U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Pioneer Charter School of Science II (PCSS-II)
            (As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 97 Main Street
            (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Saugus   State MA   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 01906-3334

County Essex County

Telephone (781) 666-3907   Fax (781) 666-3910

Web site/URL https://saugus.pioneercss.org   E-mail vsevinc@pioneercss.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.

_____Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*_Dr. Barish Icin_____E-mail_icin@pioneercss.org_____
            (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Pioneer Charter School of Science II (PCSS-II)   Tel. (617) 294-4737

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

_____Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Galip Bak
            (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 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 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 2016 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: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.

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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

                                        1 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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)
   [X] Suburban
   [ ] Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	29	44	73
8	37	36	73
9	34	32	66
10	33	23	56
11	18	30	48
12 or higher	18	42	60
Total Students	169	207	376

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
    the school (if unknown, estimate): 14 % Asian
                                         36 % Black or African American
                                         24 % Hispanic or Latino
                                         0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                       23 % White
                                       2 % 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 7%

    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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred **from** the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	370
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

    Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bosnian, Chinese, Creole, Edo, French, Fula, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Igbo, Khmer, Komi, Kurdish, Nepali, Niger, Panjabi, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Sundanese, Swahili, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese, Welsh, Yoruba

    English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %

                                              45 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 49 %

            Total number students who qualify: 185

8. Students receiving special education services   <u>14</u> %
   with an IEP or 504:   <u>52</u> 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>3</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>17</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>12</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>6</u>

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	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	31
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	9
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.	3

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   <u>10:1</u>

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	97%	98%	98%	99%	98%
High school graduation rate	98%	100%	100%	97%	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 2021.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	50
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	74%
Enrolled in a community college	20%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
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 _ No X

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

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

Prepare educationally under-resourced students for today's competitive world by helping students develop the academic and social skills necessary to become successful professionals and exemplary members of their community.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school's nondiscrimination policy.

https://saugus-pioneercss.entest.org/2019-2020/PCSS%20II%202019-2020%20Student%20Handbook%20English.pdf

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

Pioneer Charter School of Science II (PCSS-II) is a public charter school serving all Massachusetts students on a space-available basis. PCSS-II does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed or religion, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement when recruiting and admitting students. Since there are more applicants than spaces available, PCSS-II accepts students through a lottery. PCSS-II identifies all applications as one of the following three categories: siblings, residents, and non-residents. Preference for admission is given first to siblings of students who attend the school when an offer is made. Then, residents of the Danvers, Lynn, Peabody, Salem, or Saugus receive a preference for admission over non-resident students. PCSS-II does not offer admission to applicants on a first come first serve basis.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Founded in 2013 as part of the Pioneer Charter School of Science (PCSS) network, PCSS-II is a STEM-focused, regional, charter public school serving grades 7-12. Located in Saugus, MA, PCSS-II welcomes a diverse student body (77% students of color) from the North Shore region. Our community speaks 32 different languages. 70% of our students will be first-generation college students.

PCSS-II believes that all students can develop the academic and social skills necessary to become successful professionals and exemplary members of their community. This goal is achieved through a rigorous academic curriculum with emphasis on mathematics and science, balanced by a strong foundation in the humanities, a character education program, career-oriented college preparation, and strong student–teacher–parent collaboration. PCSS-II aims to graduate a generation of students who are skilled in mathematics and science and have a passion for sciences. Our students strive toward their highest levels of capability with an education that addresses their individual learning styles.

PCSS-II has established itself as a school with high academic standards and overall high expectations in a short period. PCSS-II has recently been recognized as a "School of Recognition" by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

PCSS-II provides a safe learning environment where everyone feels welcomed and appreciated. PCSS-II has a family-like environment with a school culture based on respect, hard work, high expectations, and service. PCSS-II works hard to forge a lasting relationship with parents and the community. We even visit parents at their homes to ensure high parental involvement. Various activities also bring community members to school, ensuring a connection with the school and the larger community.

PCSS-II has an extended learning program where the school calendar is three weeks longer than the traditional public schools. Moreover, students spend more time in school than their counterparts in other public schools.

The rigorous educational program coupled with high expectations is one of the critical components of PCSS-II's success. Multiple support programs for struggling students are available. PCSS-II provides tutoring opportunities for all of its students at the end of the regular school day. A Saturday tutoring program is also available for students who need more help. PCSS-II offers various enrichment activities through academic programs and extracurriculars. Aside from a rigorous educational program, PCSS-II takes additional actions to motivate and engage students in STEM. While focusing on mathematics and science, PCSS-II also provides a strong foundation in humanities.

