets for students to refine writing skills and improve Lexile reading and comprehension levels. Teachers also monitor student performance with data assembled from each standardized pretest group. New to this year, our after-school tutoring program provides services to counteract the "COVID slide," or loss of skills during quarantine.

An Academic Coach provides itinerant or scheduled assistance for students with IEPs or 504 plans. The Academic Coach then shares accommodations with teachers for shared student success. Based on their tested achievement levels, our English Language Learners (ELLs) do not need daily support; however, if needed, teachers work with the student and/or contact the ELL coordinator for strategies and accommodations. With these provisions in place, students can successfully reach beyond the familiar and embrace learning at more rigorous levels. As with all students, determining their strengths and weaknesses and meeting them at their point of need benefits both teacher and student to ensure achievement and mastery.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Our school is truly a one-of-a-kind school and environment where we pride ourselves on maintaining high standards and expectations. Our reputation precedes us, and students know before they set foot on campus what is expected of them. We believe that students behave and act differently when they are held to higher standards. To kick off each school year, students are told on day one, "You are writing your resume every day." We encourage professionalism, pride in oneself, and lifelong lessons on manners and how to conduct themselves as ladies and gentlemen. Respect is instilled and exhibited throughout their four-year tenure, where faculty, staff, other students, and community members show their regard for each other and the facilities. Our students are proud to attend our school.

As a faculty, we believe that students will rise to the expectation that is set for them. We set the bar high and our students often exceed our expectations. We use individualized student improvement plans, differentiated learning strategies, one-on-one tutoring (before and after school), peer tutoring, pre-and post-assessments, and formative assessments that help target and identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student to meet them at their point of need.

As a school, we work hard and play hard. Many programs/activities have been implemented to holistically engage our students, i.e., Phoenix Phocus groups (academics), the Heart of the Phoenix and Hall of Fame, Music Department concerts, Academic Renaissance programs, Drama presentations, Academic Banquet, and Field Day. We provide positive incentives for academic achievements with the generosity of parents and community members. Birthdays and Honor-Roll achievements are recognized; as well as star students, those outstanding students who have gone above and beyond, whether in the classroom or the community. Whether it is through snack breaks, cupcakes, or just a "shout out", students know they are the motivating factor behind all that is constructive and affirmative, spotlighting the reason we are a family.

Our school maintains constant communication with faculty, staff, students, parents, and the community through the use of Schoology, Remind, Email, School Connect Messages, and various other platforms. Over the past year, many modifications have had to be fine-tuned in order to remain academically consistent, but safe. We have continued to provide an enriched family environment that supports the students' academic and emotional needs.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At our school, we feel that it takes a village to educate a child. Interacting with stakeholders and investors inside and outside our classrooms makes for a strong bond among parents, community members, and businesses. The Academic Booster Club and School Improvement Council meetings pave the way for communication and incentives that enhance our student educational achievements, and spotlight community affairs that enrich the foundation of our school.

We have annual career fairs that include our alumni speakers, as well as parents, community members, and business partners, including Georgia Pacific and our local Army recruiter. Since field trips are no longer an option due to the pandemic, we have taken advantage of virtual field trips through businesses such as our local DHEC office. Parents and community members and professionals such as professors, chiropractors, engineers (all types), nurses, doctors, and tree farmers have also come into the classroom as guest speakers to share their expertise and experiences.

Prior to COVID-19, we had an annual fundraising event, which incorporated many of our parents, local businesses, and community members through sponsorship. This event provides scholarships for our students and funds many other student programs. Our school also sought help from the non-profit group, DonorsChoose, and received a grant that provided necessary supplies for several of our students who faced extreme needs during the pandemic, including home displacement and homelessness.

COVID-19 has caused us to explore new avenues for continuing to foster the relationships between our school and parents, community members, and local businesses. Many of our meetings have been held via Zoom to allow for larger audience participation. While we have had to limit our audience sizes for our student achievement ceremonies, we have utilized Facebook Live so that extended family, friends, and community members could be included. For example, we have live-streamed our Junior Ring Ceremony, Senior Superlative "unveil", and honor society inductions. We have also increased our use of Schoology, Remind, and email to keep all stakeholders involved and informed.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers have been provided with technology equipment, training, and resources for virtual and face-to-face instruction. Teachers at the school have served on various technology committees, and they have shared the information with the rest of the faculty. Many of these teachers have also provided their knowledge and skills at district-level professional development.

Members of the faculty have also served on the district committees to revise and create new ELA and math curriculum units. These members go to the district sessions, and then they bring the information back to the school. They work with the departments to show how to implement these new units, as well as how to track the data and use it to drive effective instruction.

While the school was fully virtual during the COVID-19 shutdowns, teachers participated in "Lunch and Learn" sessions on a variety of topics to assist teachers with implementing effective virtual instruction. Teachers met with the administration and the other members of the faculty once a week via Zoom to discuss what was and was not working, what problems teachers were running into, and what students were struggling with. The administration would help the teachers by also reaching out to these students.

To prepare for students returning face-to-face, teachers and staff were provided training at the beginning of the school year via Zoom and small groups, and documents were put into Google Drive for sharing purposes and consistency. Other trainings have been provided with Zoom links for virtual career events and virtual college/university tours which have allowed teachers to share them with students. The district held no mass meetings, but training was done at the school level and in small, socially distanced groups. Any teacher assigned a virtual teaching assignment who was not able to report to school was allowed to Zoom in.

