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

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 1145 Highway 42
              (If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Petal   State MS   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 39465-9740

County Forrest

Telephone (601) 583-3538   Fax
Web site/URL
https://www.petalschools.com/Domain/373   E-mail robert.knight@petalschools.com

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

                                                        Date
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*_Dr. Matthew Dilllon_____E-mail_matt.dillon@petalschools.com_____
              (Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Petal School District   Tel. (601) 545-3002

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. Bruce Magee
              (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   <u>3</u> Elementary schools (includes K-8)
    (per district designation):   <u>1</u> Middle/Junior high schools
    <u>1</u> High schools
    <u>0</u> K-12 schools

    <u>5</u> 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	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	169	167	336
10	137	153	290
11	131	158	289
12 or higher	147	148	295
Total Students	584	626	1210

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   0.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
    the school (if unknown, estimate):   1.3 % Asian
                                          19.3 % Black or African American
                                           7.6 % Hispanic or Latino
                                           0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                          71.5 % White
                                           0 % Two or more races
                                          100 % Total

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2020 - 2021 school year: 6%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred **to** the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	37
(2) Number of students who transferred **from** the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	37
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	74
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	1167
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

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

    Spanish, Mixteco, Arabic, Chinese (Fujianese and Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Czech

    English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

                                                      24 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 55 %

        Total number students who qualify: 661

8.	Students receiving special education services	<u>15</u> %
	with an IEP or 504:	<u>177</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>31</u> Autism	<u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>49</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>45</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>20</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>4</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>4</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>3</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9.	Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>0</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	5
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	79
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	20
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.	7

11.	Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1	<u>15:1</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	95%	95%	94%	95%	93%
High school graduation rate	96%	95%	90%	88%	86%

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	266
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	28%
Enrolled in a community college	47%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	15%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
Other	5%

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

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.   <u>2007</u>

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

The mission of the Petal School District is to empower all students with the attitudes, knowledge, and life-long learning skills essential to thrive as responsible citizens in an ever-changing global society.

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

https://www.petalschools.com/Page/11320

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The Petal community and the Petal School District (PSD) have a strong, unique bond; they are so synonymous that one really cannot talk about one without mentioning the other. The PSD began in 1976 after community members decided to create a district separate from the county school system. The City of Petal was incorporated specifically to form the new school district – a step signifying how important educational opportunities were to the citizens of Petal. Since that time, school employees have worked hand-in-hand with the community to ensure the schools reflect the values and quality of life inherent in the citizens of the PSD. While retaining its small-town atmosphere, Petal has become renowned for its academic performance and award-winning athletic and performing arts programs.

Something that will be mentioned throughout this application because of the difference it makes in our school district, is our commitment to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The district makes a tremendous commitment to provide all teachers of core subjects a 48-minute PLC each day. We value teacher leadership and this is evident in our PLCs which are led exclusively by teachers and for teachers. In these daily meetings, teachers look at student work, analyze data, research instructional practices, conduct model lessons, participate in instructional rounds, and create and/or critique lesson plans. By doing this together, we feel that teachers have a built-in support system to problem solve and grow.

We have been intentional about building on this professional collaboration in other areas. Because we understand that supporting a student's transition from one school to the next is paramount, our district conducts quarterly transition meetings where a group of teachers from each school meets with a group of teachers from the schools preceding and following them. Four years ago at one of our transition meetings, the middle school and high school explored the challenges that our freshmen faced. After surveying middle school students, current 9th graders, and their teachers, we found that there was lots of apprehension about the first day of high school. Through professional collaboration around this need, we came up with an idea of creating Freshman First where incoming 9th graders would start high school a day early. We tried to model the day after a college visit, where students are welcomed on campus and guided around by current students. This was an opportunity for freshmen to go through their typical school day (including the cafeteria, which causes the most consternation) along with enrichment activities that introduced them to our staff, campus, and clubs and organizations. We invited Petal Ambassadors, which is a group of upperclassmen that represent our school at various community functions, along with our Student Council to guide our students throughout the day. When all the students arrived on campus, our freshmen knew what to do and the feedback from students and parents has been nothing short of positive.