PCSS-II motivates students to continue their education at the post-secondary level. The school provides guidance to students with their higher education choices and career options. PCSS-II college admission counselor provides information to students about the admission process, college life, and academic preparation. The senior capstone portfolio is designed to introduce students to college expectations. Alumni regularly visit the school to meet with current high school students. PCSS-II staff work with interested students through a College Mentorship Program targeting academic and social skills.

The school culture at PCSS-II is a testament to the success of the character education program and the work to promote high moral values. Building administrators go to great lengths to ensure that behavior expectations are consistently upheld, students are recognized for model behavior, and corrected for inappropriate behavior. High academic standards are at the center of the school culture. PCSS-II students are hard-working, responsible, and respectful. PCSS-II implements a character education program for building good character, bringing out the best in our students, and ensuring that they acquire the basic life skills that will guide them to lifelong success.

PCSS-II engages parents in their children's education and choices early on. We believe that family involvement is essential for educational success. One of PCSS-II's great features is conducting home visits, especially to those who have lower levels of communication with the school. Home visits help to establish

rapport among students, parents, and teachers. During home visits, the staff discusses the student's progress and school programs while parents provide feedback and input. PCSS-II conducts multiple parent activities throughout the year that happen in the evenings or on Saturdays to increase parent involvement. Parents are routinely invited to the school for conferences to discuss student progress and develop joint action plans.

Upon graduation from PCSS-II, our students are equipped with a solid math and science background. They have developed the essential academic skills, social skills, and ambition to pursue their education at prominent colleges. Our students build good personalities and develop into responsible citizens with high moral values through the character education program.

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:

We developed a college preparatory curriculum to prepare our students for success in college and beyond. This rigorous curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and expectations. The curriculum ensures access and rigor for students with different ability levels and learning styles.

The curriculum focuses on backward design principles. This model centers on the idea that the process starts with identifying desired results and then working backward. Teachers set the vision of their units, decide how students will provide evidence of their learning, and finally design instructional activities to help students learn what is needed to be successful. To maximize the learning of all students, courses are purposefully designed to deliver continuity and coherence.

The curriculum is revised on an annual and ongoing basis and overseen by the network staff. The curriculum development process is a collaborative one that starts within the departments. During the curriculum revision process, teachers and department heads review the curriculum and instructional materials for the representation of different cultures and perspectives.

PCSS-II teachers use various teaching methods such as direct instruction, collaborative learning, and project-based learning. Teachers customize their teaching strategies to accommodate the needs of all students. They are aware that every individual student has a different way of learning and that it is their responsibility to support their students on a day-to-day basis by providing accommodations and materials that will allow students to learn effectively.

Department chairs and building administrators support teachers to ensure that instructional practices are aligned with expectations. Department heads also support teachers in implementing instructional practices that reflect cultural proficiency.

Assessments are implemented to eliminate misunderstandings and ensure that the goals of a lesson, a unit, or a class are achieved successfully. Assessments also provide the basis for further instruction, thus allowing educators to prepare a better educational environment and educational activities.

Assessments enable the faculty to identify each student's strengths and weaknesses and to design and implement individualized programs for the students. Moreover, the assessments serve as opportunities for teachers and administrators to follow the school's progress and critique the program, adapt instructional approaches, and establish new goals and expectations to serve the student population better.

The state assessment, MCAS, is administered in grades 7-10. The MCAS results help us evaluate each student's progress, our school's progress, and success compared to the districts we serve. PCSS-II utilizes the College Board's PSAT as an additional standardized assessment program that provides a profile of college readiness in grades 7-11.

All students take various benchmark and final tests throughout the school year. A benchmark covers all topics and standards learned in a specific unit. Finals are administered at the end of each quarter and cover standards taught since the beginning of the year. The assessments are administered online (and on paper when needed), and results are available to teachers to analyze on an online platform. Based on the results, teachers modify their instruction (re-teach, remediate, groupings, extra support, etc.) based on the results. Moreover, results are utilized by the administration to target students for extra help and target faculty for additional support.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The English curriculum generally addresses the various learning standards outlined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, broken down into genre study units in grades 7 through 10. In each of those grades, students take a core English course, which focuses on units including but not limited to speech and discussion, short stories, novel study, poetry, nonfiction, argument, etc. For students in grades 7 and 8, these core classes take place in two separate blocks every day. Students in grades 9 and 10 take one core English Literature course and an additional writing-focused elective. In 11th and 12th grade, the curriculum focuses on American literature and British literature, respectively. Students also have opportunities to take Advanced Placement (AP) English Language and Composition and AP English Literature and Composition in these grades. At every level, students read a variety of complex, rich texts at and above grade level. They also complete various writing tasks, including but not limited to narrative, argumentative, analytical, and research-based assignments. The variety and complexity of reading and writing tasks seek to prepare all students to continue to pursue education beyond high school.

