

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 Principal Timothy Shoaff
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 3431 North 400 West
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Kokomo State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 46901-9108

County Howard County

Telephone (765) 454-2332 Fax _____

Web site/URL
<https://www.nwsc.k12.in.us/o/northwestern-high-school> E-mail tim.shoaff@nwsc.k12.in.us

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mrs. Kristen Bilkey E-mail kristen.bilkey@nwsc.k12.in.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Northwestern School Corporation Tel. (765) 434-8101

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

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Ted Merrell
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, 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 (per district designation):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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)
- 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	80	73	153
10	81	62	143
11	73	87	160
12 or higher	71	74	145
Total Students	305	296	601

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.3 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 6.7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87.3 % White
 - 4.7 % 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 <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	37
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	597
(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, Chinese, Japanese, German

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

6 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 19 %

Total number students who qualify: 117

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 13 %
80 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>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>23</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>48</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	38
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 16:1

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%	97%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%

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	125
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	69%
Enrolled in a community college	15%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	5%
Found employment	7%
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

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2006

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

Supporting students to pursue unique paths through expectations, exploration, and excellence. Experiences that inspire confidence to impact the world.

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

<https://go.boarddocs.com/in/nwscd/Board.nsf/Public#>

Click on "policies" and then "2000 Program" and then "po2260 NONDISCRIMINATION AND ACCESS TO EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY"

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

Northwestern High School is located in North Central Indiana in a rural community. There are no incorporated cities or towns in Northwestern's district. Therefore, the school is the center of the community and the center of all community activities.

Northwestern High School has two distinct Hall of Fames housed within its walls. The Athletic Hall of Fame recognizes and memorializes former students' athletic accomplishments each year at a banquet. The regular Hall of fame recognizes and memorializes former students who have gone on to do amazing things across the state and nation. Both occur each Spring and are well attended by the community.

Our school is filled with student pride. when we decorate hallways, students honor and respect the school spirit displayed on the walls and teacher classrooms. Northwestern's Class Officers decorate hallways and classroom doors to help create school spirit each year. Sporting events are well attended, not because we win but because we are one community in support of every child that attends.

The Northwestern Community invested in the school and students by completing an upgrade to the athletic fields. The fields now play host to many local college teams including baseball and softball, and the fields are used by the state to host sectionals and regionals in football, soccer, baseball, softball, and track and field.

Band Competitions are held at Northwestern every year to bring in schools to its awesome facilities because Northwestern High School truly believes that communities are stronger together.

Northwestern students/parents/administrators have received the Sportsmanship award yearly from the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA). Character is extremely important to the entire Northwestern Community, and we strive to set the example.

Parents are often involved with the school, helping with school-wide celebrations and fundraising for school activities. Northwestern parents volunteer their time to be part of several booster clubs that help support student athletics, band, and all other academic and co-curricular activities. Their time and money collections are given back to Northwestern students in the way of scholarships every year, even during the COVID shutdown of 2020.

The Northwestern Community is characterized by a giving attitude; the school and community put forth canned food drives and coat drives, just to name a few, each year. Northwestern High School is the central location used to collect items for our community and the nearby town of Kokomo. We are constantly characterized as the high school that gives the most back to the county, even though we are not the largest school in the county.

With a small school feel, Northwestern provides big opportunities for students. We partner with Purdue University, Indiana University, and Ivy Tech Community College to offer over 50 college credits available to kids.

Our school has a reputation of excellence, and the teachers strive to hold everyone accountable to that expectation. Teachers set high expectations for kids but provide resources to achieve those goals in the form of afterschool tutoring and video resources for at-home learning.

Northwestern High School offers after school tutoring by teachers and students. Northwestern's National Honor Society students offer tutoring two days a week for any other student struggling in any class, and it is well attended.

As small as Northwestern High School is, we have a state approved alternative education program for struggling students. We offer credit recovery through this alternative education as well, and several of our students have graduated high school through this approved program over the past two years.

Each year, the counselors at Northwestern High School meet with every single kid and schedule classes for next year, touch base with how they are doing (socially and emotionally) and offer career guidance. We are one of only a few that can say we offer counseling services to every kid, face-to-face, every year.

Northwestern High School implements a Student Athletic Leadership Team to help make athletic and interscholastic decisions. This team meets each month and discusses potential activities, such as Unified Athletic events with special needs students from across the state. This team also travels and is part of the statewide Athletic Leadership Team.