Throughout the COVID pandemic, our culture of collaboration has enabled us to respond to these new challenges in a way that minimized the negative impact on our students. When cases rose to a level that required our school to go hybrid, we were able to implement co-teaching opportunities that proved not only resourceful, but beneficial past COVID. By partnering classrooms with multiple teachers, they were able to better serve more students and learn new classroom management and instructional strategies that they can carry with them the rest of their career. Teachers have also worked together to learn new ways to use technology to engage students. In response to COVID we transitioned to one-to-one with our student devices and converted to the Canvas platform to adapt better to scheduling issues that this pandemic has created. This shift allowed more flexibility with student work and due dates and has stretched our teachers to focus on quality learning tasks. In the long run this will enhance our instruction and provide us with better ways to meet the current needs of our students. We have been very proud of how our teachers have endured and overcome so many challenges during COVID and come up with innovative ways to continue to instruct our students.

With all the changes around COVID the character of our community-to-school relationship has shown through. The community has stepped in to ensure that students' needs were met and that students' quality educational experiences are sustained. For instance, to help provide students with access during remote learning sessions, restaurants, public facilities, and churches partnered with the district and provided internet access points for our students. Ensuring everyone had access allowed us to use technology in new ways to

maintain and establish new connections with our students, families, and community. These communication tools have stuck with us, and will continue to be a part of our relationships.

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:

Student achievement is at the forefront of all the decisions made at Petal High School, but we know that student achievement means more than the sum of our test scores. That is why Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are one of our cornerstones.

All teachers at PHS are part of a discipline-specific PLC. Our core subjects meet every day for 48 minutes and our SPED and CTE programs meet 2-3 times per week. During this time teachers respond to Four Essential Questions that direct their work: What do we want all students to know and be able to do? How will we know if they learn it? How will we respond when some students do not learn? How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient? Focusing on these areas keeps student learning at the center, allowing our educators to identify and be responsive to students' needs, and at the same time, honors their professional expertise and growth.

Though administrators play a role in protecting PLC time, each PLC is led by teachers. Some of these leadership roles are more formalized, department chairs and data leaders, yet all teachers play an active role in guiding the work of the PLC. Leaders do a careful job of placing teachers in areas of strength, whether it be curriculum/assessment development, data analysis, instructional supports, etc. to address the Four Essential Questions.

Our school has strong teacher leaders and we believe it is our job as administrators to create an environment that is conducive to their development. We feel like this works best when teachers are given time and an environment to collaborate and work together. Through various principal changes, accountability model alterations, and the recent pandemic, PLCs have been the constant at Petal High School for almost 20 years.

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

English Language Arts is taught through a teacher-developed curriculum following MS College and Career Ready Standards. Within each unit, students encounter informational and literary works; they consume and produce a variety of texts that show their critical-thinking skills. We take this approach because it is authentic to the tasks students will face beyond high school as engaged citizens, employees and students, but also because research behind this integrated approach shows its effectiveness in supporting students' critical thinking skills.

Throughout instructional units teachers ensure student-centered instruction by having students set goals and make choices in how they will show mastery. This is done through the teacher's design of open-ended tasks that allow students to demonstrate nuanced understanding. However, students are also provided ownership through their choice in what they will read, research, and what audience they address through their compositions. All of these instructional strategies create an individualized learning environment and tailor tasks to students' personal, professional goals and interests.

Teachers use a variety of assessments throughout the year to inform instruction and next steps for students. While formative assessments are utilized frequently, one of the most influential assessment practices in the ELA classroom is the use of peer- and self-assessment. In the ELA classroom students are empowered to evaluate their progress toward the learning goals through the application of clear rubrics. Not only does this ensure that students are active participants in their learning, but it also reinforces the skills through the level of understanding needed to critique their own or someone else's work.

Though we most frequently assess through writing in the ELA classroom, traditional summative assessments are used at checkpoints throughout the year to monitor growth and to inform interventions for

individual students. Both teacher and student monitor their growth in proficiency to determine areas of strengths and weaknesses in regards to the grade level standards, and work together to create a plan for next steps (i.e. tier support, peer tutoring, etc.). During PLC time, teachers discuss more persistent trends in student growth to determine if modifications are needed to address students' needs. This is where teachers explore data trends at the whole-class level to address the following essential questions of: What do we want all students to know and be able to do? How will we know if they learn it? How will we respond when some students do not learn? In answering these questions, PLCs identify gaps in curriculum and research ways to address those gaps in meaningful ways.

Through our response to the pandemic there have been several adjustments made; however, we were intentional about protecting key features of our instruction. No matter the means of interaction, we prioritized students engaging with high-level texts in meaningful ways. We wanted to protect students' access to quality learning experiences as well as their access to a community of learners that supported their growth. Because of those priorities, the shifts across virtual and traditional learning platforms has been manageable for students and we have avoided preventable gaps in their progress.