In the classroom, teachers use a variety of instructional approaches to help all learners access content and grow their skills in reading and writing. Teachers frequently deliver direct instruction in a mini-lesson/workshop model, where students have ample opportunity to practice skills and receive feedback. Many grade levels feature collaborative learning in the form of literature circles or other group work that allows students to engage with content and reading in a meaningful way. Students frequently participate in technology-enhanced, skill-building practice on various platforms, including NoRedInk and Zinc Reading Labs. Most units are also structured around project-based learning, which gives students an end goal to build towards where they can demonstrate their skills. Each of these approaches allows teachers to differentiate for students with disabilities, 504 plan students, English learners, and other at-risk students.

In addition to project-based assessments, teachers also utilize benchmark assessments for units to analyze student mastery of concepts. Each quarter, students also take additional summative assessments, which measure their learning and readiness for a variety of other standardized assessments. Teachers meet with counterparts and school leaders to analyze data from these assessments and make actionable plans for intervention in whole-class and individualized settings.

Since March of 2021, the school has largely returned to operations as normal from before online learning; however, a few benefits of online learning continue to provide opportunities for teachers to improve their instructional practices. Many teachers have maintained an improved organization of online materials that was required in the remote setting, including the capability to record and post instruction. This shift has allowed increased access to content for students who need additional support at home or are forced to miss extended time in school. The implementation of a one-to-one Chromebook system has also allowed teachers to rely more on technology-enhanced instruction and practice platforms.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The mathematics curriculum and assessments are aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, or the AP frameworks where applicable, with additional supplementary topics included to bridge between courses or to lay the foundations for future classes. The curricular pathways are designed so that students will become increasingly proficient in the grade-level mathematics skills in each subsequent year and culminates in the majority of students taking Calculus or another collegiate level mathematics course before graduation.

In general, students have two mathematics blocks each day from 7th-10th grade. In 7th and 8th grade, these consist of double blocks of 7th and 8th-grade mathematics. In 9th-10th grade, students generally take two distinct mathematics courses designed to be taken concurrently, like Algebra 1 and Geometry or Algebra 2 and Trigonometry. There is an option for students to take a double block of Algebra 1 in 9th grade, a double block of Geometry in 10th grade, a double block of Algebra 2 in 11th grade, and a double block of precalculus in 12th grade for students that need additional time and support to master the content. In 11th-12th grade, students increasingly specialize and take a combination of Precalculus, AP Statistics, Calculus, AP Calculus, or dual enrollment mathematics courses. Students can move up to higher-level courses by completing coursework and demonstrating proficiency during summer sessions. This option is available to all students, providing flexibility in mathematics pathways and allowing for the opportunity to complete

additional collegiate mathematics courses before graduation.

Each mathematics course is grouped into thematic units like "Quadratic Functions" that each has a benchmark assessment used to measure unit mastery. Each quarter, students additionally take a quarterly summative exam on all cumulative content. These benchmark and quarterly assessments can be given via traditional paper means or via an online testing system that allows teachers to assess students remotely if needed and allows students to practice using computer testing platforms. Teachers analyze each benchmark assessment with respect to student mastery and standard mastery to adjust the delivery of future lessons and develop remediation plans for topics and students of concern. At the end of each quarter, teachers across the network meet with their counterparts to analyze their quarterly assessment data similarly to identify topics and students of concern and develop plans of action.

Mathematics instruction is intended to be student-centered, problem-based, and inquiry-driven. Teachers use various techniques and platforms, including direct instruction, collaborative learning, low-floor high-ceiling activities, formative data collection, technology-enhanced discovery through platforms like Desmos and GeoGebra, and technology-enhanced practice through platforms DeltaMath and Khan Academy. All lessons and assessments are differentiated to accommodate students with disabilities, English learners, or 504 students and provide an appropriate proximal challenge for all students.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The science curriculum is formulated around the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards)-aligned Massachusetts 2016 STE (Science, Technology Engineering) curriculum framework. The science curriculum promotes mastery of standards and scientific skills by emphasizing application and hands-on experience. Science courses are required to provide one laboratory experience per unit. Grade 7-8 have one scheduled lab block per week in addition to the daily classroom schedule, and Grade 9 is scheduled for two blocks a day to facilitate the emphasis on labs and inquiry.

The science curriculum was designed to provide students with foundational knowledge and skills in all science content strands. Students must take biology, chemistry, physics, and engineering to graduate. PCSS-II also offers a range of advanced science electives, including organic chemistry, anatomy, and four AP science classes.

Every student must complete a science or engineering project annually presented in a school-wide science and engineering fair. This semester-long project is embedded into the curriculum, so students receive constant mentoring and constructive feedback from their teachers.