Every day, Northwestern Students have 30 minutes right after lunch to engage in activities with a Homeroom class we call Face-to-Face. This time ensures that every child is recognized and known by at least one adult in the building. We have been doing this successfully for 7 years. This time sees students talk to the teacher about their grades, social pressure, emotional stability and pressure, and make connections with other teenagers. This time is filled with team building activities and time to study or get help from a subject specific teacher, if needed. By having Face-to-Face each day, the atmosphere at Northwestern High School is one characterized by caring, compassion, and acceptance.

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:

Northwestern High School's core curriculum is defined, supplied, and supported by the teachers. Northwestern's teachers create and maintain curriculum maps, viewable by the public, in every content area and discipline. The teachers focus on topics/units that are linked to Indiana State Standards, curricular resources used for specific topics, learning activities used to support the topics (including writings and questions), and assessments used. This layout supports students and helps parents and new teachers understand the sequence and scope of each class. The standards linked to each topic or unit are prioritized by strength of standard. In essence every teacher reviews the state standards for that subject and creates a high priority standards list of the top ten to fifteen standards relevant to every class. This list is used to create units and lessons ultimately assessed at the end of the unit by the teacher.

The aforementioned is what drives Northwestern High School's professional learning communities (PLCs). Our teachers meet once a week in groups of teachers that teach the same courses to look over curriculum maps, high priority standards, activities, and formative assessments. They teach the same standards within a timeframe, assess the students with the same formative assessment, look over the results, and adjust instruction and curriculum maps as needed.

Combined, these processes define our scope and sequence across the school for every class. It is a process our teachers have become very good at and one that is integrated in all aspects of curriculum development and textbook adoption processes school-wide. Every class goes through this process throughout the school year.

Northwestern creates its own formative assessments each year through the PLC process. These assessments drive remediation and enrichment activities in each classroom and are specific to student needs. These assessments are used to help prepare students for the state's summative high school assessment, ISTEP (Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress).

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

At the beginning of every year, Northwestern English teachers hold a meeting where they look over the content of each class and adjust the scope and sequence as needed. Every teacher makes sure to place an importance on writing and reading complex fiction and non-fiction materials, beginning with freshman year through senior year. The English department works with a top-down approach. They figure out what they want students at Northwestern to know by the end of the senior year, and they work on a scope and sequence that supports those goals. English teachers use past summative assessments to help guide their research of best practices for units within their curriculum maps, and they create and use formative assessments to help develop remediation and enrichment activities after each formative assessment. These formative assessments range from writing to reading, and each one assesses State Standards defined in the English Department's high priority list. Reading is assessed through the use of fiction and non-fiction pieces. Fiction is used to assess certain elements, such as characterization and setting. Non-fiction is used to assess elements such as historical details and author's purpose. Writing assessments are used to pinpoint individual's structural mistakes in writing and to provide appropriate feedback to individual students to improve writing skills.

After March of 2020, the Northwestern English Department placed more emphasis on their formative assessments to help narrow the achievement gap. They are able to do this by presenting instructional content over iPads (every student has an iPad), and they are able to assess students at school or quarantined at home in a real-time manner, giving instant feedback to students.

At the beginning of their freshmen English class, students learn about growth mindset and how to apply that mindset. Teachers then use this mindset to setup instructional methods such as literature circles and Socratic seminars. By junior year, students are used to Standards Based Grading where teachers give students multiple perspectives on standards and levels of completion through assessment. Students' senior year is characterized by high levels of language learning. Northwestern High School offers kids to take AP level English classes or Indiana university level English classes. Both paths afford students an opportunity to earn University credit and learn at high levels.

Northwestern High School English teachers focus on a depth of instruction and retention rather than breadth of assignments. The teachers make sure the kids know how to achieve the state standards well by focusing on high priority standards and adjusting materials/lessons through the weekly PLC process.

Students who fail to meet expectations, fail the first semester and removed from second semester English and placed back in a remedial English class that repeats first semester's standards. The teachers that instruct those classes take alternative measures to reteach State Standards and provide individualized instruction and attention.

Northwestern High School's English Department has a reputation of being the best, and high student scores on ISTEP (above state average every year) consistently reaffirm the positive approach the teachers take toward teaching with standards and students in mind.

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

Northwestern High School math teachers participated with the high school principal in a book study (Limitless Mind by Jo Boaler) in the spring of 2020 when students were sent home due to COVID. This time and study allowed the teachers to rethink their ideas of Math instruction and the importance of productive struggle. Teachers learned how to take kids through the pit of struggle and discovery in order to gain a different level of understanding mathematics. This new way of thinking helped propel the teachers to readjust their curriculum maps and create a new focus on priority standards.