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

The Mathematics Department at Petal High School follows the MS College and Career Readiness Standards, using curricula created "in-house" by our mathematics team through their common planning periods and daily PLC. These curricula were designed to meet and exceed the expectations set forth by the state and challenge students to think mathematically, with a well-rounded understanding of the concepts and processes and how they apply to daily life.

Each teacher works together to design and refine these lessons to ensure that individual student's needs are met through the use of explicit instruction, cooperative learning, and individual practice and feedback. Student data is monitored through the PLC in both large-group and small-group settings, with the department seeking trends and making adjustments based on those trends. Student examples drive analysis of formative assessments, while summative assessments are analyzed through data meetings that compare classes' and students' data.

Teacher leaders in the department serve as Data Leaders, meeting with other departments to identify schoolwide trends and offer support for students and teachers alike. The work of Data Leaders in the math PLC has led to innovative practices around summative assessments, leading to the use of common assessment data in formative ways. One of the key changes in the past two years has been looking at "favorite mistakes" on common assessments as an opportunity for teachers to design lessons to address gaps in understanding. These have been done through lesson study opportunities in PLC, where teachers lead their colleagues through a lesson in order to elicit critiques before it is taken to students in the classroom. These lessons have been shown to not just benefit the students in the presenting teacher's class, but because of the shared work, they have benefited all students.

Our Mathematics Department teaches many upper-level courses, including Advanced Placement and Dual Credit options. They collectively work to improve students' preparation for high stakes tests, implementing lessons to prepare students for their section of the ACT based on students' scores and trends. They have offered "bootcamps" to Juniors taking the ACT.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented teachers with an opportunity to serve students in new ways. The Mathematics Department created an online library of lessons led by PHS teachers. These lessons are used by students facing health impairments that prevent them from attending school and for students who need reviews of daily lessons. These efforts showed teachers' focus on providing resources to students that meet them at their current level of performance.

The new reliance on technology along with the challenge brought on by student motivation, has brought to the forefront the necessity of individualizing instruction, specifically with responding to the question of how we will enrich learning for students who have already met the identified learning targets. The adjustments COVID teachers made to the usual scope and sequence allowed them to see areas of student mastery and

presented teachers with opportunities for being even more responsive in instruction. Teachers stepped up to the challenge to address this opportunity that will continue to positively influence student performance.

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

Our Science PLC is driven by data, focused on students, and oriented around the state standards and relevant, research-based instruction. Though the Science PLC is made up of various science courses, both life and physical sciences, they have focused their instructional efforts around cross-cutting concepts and implemented an inquiry-based learning approach. This includes the priority of spending at least one-third of class time in a lab setting. It is their goal as a PLC to develop scientific habits of mind that support a vertical progression through the sciences.

Within the last few years MS has released a new set of standards and assessments for science. This change has refocused the PLC around what students should know and be able to do within each science course. In the process, our life sciences have worked together to increase the rigor of classroom instruction and assessments and shifted to a more student-centered approach, rather than the traditional direct instruction model. As they've supported students into the new curriculum, they have been careful to keep a strong pulse of student gains through careful data study.

In conjunction with their standard studies, the team created common formative and summative assessments that are used as benchmark and progress monitoring assessments. Data from these are studied in PLC to identify areas of mastery as well as areas where students have not grown. From this careful data study, teachers have developed quarterly Boot Camp style sessions. During these sessions students are grouped with students from each science course based on their individual strengths and weaknesses. They then rotate through interactive stations, led by a teacher expert, to address the concept that the student needs support in. These Boot Camps have not only served to meet students' needs, but have also led to a stronger team approach to student learning.

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

The History PLC has conducted a careful study of the established state standards, and has created units of study designed to build conceptual understanding and historical habits of mind. This has been a shift from more traditional, chronological Social Studies instruction, allowing our students to focus on connecting historical phenomena, rather than seeing developments as discrete events.

All PHS history courses are focused on developing key habits of mind for a historian. For example, tracing multiple causes and effects is a critical thinking skill that is reinforced throughout all history units. Because this is the type of thinking that isn't easily shown through multiple choice assessment, our history department uses various assessment methods to identify next steps in instruction. One key assessment is the use of Document Based Questions. Through this type of assessment, students are guided through their use of primary documents in making historical connections and interpretations. This provides teachers with the depth of student understanding as students contextualize and evaluate historical artifacts.