Typical classroom instruction is a mix of direct instruction, problem-based learning, and student-centered learning. Instructional materials are designed with universal supports and are further differentiated to meet the needs of individual learners. Since the return from remote learning, educational technology has been thoroughly integrated into science classrooms. Online simulations, digital labs, and online practice tools have become an integral part of science instruction and can be observed almost daily in most courses. These digital tools have also been integrated into the formative assessment strategies. Teachers work closely with other teachers and Science Network Chair to analyze formative assessments and adjust lesson plans accordingly. Summative assessments include project-based assessments, lab reports, end-of-unit tests, and final exams. Teachers analyze the data from these assessments with support and feedback from the Science Network Chair and administration to inform reteaching and future instruction.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Students take one block of social studies class per day from grades 7-12. We generate our curriculum based on the Massachusetts History and Social Studies Frameworks from 2018. Generally speaking, students in our social studies classes will produce two Quarter Final Projects and take two cumulative Final Exams (mid-term and end of the year) throughout each grade level. In 7th grade, we first introduce our students to World Geography and Ancient Civilizations. Then, students study World History, United States History, and Civics before they graduate from PCSS-II.

Students in grades 9-11 participate in National History Day. This project's theme changes yearly, but it helps develop our students' abilities to critically think, problem-solve, and perform independent research. It also allows our students to learn about something outside the scope of the curriculum and prepares them for college-level assignments. Students in grades 8 and 12 must complete the student-led Civics Action Project. This project allows students to develop their civic dispositions, practice and develop their civic skills, develop social-political awareness, and learn how to play an active role in their communities.

Our teachers use a variety of multimedia resources while teaching social studies, including, but not limited to, edpuzzles, videos, pictures, music, films, etc. Every student is accommodated with differentiation to meet the needs of different learning styles. All of our classes emphasize analyzing primary source documents and having students demonstrate evidence-based reasoning. We prefer to have our students critically think about cause-and-effect relationships rather than just memorize important facts and dates. Some teaching strategies include lectures/direct instruction, debates, project-based learning, and learning through inquiry. Data collected from benchmarks (around two per quarter) and final exams (two each year) are analyzed to identify students of academic concern and assess what content areas students need to revisit.

Since the pandemic, our teachers have become more comfortable utilizing resources such as Edpuzzle Live and Poll Everywhere, which allow for a more interactive experience for students in the classroom.

1f. For secondary schools:

All PCSS-II students are exposed to core college prep courses designed to ensure post-secondary success. Students are provided with a variety of electives in addition to the core classes during their high school years. Each student must take at least five mathematics and science core courses and four English and history core courses. Students are also required to complete at least two years of study of a foreign language, a year of art/music, and computer science before they graduate.

The electives are purposeful in providing an overview of different paths available to students during college. From rigorous science electives to comprehensive English electives to creative art electives, students are challenged and exposed to different career paths they can pursue during their college years.

Students can enroll in various AP courses in mathematics, English, science, computer science, social sciences, and art. Moreover, they can also take dual enrollment courses at nearby colleges during their junior or senior years. Approximately 2/3 of our juniors and seniors take AP or dual-enrollment courses.

The Senior Capstone Portfolio, a graduation requirement, is built around college-level work. It has been designed to allow students to research and volunteer for a topic that they find meaningful and are personally connected to. The five major parts of the Senior Capstone Portfolio are the background essay, the research paper, the service learning, the presentation, and the portfolio.

PCSS II also provides opportunities to network with the nearby science community. Speakers (professionals from area companies and researchers from universities) are invited to the school for assemblies and class visits. Trips are scheduled to universities and research centers. Students are provided with information about careers in science-related fields. Our college guidance department works with high school students to help them apply to various summer internship opportunities and classes held at nearby colleges and companies.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Performing Arts Department offers four courses and two extra-curricular club opportunities. All 7th-grade students are required to complete a General Music course. High school electives include Music History, Introduction to Piano, and Performance Ensemble. If students are more interested in music, they are

encouraged to audition for the two extracurricular ensembles offered, a select choir and symphonic band. The Visual Arts Department offers five courses. All 8th-grade students take an Art Exploratory course. High school electives include Studio 1, Studio 2, Drawing 1, and AP Art Drawing.

The mission of the Performing and Visual Arts Department is to teach our students a curriculum that will set them up to be lifelong learners, participants, and appreciators of the arts in their communities and the communities of others. Our curricular mission is to offer our students a diverse and culturally responsive education in which they can see themselves and appreciate those that are different from them.