The administration has provided encouragement and support by gauging the social-emotional health of the faculty and staff. Administration and other members of the school community have provided incentives for teachers throughout the school year to keep morale up. Faculty members have shared ideas of what has and has not worked in teaching virtually and teaching face-to-face.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership is focused on providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all students and parents. In addition to getting to know all students on a personal level, the principal and staff make efforts to get to know the parents and families of all students. Parents are encouraged to participate in school activities and meetings. In order to encourage participation, students are offered incentives for parent participation in Parent/Teacher conferences and Individual Graduation Plan meetings.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, leadership issues daily reminders of safe practices to prevent the spread of the virus. Students are frequently reminded to maintain safe distances, wear masks, wash hands, and sanitize. The principal communicates daily with all students via email, Remind, Schoology, and other media in order to ensure that all students are well-informed about activities/events that are occurring within the school.

School leadership implemented the Social-Emotional Committee, which is headed by the assistant principal and includes the school counselor, the school nurse, and some teachers. The purpose of this committee was to establish guidelines for determining if virtual and face-to-face students were experiencing social/emotional problems. Teachers report any issues they see to the committee, and then the committee

implements intervention strategies.

As a result of the COVID-19 threat, Individual Graduation Plans conferences between the school counselor and families that were previously done face-to-face were primarily conducted via Zoom video conferences.

Students are made aware and frequently reminded of the school goals for tests such as the Pre-ACT/ACT, PSAT/SAT, WIN career assessment, and other tests they take. The students and their parents understand the significance of the tests and they share in the enthusiasm for attaining those goals.

The administration believes in sharing data for all students and presents longitudinal data several times a year to monitor student growth. This data drives the curriculum and the schedule to provide each student with as much individualized instruction as possible. Administration shares this data with the teachers, her administrative team, and the parents. Individual longitudinal data is shared with students to help them reach their potential and goals for college. Individual and group achievements are recognized and celebrated by staff as well as other students. The students are recognized for all achievements, big and small. The school has established a culture of honesty, service, and support for one another, and the students share in the enthusiasm for the accomplishments of others.

5. **Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Our school is a unique institution, allowing students to be the best version of themselves. Embracing our demographics provides opportunities to identify the needs of students while examining the demographics is the catalyst for weaving equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of the school. Our school fosters a family environment while focusing on their needs, taking into account their backgrounds and need for support. School questionnaires, Parent-Teacher conferences, and Academic Booster Club/School Improvement Council meetings provide feedback from all stakeholders.

Communication is key to our school's success. All stakeholders receive information through various communication forms: social media, the school website, phone calls, emails, Remind, and Schoology. In our classrooms, examples of blended learning and meaningful instruction encourage collaboration such as flipped classroom/virtual learning and station rotation using Zoom, Nearpod, Google Suite, etc. Throughout the curriculum, students are encouraged to both cherish their heritage and respect and value all other cultures. Starting in their freshman year, students have the opportunity to express their individuality through school-wide programs and events such as the school's scholarship pageant, which awards scholarships to winners through sponsorship and donations, and Read Across America and online activities through the media center that highlight the necessity of the power of reading. Every February, we present our Black History Program where students of all cultures are welcome to participate, and the Fine Arts and Foreign Language Departments infuse culture into their curriculum, allowing all students the opportunity for creativity and expression.

The various clubs and teams our school has, including the National Beta Club, National Honor Society, English Honor Society, where senior writing experts tutor other students with writing issues, are great platforms for academic success. Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) allows students to meet and network with other students from within the state and around the nation. Students also benefit from the full support of the community through the school's community garden, a food source that serves several families in our surrounding area, and our annual fundraiser where several restaurants and venues from various cultural backgrounds volunteer to showcase their cuisine.

As a result, by highlighting a global lens for content area learning inside and outside the classroom, our school continues to foster countless opportunities for our students to succeed

without limitations. Positive relationships among the community shareholders and the school are built, allowing the classroom to become an open door that generates success for everyone involved.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one most instrumental factor in the school's continued ability to successfully educate and support students since school closures began in March 2020 is the socio-emotional piece of communication. Administration effectively communicates daily and weekly with faculty/staff while supporting technology training as professional development. The faculty is strongly encouraged to communicate with one another. In doing so, they teach one another new technology skills, thus creating a strong scaffolding to effectively communicate lessons, assess students' learning, and statistically track mastery of knowledge gained for each student through our existing learning management system, Schoology, and our data program, MasteryConnect.

The administration quickly jumped into an even more supportive role as it became evident that schools would be closed for more than two weeks. Personal phone calls were added to the daily emails and Remind texts from the administration to the faculty. The faculty, in turn, increased communication with one another through Remind, email, and phone calls. Encouragement of one another has been essential in the well-being of our faculty. The teachers also passed on that encouragement to the students by Zooming daily for instruction and relationship strengthening. Many students struggled emotionally while at home and fell behind on assignments, so there were weekly conversations with parents and students to correct problems and get the support students needed. Some required video conferences to clear up issues. Still some students, because of the lack of internet service in the area where they live, needed assistance getting a hot spot or advice from our technology coordinator. Teachers referred students when needed for these services, and the assistant principal followed up on all of the cases mentioned.

As school was fully virtual and then reopened with a hybrid schedule, teachers were communicating in creative ways. Each teacher adapted to make sure that students could get as full of an experience as possible. For example, our art teacher videoed her drawing techniques as she instructed her students to shade for the depth of an image. Our chemistry teacher videoed experiments as she moved from station to station in the laboratory so that the students could experience taking the data and then draw conclusions. Each lesson ended with the teacher reminding the students that they were valued and could reach out with questions of any kind. As with anything done correctly, effective communication generates understanding, strengthens bonds, fosters teamwork, and builds trust--something we all need in times of crisis.