During PLC time, teachers that teach the same subjects analyze student performance and mastery, and work together to create lessons, including team-teaching lessons. Through these discussions teachers have identified an overlapping need of building literacy skills and social-emotional skills. History teachers are heavily influenced by educational researchers Elliot Aronson and Spencer Kagan who use heterogeneous grouping for a student centered classroom. Students are able to build strong relationships with one another and the teacher. Classroom culture conducive to student centered learning is at the center of our history classrooms.

Teachers realize that our students are living in historical times. They are intentional in giving real-world experiences, including civic engagement opportunities, modeling legislative processes, and giving students the opportunity to vote or voice their opinions around current issues through organizations like Vox Populi.

1f. For secondary schools:

At PHS, college and career readiness is supported through a variety of opportunities. We offer various ways for students to gain work experience and college credit during their high school years. We have partnered with a local college to allow students to obtain their associate's degree prior to graduation. We offer Dual Credit and Advanced Placement courses in all disciplines. We also offer ACT Prep and PSAT Prep to provide students with support to reach their college goals. ACT, ACT WorkKeys, and PSAT-focused material are also a focus of our PLCs, so that this work is integrated with other instructional goals. We provide the practice ACT test twice during their first two years of high school, and then the ACT twice during their junior year of high school.

Consistently, approximately a third of our high school population is enrolled in skilled career and technical education (CTE) programs that work closely with community, business and industry professionals to prepare students for the most competitive careers. Five of eleven skilled CTE programs offer a national certification exam. CTE programs also offer opportunities to participate in clinical experiences, observation hours, mock interviews and our Hire Petal First initiative connecting students with community, business and industry professionals. Through our Work-based Learning course, students have opportunities for employment, internships and simulated work environments both on campus and in local businesses. Specifically, our Utility Lineman program, one of the first of its kind in Mississippi, is a partnership between a local company and community college where students receive onsite training and college credit in preparation for a career in the power industry. At PHS, career technical student organizations CTSOs, co-curricular clubs and athletics provide training and opportunities for students to gain leadership skills and facilitate opportunities to support organizations and individuals in need in our community.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Petal High School provides numerous opportunities for students to enhance their educational experience through our elective courses. We offer twenty-one elective courses, many of which have a sequence for long-term participation. Dual credit electives are offered in Psychology, Spanish, and General Music, along with Advanced Placement Art.

Our choral arts program includes women's choir, men's choir, advanced women's choir and advanced mixed choir. These groups are consistently top contestants in state and national competitions. In addition, our students and parents have begun hosting competitions for advanced mixed choirs. We offer multiple musical ensembles including marching, concert, and jazz bands, along with indoor percussion. Each of these groups is esteemed in their various competitions, receiving multiple state championships. Our indoor percussion has begun to compete at an international level. All of our performance arts groups feed into local and national opportunities, with many students attending clinics hosted by colleges and organizations in our area. Visual arts offerings include various levels of arts, ceramics, and now advanced placement. Their work is featured throughout our district and at local, public art exhibits.

Physical education and health take on the role of reminding students of the importance of self care and prioritizing their physical and mental health for long-term enjoyment. Along with myriad extra-curricular sports programs, we offer traditional PE and weightlifting.

Our JROTC is a fairly new program for our school; however, it has quickly earned the highest marks in their ratings and competitions. Students have excelled in the leadership, physical fitness, academic demands of this program and for two years has achieved state champion level, going on to compete at the national level.

We offer two foreign languages - French and Spanish, and Spanish includes three different levels as well as dual credit. We also support students in achieving the Seal of Biliteracy. Recently our foreign language teachers advocated for this to be recognized at the state level.

Technology classes include computer science, both regular and advanced placement, as well as multiple

levels of digital media. Our library is a hub for all types of learning. We have a writing center, and our librarian conducts writing and research workshops and training for classes. She trains qualifying students as peer tutors. These students are upper-classmen who specialize in particular areas to support students. In return for their expertise, these students are awarded community service hours. Students may self-select to meet with a peer tutor or a teacher may refer individual students. The librarian hosts a book club based on recommendations from the Magnolia List. Six books are chosen for the school year and read monthly. The first twelve students that sign up receive a free copy of the book. They meet for lunch to discuss and at the completion of reading all six, all students get to vote on their favorite book.