The Computer Science Department offers six courses and one extra-curricular club opportunity. 7th-grade students participate in an Introduction to Computers class. 10th-grade students participate in an Introduction to Programming Languages course. Other courses offered include Topics in Computer Science, Web Design, AP Computer Science Principles, and AP Computer Science A. For students who would like to explore more of what Computer Science has to offer, they can join our Game Design Club. Along with courses required or offered as electives, PCSS-II supports students through various field trips and virtual learning opportunities focusing on subjects like machine learning, IoT, and cybersecurity. Our teachers work closely with the College Guidance department to match students with various summer internships.

Foreign language classes are designed to introduce students to the most basic functions of the language and become familiar with the aspects of the culture. The program focuses on reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar skills. Foreign language offerings start with Spanish classes for 7th and 8th graders. Students are offered two additional foreign language options in high school. Each of the three language electives provides a three-year study option in the same language for high school students.

All students take a yearly physical education and health class as part of their program of studies. We offer an additional fitness elective for high school students. Students who are further interested in physical education can also sign up for various clubs or sports teams throughout the year.

All seniors take a project-based engineering class before they graduate.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

PCSS-II's small size allows for personal relationships among students, staff, administration, and families. This ensures no one falls through the cracks and all students have access to high-quality education that fits their needs. The PCSS-II Response to Intervention (RTI) protocol functions as a grade level screening system to identify students with academic, behavioral, or social-emotional concerns. All teachers participate in the screening process during student discussions at grade-level team meetings. When a student is identified as struggling, the teacher teams collect performance data and earmark accommodations to be implemented for the student.

The grade-level teams design the first tier of supportive interventions, which include targeted and prescriptive strategies implemented during homeroom, advisory, lunch, after-school tutoring, and in the classroom. For emotional issues, the school adjustment counselor provides support such as check-ins and participation in small group activities. Each grade level team has a lead teacher who chairs the RTI process. The Dean of Academics provides further input to the RTI process through in-depth analysis of assessment results to identify students and content areas requiring additional attention.

The variety of academic support available includes tutoring, small group instruction, push-in, pull-out small groups, and a range of commonly used accommodations, such as preferential seating, additional time, and graphic organizers. Teachers provide guided notes, various graphic organizers, frequent check-ins for understanding, opportunities for 1:1 tutoring support, and gradually modified assignments and assessments as may be needed. Tutoring opportunities are available at Saturday academy and after-school academy.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Supports are also available for high-functioning students. PCSS-II has mapped pathways to advanced coursework to accelerate student learning. Students can participate in the accelerated mathematics program at any point in their academic careers. They can also utilize a summer acceleration program to skip a class during the school year.

Students are provided with the option to enroll in AP-level courses in place of the core academic courses offered in high school. These offerings are available in English, mathematics, science, and social studies programs of study. Students can take rigorous and challenging AP and non-AP electives in high school. PCSS-II regularly offers more than a dozen of AP courses every year. Moreover, PCSS-II enables students to take dual enrollment courses at nearby colleges.

School administrators and the college counseling department work with students individually to design a challenging program of study for each student's level. Students and their parents discuss different pathways and elective options with school staff and learn about the required preparation. Staff also help students apply and secure a place at prestigious internship and summer study programs.

PCSS-II has various academic teams to provide additional challenges for high-achieving students. These students can join various academic competition teams and compete with their peers from other schools. Offerings include all core content areas, mathematics (MathCounts, AMC), English (writing, poetry), science (state science fair, science Olympiads), and history (geography bee, national history day, model UN).

3c. Special education:

PCSS-II believes that improving educational results for children with disabilities is essential to ensuring equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. To the maximum extent appropriate, PCSS-II educates students with disabilities in regular classrooms with non-disabled students. The IEP Team, as needed, develops teaching strategies and classroom modifications and strategies. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

PCSS-II provides students with disabilities an equal opportunity with students in the regular education program to participate in and, where appropriate, receive credit for non-academic, extracurricular, and ancillary programs, services, and activities.

The PCSS-II IEP Team consists of the Special Education Coordinator, Director of the school (or his/her designee), teachers and parents of the student, and outside evaluators as needed. A student suspected of having a disability is referred in writing to the special education teacher/coordinator for an individual evaluation and determination of eligibility for special education programs and services.

The IEP contains annual goals in each area of need and the objectives required for the student to reach each goal. The IEP process is centered on these three key points: (i) the involvement and progress of each child with a disability in the general curriculum, including the addressing of the student's unique needs that are tied to the disability; (ii) the involvement of parents, students, special educators, and general educators in meeting the individualized educational needs of students with disabilities; (iii) the critical need to prepare students with disabilities for independence, employment, and other post-school activities.

If the IEP Team determines that none of the various assessments administered by PCSS-II are appropriate for a given student with disabilities, then PCSS-II creates individualized assessment instruments based on the goals and objectives of a child's IEP. PCSS-II also teaches students their civil rights and invites adult human service agency representatives to speak to student groups about provided services and eligibility requirements.