Northwestern teachers do not follow a textbook curriculum; they create their own learning experiences based on state standards by piecing together practices from textbooks on students' iPads, using technology to create games as learning experiences, and creating productive struggle experiences. Often Northwestern high School's math teachers will introduce a new topic by reviewing what they know and asking kids to put processes together to figure out a new concept. This productive struggle often leads kids to a deeper understanding of the state standard being covered.

Math teachers at Northwestern are in weekly PLCs to adjust curriculum maps, curriculum, activities, and assessments. Teachers begin with a focus on priority standards and work to create productive learning struggles for students and a curriculum scope and sequence that allows for remediation and enrichment. These PLCs create, adjust, and use assessments to inform instruction and group kids into remediation groups and enrichment groups. Priority standards drive the curriculum and timing of lessons.

Previous summative assessments are used as a starting point for Algebra I and Geometry students at the beginning of each year. Since Indiana does not test high school kids every year, Northwestern High School teachers place an importance on formative assessments. Formative assessments are used to create change and for student placement.

All Northwestern math teachers offer students extra help after school in the form of tutoring or homework help. Teachers are characterized as flexible and caring and offer live-classes for students quarantined or sick due to COVID. Most after school tutoring by our National Honor Society students is in Mathematics, and our teachers oversee this tutoring.

Mathematics is treated as a foundation class. This means if a student fails to pass the first semester of Algebra I, that student must not move onto the next semester but retake the first semester. The second

semester is made-up in the summer, and students are then back on track with their peers. Northwestern High School mathematics teachers and curriculum place high importance on meeting kids where they are.

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

Science classes, at Northwestern High School, place emphasis on discovery and connection. All of Northwestern's science teachers use hands-on activities to help kids understand the scientific process. From Biology class where students dissect worms to Chemistry where students create chemical compounds in beakers, Northwestern teachers use hands-on activities to explain and teach Indiana State Standards.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are the foundation for science teachers at Northwestern High School. Within these PLCs, teachers identify priority standards, research best practices, create learning experiences, and create subject specific assessments.

Biology is our foundation science class at Northwestern High School, and we have two teachers that collaborate and teach Biology together. These two teachers are unique at Northwestern because they use Standards Based Grading to make sure all kids know the foundations of science before moving on to their next classes. The teachers meet regularly to discuss standards, activities, and assessments in their PLCs to create better learning environments for Northwestern students.

Northwestern High School houses multiple higher level classes that meet our students' needs. We offer students the choice between Anatomy and Physiology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, and Indiana University's college Biology course. All of these classes are designed around the interests of students, and these classes are housed in our recently renovated science wing of the school, offering more room for hands-on activities.

Connected with Honor's Biology and AP Chemistry is a class called Science Research. Every year, kids in these courses create Science Fair projects to showcase around the state. Northwestern High School is well known for placing in the top group at the state competition each year and placing well at the international competitions. There are two teachers that co-teach this class, and students utilize the fantastic labs and greenhouse (connected to the science classrooms) Northwestern High School has to offer.

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

Social Studies teachers at Northwestern High School utilize Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to help identify priority standards, create and adjust engaging instruction, and create appropriate formative assessments. Northwestern's Social Studies teachers meet once a week in their PLCs, and their focus is on student learning.

Formative assessments focus on academic standards, identified last year and monitored yearly, with a focus on student mastery. Standards to be covered each day/each lesson are relayed to students by the teacher as "I can..." statements. These statements help students know where they should be at the end of class, and often Northwestern teachers will use this for students to reflect upon at the end of class.

Instructional methods used vary from teacher to teacher, but all teachers use hands on activities to engage kids in the curriculum. World History students engage with the new cultures as they take virtual tours, monitored and given by the Northwestern teacher. Students in U.S. History engage in hands-on instruction that walks them through the horrific slave trade and triumphant end of the Civil War. Economics and Government teachers have their students create their own civilizations with a social structure and economy via current gaming technology. AP Government class uses more project-based learning units to engage students in state standards. These are just a few interactive activities Northwestern teachers use in their Social Studies units.

Each year, Government students take a trip to the courthouse to watch judicial proceedings. The kids do not watch real-life proceedings but mock proceedings. However, Northwestern students walk away from the mock trial proceedings with renewed vision of our local government. The teachers at Northwestern High School work conjunctively with our local prosecutors, judges, and city officials to provide students with an

inside look into local government.