Our career and technical education programs provide additional opportunities for students to gain essential skills and knowledge. CTE offers fourteen two-year programs in subjects such as business and marketing, culinary arts, polymer science, etc.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

PLCs and Student Support Personnel look at multiple data points on students to identify gaps in student outcomes prior to creating students' schedules, particularly for our incoming 9th graders. For students who perform below grade level in math and English, we provide them with a High School Ready course. This is an intervention course where students receive instruction based on gaps in their foundational knowledge prior to transitioning into the on-grade-level course.

Throughout the year PLCs compile student performance data from common assessments to determine where students are (not) meeting grade-level targets or are not growing. This data is included in a Growth Sheet, so that teachers and other staff can quickly determine students' progress in order to collaborate around interventions.

We also utilize the Multi-Tier Support System (MTSS) and our At-Risk Committee to follow student progress. Two components of our MTSS are the core meeting with the intervention specialist, counselors and administrators, and our morning teacher teams. When the teachers meet around student outcomes, they are able to share strategies and information with one another based on their shared experiences. This allows teachers to identify underlying, pervasive issues and develop more research-based strategies to intervene. Our At-Risk Committee meets frequently as a check on students' progress to graduation. As a committee, we have assigned each at-risk student a mentor who meets with that student regularly to encourage them with attendance, behavior, and course progress. We have strengthened support for all students throughout the school. Following a college-style model, our librarian has trained students to facilitate a tutoring center to support students with all course work. Teachers refer students to tutoring, or students may self-select for these services. We have seen growth in students' performance across multiple data points and have anecdotally seen stronger community among our students.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Petal High School works to challenge students performing above grade level through a variety of efforts. In the classroom, students are closely monitored and their growth is measured, and this data is shared through transition teams from school to school. Upon arrival at PHS, student data from previous schools is shared with teachers, giving them insight into each student's history. Based on this information, 9th graders may be selected for advanced or AP courses in math, English, science, and history. Teachers provide students with challenging tasks through enrichment exercises embedded in their curriculum. Students also have the ability to self-enroll in a number of advanced courses, including Advanced Placement and Dual Credit offerings. This allows all students the opportunity to explore subjects in which they are passionate and seek additional challenges. Advanced Placement scores at Petal High School regularly exceed state and national averages, allowing students the opportunity to earn college credits. Cross-departmental AP teachers work collaboratively in a PLC to improve instructional strategies, identify gaps in student learning, recruit and retain students, and promote equity and access to AP courses. Dual Credit courses are offered in mathematics, English, history, science, and Career and Technical Education by Petal High School teachers

through local community colleges and universities. Students are provided opportunities to excel on nationally recognized tests, such as the PSAT. Before school, students are invited to PSAT preparatory classes, team-taught by three, expert teachers, giving students the opportunity to qualify for National Merit Honors. Additionally, our students have performed well on the ACT, with multiple students receiving perfect scores and over 40 students each year scoring 30 or higher. These students are recognized in our Pride Hall displays and through graduation. Students graduating with Honors and Highest Honors or with an associates and high school diploma are also recognized during graduation.

3c. Special education:

Day-to-day classroom instruction for our students in special education is driven by the individualized education program for each student. These are developed and implemented with much collaboration between the general education teacher and the SPED teacher. The collaboration includes SPED teachers attending PLC meetings as a department and across multiple departments to best support inclusive learning environments. Our special education department leads a focused faculty meeting that emphasizes both instructional strategies and social-emotional support for these students. Every traditional track student that receives special services has a learning strategies class embedded into their schedule. This is a tutorial-style class that provides time for students to build foundational skills or get support with course completion. Multiple SPED teachers, certified in each subject area, coordinate the learning strategies class. They work with students during their learning strategies period to help with comprehension of content and assignment completion for all of their general education classes to ensure they are on track with their goals. During this time they explicitly teach academic skills, along with social emotional and self-advocacy skills. Along with other modifications and accommodations, students are allowed to test in an alternate, more comfortable setting along with pull out services from general education classes during testing or electives if needed. Within the broader SPED program, we have different tracks for completion: work-based, certificate, or self-contained and community-based learning. Our school has partnered with a local hospital to provide work-based experiences for our certificate students. This is our CARES program, which places students in apprentice-style jobs at the hospital, with the opportunity to gain employment after high school.

No matter the placement, our SPED students participate in all academic programs, including Advanced Placement and Dual Credit courses, CTE, general electives, and athletics to ensure that they maximize their high school experience.

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

We are intentionally integrating English Language Learners into our learning environment in equitable ways, providing them access to the support necessary for their growth and success. As a school we have provided targeted, in-house training on strategies for EL scaffolds, interventions, and modifications and sought feedback from EL specialists.