Teachers are regularly trained to understand their responsibilities in implementing IEPs and serve students

with disabilities better. Teachers are expected to be familiar with each student's IEP and frequently consult with special educators working with them at each grade level.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PCSS-II is committed to serving English Learners (ELs) population well and works diligently to recruit and retain ELs. All teachers at PCSS-II support creating a warm classroom environment where the English language is not interfering but instead becomes a part of the students' normal functioning in the academic learning process. PCSS-II supports and accommodates ELs by providing sheltered English immersion (SEI) classes and English Language Development (ELD) instruction based on the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) English Language Development Standards. Annual WIDA and MCAS scores are used to measure student success.

Instruction is delivered by licensed ESL teachers and content teachers who receive appropriate training. The ESL curriculum at PCSS-II is based on the Massachusetts English language proficiency benchmarks and outcomes. The lessons include language objectives based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards; content objectives based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher and students and among students; grade-appropriate supplementary materials; pictures and visuals; and instruction linking academic concepts to students' prior learning.

PCSS-II ensures that ELs are not excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities based on their inability to speak and understand the language of instruction and that ELs are not assigned to special education because of their lack of English proficiency. To meet the needs of every student, the educational program for each student is designed with the language proficiency level in mind.

The ESL coordinator and teachers meet regularly during grade-level meetings to plan strategically for the needs of their students. The ESL coordinator trains teachers to meet the needs of ELs and runs professional development sessions to support teachers in improving instructional practice and EL student achievement. The ESL coordinator observes the SEI classrooms and provides feedback to the teachers. The ESL coordinator collaborates with the special education coordinator to meet the needs of EL special education students, who receive ESL services in accordance with their IEPs.

Parents whose English proficiency is limited receive notices and information from the school in their native language so that PCSS-II can encourage the participation of all parents, regardless of their home language, in the PCSS-II community.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

PCSS-II provides a safe and supportive school environment where everyone feels welcomed and appreciated. Relationship-building activities in and outside the classroom provide an opportunity to sustain an amazing school culture. Every student knows that they are a part of the PCSS-II family and contribute to the school's success.

The Executive Director and Dean of Students meet regularly with students in various formats (lunch-ins, focus groups, mentoring sessions, peer groups, etc.) to check-in, provide support, and receive feedback. Students feel empowered to reach out to the school administrators with concerns or requests. Student input is considered valuable and used over the years to make adjustments.

PCSS-II has actively worked to create a positive learning environment where students are recognized for academic and behavioral accomplishments and contributions to their community. This recognition involves various daily, weekly and monthly events in and outside the classroom. The school makes an effort each quarter to find a way to celebrate achievements, including but not limited to holding various events to which parents are invited.

Our School Adjustment Counselor provides social and emotional support to our students. She runs student assemblies, focus groups, and peer mentoring programs. Moreover, several community health organizations are invited to the school as needed. Physical education classes and athletics programs reinforce a healthy lifestyle. Life choices and consequences are reviewed through health classes.

Student engagement starts by ensuring a school culture that promotes respect and acceptance. Through the work of the Dean of Students Department and School Adjustment Counselor, high behavioral expectations are conveyed to our students. Through assemblies and character education program, students are educated on acceptable behaviors and conflict resolution. PCSS strives to build a culture of respect, kindness, and belonging.

School-wide assemblies and events are planned to introduce students to new skills, build relationships, and enjoy learning through experiential activities. Instructional coaches work with classroom teachers to design and implement engaging and relevant lessons.

When COVID-19 forced school closures, PCSS-II designed and implemented a full-scale remote learning program within two days. PCSS-II focused on ensuring that all students have been accounted for and provided the support they need. Students who were challenged significantly with the expectations of the remote learning program were invited to campus for in-person help. Relationship-building activities and various events continued in a virtual format. The hard work to keep our students engaged resulted in remote learning program attendance rates similar to in-person program rates.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parental support has been vital to the success of our program. We believe that high student engagement will result from high family involvement in the school's programs. PCSS-II keeps parents engaged through several activities. This starts with keeping parents up to date with their children's progress, being responsive to their requests, and keeping lines of communication open. PCSS-II organizes various celebratory and informative events to bring parents to campus.

PCSS-II works hard to help the parents and students to adjust to the new school system and curriculum. Summer information sessions and a seventh-grade summer academy (for incoming student cohort) ensure parents and students have a solid start to the school year in a new school. The administrators, staff members, and parents work together to ensure open communication. The partnership is based on meeting parents where they are, inclusive of different cultures and values, collaborative, and strengths-based.