We have maintained 3-4 EL-certified staff on campus. These professionals support EL students through pull-out services or by providing support to the student and/or teacher in the general education setting. The main focus of our practice has been ensuring active EL participation, using both social and content-specific language at their growth level. This requires innovative practices in how we support and assess EL students' understanding. Each department has done professional research and data studies in PLC on our EL students' performance. Based on that research, as a whole school, we are careful to ensure that EL students have the opportunity to listen, read, write and speak in all content areas to support their acquisition of English and subject-area skills. In recent years, we had an EL-focused Shadow a Student experience. We chose to go through an EL student's schedule with him/her to connect that experience with the social and academic outcomes we have seen in EL students' data. This culminated in a whole-school PD where teachers shared their observations and modeled strategies that supported their learning as Shadow Students.

One of our biggest strides in serving EL students has been fostering a relationship with them and their families. We have added translation services to all schoolwide and individual communication. We have added literacy nights and milestone celebrations specific to our EL students' accomplishments to build on

the unique relationship our EL coordinator is able to establish as she serves these students K-12. This trusting relationship has been key in supporting our EL students to their goals.

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

We have support in place to ensure the success of students that qualify as homeless/migrant. Our response is guided by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Program through the U.S. Department of Education. The law prohibits these students from being segregated in any way, therefore they receive access to the same assistance as all other students while also providing protections and services under the Act. Homeless students automatically qualify for Title I services. If a student was enrolled in special education services and we cannot secure that student's most recent IEP, one will be created immediately. Being in a rural area, almost all of our students who qualify as homeless live with another family whether relatives or others or meet other qualifications as homeless but do not live with a parent. If assessments are needed for placement or medical care, we make those arrangements. Our district employs a social worker located on our campus that assists with students' needs. We have partnered with community organizations to supply a closet on campus where students can get school supplies and clothes, free of charge. We have partnered with SouthEast MS Rural Health Initiative to provide exclusive, free health care to all students, with a clinic being on our district campus. We have a school-based behavior counselor and local mental health providers who meet with students during the school day as needed. If our homeless students face academic challenges, they are closely monitored by our at-risk team. We have made accommodations for students when their situations warrant (i.e. virtual learning options for extreme cases, accelerated graduation to secure on-campus housing, etc.) Our social worker also seeks funding and/or scholarships for students with financial challenges to participate in extracurricular activities with participation fees as well as graduation fees.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At PHS we engage students in a positive environment by empowering them in all aspects of the school. Our student Council is a group of students that meets with administration as a representative voice of students' needs around campus. They inform decisions about events and lead initiatives. The Student Council awarded over $10,000 to a young man for his Disney wish – all through fundraising efforts led by students. The Student Council was key in creating a graduation experience for the class of 2020. Student leaders advocated for an opportunity to walk across a stage in front of family and friends, and with administrators and community representatives, were able to expand on that request and create a parade and red-carpet family highlight that engaged the whole community. From their input, we now have new traditions that enlivened graduation for graduates and their families.

We have been intentional at welcoming new students into our school. Each semester we host a New Student Breakfast. This is an opportunity for new students to meet one another, veteran students, and support staff. Students from leadership organizations host this event, and they are mentored in how to build community by their club sponsors and school counselors. Over breakfast students visit with one another and learn about supports that are available in the school and specific to their needs.

We invest in students in positive ways. This starts by maintaining a consistent presence around campus and at events, so that students know we are approachable and invested. We use positive behavior referrals to encourage prosocial behaviors. As a consequence of a positive behavior referral, students are called into the principal's office to receive a bag of candies and a phone call home, and have their picture taken to be featured on our brag board. Our administrative team writes personal notes to students to encourage them. Each student gets at least one personal note from an administrator each year on their report card. These are opportunities for administrators to let each student know they are seen and valued.

During the COVID-19 pandemic,teachers worked to connect students through video conferencing to ensure that they were able to maintain the cooperative learning structures that are essential to their academic and social development. Teachers sent notes home, called to check in, and even had a billboard placed on a nearby highway stating, "Students, we miss you. - Your teachers."

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We strive to connect students to the wider community. Twice a year we have "Seniors Serve" days, in which seniors select an area of need within the community and then spend the day working to address that community issue. For this project, we've had students clean community parks, assist elderly, stock shelves at food pantries, and work with day cares and retirement centers. Through co-curricular organizations on campus, efforts to support the community are initiated by students, then supported by educators. Student organizations have supported the Make-a-Wish Foundation, assisted in funding a water well in Africa, provided socks to a local nursing home through a Sock-tober event, supported specific awareness months, and raised funds for other communities following natural disasters.