Parents are encouraged to come to school for conferences to seek help and guidance on academic, social, and emotional issues. Students at risk of failing are monitored, and parents are invited for individual conferences each quarter to develop and monitor action plans. Similar meetings happen for parents of students with social and emotional issues.

One of PCSS-II's unique features is the home visit program. Home visits contribute to building a community, learning about the student, learning about the family, increasing parental involvement, and providing parents with additional means of interacting with their children's school. This program was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we increased our efforts to provide support to our families. PCSS-II staff reached out to families frequently to check in and adjust the program for unforeseen circumstances. PCSS-II delivered food to our students' homes during the initial phases of the pandemic. PCSS-II has arranged for parent webinar series focusing on the stress and challenges of parenting during a pandemic.

We collaborate with nearby colleges and companies as part of our science engagement programs. About 50 judges (researchers, engineers, scientists) are annually recruited for our science and engineering fair. We continue our collaboration by having these individuals visit our classrooms during the school year (and virtually during remote learning days) to engage and work with our students. Similarly, we invite (and virtually during remote learning days) community members (local elected officials, public servants, and local business owners) to visit our classrooms to interact with our students.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teacher support at PCSS-II aims to ensure high-quality instruction, maximize successful student outcomes, and foster professional development and growth in our teachers. PCSS-II teachers receive formal feedback from the building administrators through classroom observations and lesson plan reviews. The feedback focuses on planning, instructional effectiveness, classroom management, interpersonal relationships, professional ethics, scholarship, and contributions to school improvement. Network instructional coaches work individually with teachers and provide job-embedded, content-driven professional development. PCSS-II teachers also receive support through other venues, such as peer observation, walk-throughs, departmental meetings, and grade level meetings.

We begin our year with an intensive Summer Teacher Institute for both new and returning staff that allows time for staff team building, pedagogy workshops, curriculum development, and instructional workshops and training. Throughout the school year, teachers have monthly professional development sessions. These sessions are planned based on teacher recommendations, internal needs (based on student and observation data), and state mandates. PCSS-II also encourages the staff to sign up for any professional development opportunities outside the school that they think will benefit their professional growth. A generous tuition reimbursement program is available for all staff members.

PCSS-II encourages collaboration among teaching staff and provides opportunities for that to occur. Every Wednesday, teachers participate in department and grade level meetings where they share best practices, talk about student issues, review data, and plan curricular activities and trips together. PCSS-II also encourages peer observation to share best practices and provide feedback to each other. Administrators communicate the staff expectations, listen to their feedback, and intervene when needed. Teachers are provided with support in and out of the classroom to deal with student and professional issues.

During the transition to remote learning, PCSS-II administrative and support staff did the heavy lifting by designing a robust and structured program. They took care of many operational hurdles to enable teachers to focus on student learning. Teachers are provided with various instructional technology and training to facilitate remote learning, job-embedded professional development from network staff, and support structure when dealing with their pandemic-related challenges.

One of the things that PCSS-II is proud of is that we have a family-like environment not only between

teachers and students but also among teachers and administrators. We are a team! We work together to overcome all the obstacles that come our way. We discuss important current events, upcoming events, reminders, and concerns during faculty meetings. The administrative team greatly stresses that there is an open-door policy for teachers. They are free and welcome to go to the administrative team with any concerns and ideas that they think will better the school.

4. **School Leadership:**

The Executive Director (principal) is responsible for the safe and orderly operation of the school and student success. He oversees the implementation of the educational plan, management of the instructional and support staff, safe learning environment, the establishment of positive school culture, and an inclusive, respectful work environment.

Dean of Academics and Dean of Students help the Executive Director lead the school efficiently. The Dean of Academics focuses on the instructional programs, assessment programs, scheduling, academic support programs, and student achievement. The Dean of Students focuses on school culture, student life, student attendance, discipline matters, community involvement, and parent relations.

The Executive Director leads the process of accountability and improvement. The school staff is proactive in addressing performance goals and problem solving. All teachers have alternating weekly meetings at three levels, during which they discuss students' assessment data, behavioral issues, and how to improve student outcomes:

(i) School Level: The overall educational outcomes of the whole school, the areas that need improvement at the school level, and plans for immediate action and long-term actions are discussed.

(ii) Grade Level: Grade level achievement, areas that need improvement, plans for immediate action, and long-term measures are discussed.

(iii) Department Level: Departments meet separately to discuss achievement in their subject at all grade levels. Curriculum and instructional methods are discussed as well.

All meetings focus equally on strengths and accomplishments, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Corrective actions may include (a) professional development seminars concentrating on key areas for improvement, (b) the establishment of a committee assigned to a problem area, (c) teachers mentoring each other or working together with students who have difficulties, or (d) participation in creating and evaluating short and long term goals to reach objectives.

The network team provides academic and operational support to schools. The network academic team prepares and analyzes data to be used by all stakeholders and provides instructional coaching to teachers in collaboration with the Executive Director. Various data compiled at the building and network level ensure continuous monitoring of student progress. The data is analyzed with subgroups to identify gaps and trends.

The leadership style is based on a culture of accountability, trust, and collaboration. The Chief Executive Officer empowers and provides flexibility to Executive Directors. The network office mainly works as a support organization while the building staff shows ownership of their results. With additional support through the network team, the Executive Directors support their staff and work with them collaboratively. Teacher input is sought continuously in decision-making.

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

The school environment is culturally responsive, inclusive, open, reflective, and respectful of differences. PCSS-II staff goes above and beyond to ensure students and families feel supported and accepted for who they are. Relationship building activities in and outside the classroom focus on sustaining an amazing school culture based on belonging and inclusivity. Purposeful celebratory activities to understand and appreciate different cultures and backgrounds engage the larger PCSS-II community and stakeholders in the cities and

towns we serve.

The diversity of the PCSS-II community is seen as our biggest strength. Various projects and events are organized to celebrate our diversity throughout the year. PCSS-II students are intimately involved in the planning of many such events. For example, hosting guests at Spanish Heritage month events or international festivals allow students to interact with their parents, teachers, administrators, and friends during the events. Students cooperate with their peers, generate ideas, create posters, send letters to parents, and make announcements in school before the events. They greet the guests, serve food, present their projects, give speeches, perform songs, dances, etc.

PCSS-II works diligently to ensure that the curriculum and instructional practices are culturally responsive and appreciate the diversity of the student body with a strength-based approach. During the curriculum revision process, teachers and department heads review the curriculum and instructional materials for the representation of different cultures and perspectives. Instructional resources are evaluated, and recommendations are made annually. Department heads also support teachers in implementing instructional practices that reflect cultural proficiency. Teachers work on establishing classroom environments where students feel they belong and differences are not only accepted but celebrated.

PCSS-II utilizes a rich set of data in the decision-making process to ensure high levels of student achievement. The data is continuously disaggregated to monitor subgroup performance and achievement gaps among different student groups to ensure equitable student outcomes. The data analysis is shared over the google folder to provide easy access and accountability to take actions to improve outcomes for all.

A family-like environment and an inclusive school culture facilitate an effective way to deal with current events or other circumstances impacting the PCSS-II community. The trusting relationship among different stakeholders and a laser-like focus on student achievement enable PCSS-II staff to address effectively many outside developments affecting our community. PCSS-II organizes assemblies, conducts focus groups, brings in community service agencies, and holds webinars to address many current events and social movements impacting our community.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One of the strategies that makes PCSS-II an academic success is its data-informed tiered support programs. Tiered support to all students is provided through the Response to Intervention (RTI) and Targeted Academic Support (TAS) processes. PCSS-II has high expectations for all students. At the same time, PCSS-II provides a tiered support system to ensure all students can be successful in its rigorous program.

The RTI process is initiated at the grade level teams and targets all students who are not performing at the expected grade level. General education teachers take the lead. Staff members concerned about a child's academic performance, social progress, behavior, or emotional well-being discuss their concerns at the grade level meeting. The team reviews all available student data and seeks input from members who observe the student in classrooms. An agreed-upon RTI plan is developed collaboratively to be implemented in a four-to-six-week cycle. At the end of the cycle, the team reviews the student's progress, continues the plan, changes the plan, or ends the plan if satisfactory progress is obtained.

The TAS is run by the Dean of Academics (DOA), who continuously monitors student achievement data to identify groups of students who are not performing well and can benefit from additional support. The DOA develops an intervention program for students identified for targeted assistance. Students receive intensive one-on-one or small group tutoring on the academic content they are not doing well. Their attendance at the tutoring sessions and their progress in the classroom are closely monitored. At the end of each quarter, the DOA reviews the data and changes the intervention program for the next quarter.

Data is an essential piece of these processes. PCSS-II's comprehensive assessment system tracks students' progress in its challenging academic program. Data enables staff to see where students meet the curricular standards and grade-level expectations and where they fall short. The disaggregated data inform trends in groups of students and allow administrators and teachers to propose targeted solutions. The disaggregated data is held at a cloud-based location to provide easy access by stakeholders.

Student assessment data informs another area of support, teacher professional growth. The network instructional coaches review student data to identify teachers who need additional help. The data is compared between campuses and previous years for a richer analysis to ensure targeted support for teachers. Instructional coaches develop action plans for teachers whose students are not at the desirable level. The focus is on helping teachers to grow as opposed to evaluating them.