The partnership between our school and community is two-way. Our school is adopted by a faith-based organization that offers support and resources to students, and appreciation and support to faculty. They maintain a food pantry where students can inconspicuously collect non-perishable food and toiletries. There's also a stock of general school supplies and uniforms. If they need something that is not available, our social worker coordinates with First Bridge, another non-profit organization to meet that need. These needs reach beyond school needs, and include helping students have access to transportation, parenting supplies and furniture. The Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club recognize Mississippi Scholars and Tech Master recipients by providing a luncheon and ceremony. Through our Petal Education Foundation, community and business partners fund ongoing scholarship opportunities for graduating seniors. Each of these scholarships establishes a long-term connection between the local donor and the recipient. Students may select courses during their school day that are a product of the community's partnership with the

school. Our Utility Lineman program, one of the first of its kind in Mississippi, is a partnership between a local company and community college where students receive onsite training and college credit in preparation for a career in the power industry. Community, business and industry volunteers donate their time to advisory committees and provide individualized mock interview experiences for students.

School staff communicate with parents through phone calls, emails and handwritten Hope cards. School counselors organize events to provide interaction with parents and outside entities to support students through Freshmen Orientation, Open House, College Day, Financial Aid Night, Choices Night, Awards Day and Senior Awards Night.

3. **Creating Professional Culture:**

Teachers have a strong role in designing schoolwide logistics. Teachers constantly provide and develop their ideas around areas of operation, instruction, and culture. Their role in designing the traditional system provided insight that allowed us to respond to COVID-related challenges. For example, it was their input that allowed us to quickly get a chromebook to each student, and solve access issues for individual students. They were also able to assist in designing schedules and minimize disruptions from COVID. We know that the level of control individuals have in their work environment increases their satisfaction and makes us more effective, especially during an unpredictable situation.

We constantly seek ways to highlight and build-upon teachers' instructional expertise. This is why PLCs are such an integral part of our school culture. Through the work of these groups, teachers are provided the time and resources to explore questions that drive student success. In addition to PLCs, administrators invest time on individualized professional support. This starts with one-on-one meetings at the start of the school year where teachers engage in a reflective conversation and set goals for the year. These goals inform administrators work with teachers, and are also compiled to identify trends and develop whole-school goals. These goals are followed through in teachers' non-evaluative walk-throughs, where administrators give targeted support for teacher's goals. These conversations and ongoing support are especially important to our new teachers, who are also provided a mentor and monthly New Teacher Academies to support their organizational and instructional growth.

Following feedback from teachers, we have taken intentional steps to connect teachers across departments. We've established a Sunshine Committee to focus on connecting building relationships among staff. These social opportunities were particularly valuable during the professional isolation brought on by COVID.

Administrators have established avenues to highlight teachers' expertise through whole-staff PD, including full-day workshop-style sessions and monthly Focused Faculty meetings. These are teacher-led sessions that highlight teachers' approaches to a schoolwide goal. For instance, this past year we explored student-centered instruction to address the challenge of engagement during COVID. We shifted the Focused Faculty meetings from in-person to virtual so that teachers could share resources and experience the digital platform our students would use.

4. **School Leadership:**

We believe that everyone in our school is a leader and tasked with promoting our mission of empowering all students to thrive. The core leadership team serves as a catalyst in empowering students by empowering those with the most influence: teachers. Our system of PLCs relies heavily on Department Chairs, Data Team Leaders and each individual within the PLC; everyone has a role and influence. One example of the influence that teacher leaders play is the fact that the Department Chairs are heavily involved during the interview process, and then are empowered to design their department's schedule around their teachers' strengths. They work with counselors and the principal to approve and implement their proposals. This gives teachers ownership and influence in students' vertical experience through their discipline. As a result Department Chairs are often teaching the most challenging classes because they want to guide their teams in meeting all students' needs. This close relationship with teachers and administrators in decision-making is further demonstrated through monthly leadership meetings, including meetings with PLC leaders and data leaders, and monthly, teacher-led Focused Faculty meetings where instructional practices are exchanged

among departments. Our teacher leaders in math, English, foreign language and other disciplines are also influencing the field of education at a broader level, by serving on state and national committees around initiatives like standard and assessment development.

School leadership is also shared among administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and community members through Shared Decision. Culinary students host monthly meetings where the Shared Decision Committee discusses various topics affecting the school. These are facilitated by the principal, but are an open forum for ideas and discussions to make our school the best experience it can be for students and staff. It is from these meetings that we've been able to adapt school events during COVID to allow our students quality high school experiences, as they've provided input on morale-boosting activities, such as staff and student recognitions, attendance incentives, co-curricular activities, and graduation during times of social distancing.

Accountability is extremely important for strong leadership and a big part of this accountability are weekly meetings with central office personnel. These are led by the school leadership team and instructionally focused. Each principal discusses his/her classroom observations for the week, attendance, discipline data, and upcoming challenges. This allows for weekly reflection and discussion on ways that we can grow our teachers and administrators to help increase student achievement.

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

Principals and data leaders participated in an SEL self-audit and Shadow-a-Student experience, where we look at the school environment through the lens of the diverse populations we serve. These experiences have led to myriad improvements. One being how we support students' social-emotional needs. We have on-site counselors, and group counseling is provided for students to assist them in learning helpful strategies for self management and conflict resolution. Students have established a Multicultural Inclusion Club. The MIC leads cultural celebratory events on campus. One of their key initiatives has been designing a mural to emphasize cultural diversity and achievement among our students in Pride Hall. Along these same lines, our library has intentionally revised their collection to ensure that all student cultures are represented and that students have access to relevant and current resources around social issues that are relevant to them.

Something that we're really proud of that highlights our effort to create an inclusive school that connects our diverse student population is our Brew Crewe, where students from our resource and certificate classes run a morning coffee shop. The shop has a central location in our library and a mobile cart. The Brew Crewe is responsible for working as a team to stock shelves, prepare drinks, count money, and greet customers. This shop has allowed our SPED classes to practice work-related skills while giving staff and students the opportunity to interact with them. This has developed relationships that can be seen throughout our school and community.

We strive to connect students' experiences to life beyond K-12. Along these lines, mayoral candidates spoke to students who were eligible to vote to answer their questions around issues affecting our community. Through this event, students voiced their perspectives around topics that were important to them, ranging from use of taxes to challenging social practices. NAACP hosts an annual voter registration drive, giving qualifying students the opportunity to register to vote while on campus. VOX Populi is a club created by students to give them an outlet to talk about political issues.

The vaping epidemic is an issue that has had a strong influence on our students. We have partnered with a non-profit agency to provide a tobacco and vape cessation program for students and we participate in the Great American Smokeout. These initiatives are student-led and focus on educating students about the impacts of vaping and asks students to pledge to be tobacco and vape free.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

This was the easiest and most obvious answer for anyone in the Petal School District. Nearly 20 years ago, Petal High School started really investing in PLCs and the Lesson Study Model. Throughout this narrative, PLCs have been discussed over and over again and that is on purpose. We believe it is the single biggest reason for the sustained success of the Petal School District. There have been changes in leadership, teacher turnover, economic and demographic waves in our district, but throughout all of these changes, the cornerstone of PLCs has remained and it has allowed us to sustain our high level of accountability and provided opportunities for teachers to adapt to whatever changes we face. The time that is allotted to our teachers for PLC in their work day, provides them with the environment to thrive. These PLCs look slightly different in each department and at each school as they have organically evolved to meet the needs of those subjects, grade levels, and teacher strengths. Although they may look slightly different, there are basic expectations and guiding questions that include: What do we want our students to learn? How will we know if/when each student has learned it? How will we respond when some students don't learn it? and How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have already demonstrated proficiency?

The Petal School District believes strongly in our teachers as leaders and these PLCs are led, in their entirety, by Department Chairs. Administrators are encouraged to attend two PLCs a week and provide feedback to Department Chairs and are there for support, but the agenda and process is teacher led. The day-to-day work of our PLCs includes teachers working on common lesson plans, creating and analyzing common assessments, reading and discussing professional articles, conducting instructional rounds, or working through a lesson study. A collaborative review of a lesson study is some of the best professional development that we do. In these a teacher creates and develops a lesson that he/she will teach to the rest of the teachers during PLC. Colleagues go through the lesson as if they were students and provide feedback and ask questions to the teacher with the goal of refining and improving the upcoming lesson. The teacher also may video the lesson and bring it back to the group for further feedback and ideas for improvement. In following with the old adage of "Iron sharpens Iron," we believe that by providing the environment and opportunities for teachers to help one another improve their craft, our students will grow and prosper.