Northwestern High School juniors and seniors are presented with the opportunity to take two consecutive college history classes from Indiana University, taught by one of their high school teachers. If taken, students complete all of their university freshman level classes while in high school. These two classes help students prepare for advanced college work and create a higher education academic atmosphere.

1f. For secondary schools:

Northwestern High School is a proud supporter of a National Honor Society (NHS) chapter. Students accepted into Northwestern's NHS commit to service, leadership, scholarship, and character. These four pillars of NHS help our students prepare for life after high school as they enter the work force, community college, or university. National Honor Society supports student success by giving each high school student a sense of civic responsibility coupled with character.

Northwestern High School currently offers 61 college/university credit hours through Ivy Tech Community College, Indiana University, and Purdue University. The high school offers students the opportunity to take the following classes for college credit: Biology, Business, Computer Science, Education, English, History, Mathematics, Political Science, Public Speaking, and Spanish. Coupled with these college courses, Northwestern offers 5 AP courses in areas where college credits are not awarded, giving kids more of an opportunity to earn college credit and be college ready. The pass rate of these college classes is over 90 percent every year, a testimony to Northwestern students and teachers.

In addition to college credits, Northwestern partners with a Career Center in the nearby city of Kokomo, where students may take career classes and earn Ivy Tech Community College credits. These classes range from Culinary Arts, Nursing, Criminal Justice, and Automotive Technician, just to name a few. The majority of Northwestern kids that enroll at this career center graduate high school with industry certified credentials in their area of study, helping them land jobs and proceed with higher education.

Student leadership is not a stranger to Northwestern High School students. Our students have the opportunity to join Student Council, National Honor Society (NHS), Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Spanish Club, German Club, and Student Athletic Leadership Team (SALT). All of these clubs offer students an opportunity to develop leadership skills and practice leadership within the community. Northwestern High School also offers student the chance to sign-up for a class titled "Community Service" where students develop and lead community service activities in Kokomo, Indiana.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Other areas of study at Northwestern High School include the following classes: agriculture, band, business, choir, computer science, consumer sciences, engineering and design, health, personal finance, physical education, visual arts, and yearbook. All of these classes can be accessed from freshman year through senior year of high school.

These classes help support the acquisition of skill by providing students with creative outlets that help students think about topics and subjects with a critical mind. These classes help support math through technology and real-life situational instruction, English acquisition through writing and non-fiction reading, and science skills through hypothesis and observation. Altogether, Northwestern High School's additional classes support foundational academics by encouraging academic inquiry through project-based learning. Every one of these classroom teachers also participates in a Professional Learning Community (PLC). Most of these teachers are in a PLC titled "CTE" where teachers focus on creating project-based lessons around employability skills. The PLCs then create assessments to help teachers identify students in need of support

and enrichment.

Band and choir classes enrich students' academic experiences by incorporating opportunities that resemble athletic experiences while in school co-curricular classes. These experiences range from practicing fine motor skill and engaging in difficult processes that encourage refinement at detailed levels. The arts programs at Northwestern High School play a large role in the academic successes here because they are intricately linked to the fabric of every educational experience by encouraging discipline and expecting rigor. Proof of this lies in the awards Northwestern students receive each year. Indiana State School Music Association (ISSMA) has awarded Northwestern High School the highest level of distinction three years in a row. Northwestern has received the All-Department Music Award. This is where students in band and choir compete and have earned "gold" ratings in all events. This distinguished award is only given to a small number of schools, and Northwestern High School has been the smallest school to receive this award each year, proof that the students work hard, and teachers provide adequate support for success.

Northwestern does not have a traditional library for students. Instead, the school has a Learning Commons that functions as a library, common learning area, and maker-space. Students come to this area as a class to learn about different media and how to use them for classroom purposes, and classes meet here in the classroom area for an open-concept learning environment to help student collaborate and learn from each other with the help of iPads and smart screens for group presentations. As well, students can also come to the Learning Commons individually to tap into their creative sides via the maker-space. There is a dedicated space where students can use different manipulatives to create individual projects ranging from Lego builds to origami cranes to show support for the Ukrainian citizens.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Below grade level students experience a valuable support system at Northwestern High School. Every teacher has a curriculum map with high priority standards and leveled activities. Each year, teachers support struggling students by meeting with their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), adjusting curriculum to meet student needs, creating grade-level assessments, and creating remedial instruction for below grade level students. This process supports Northwestern students and helps teachers group students according to academic preparedness on subject-specific formative assessments.

After going through a semester of formative assessments and re-teaching, any student who still fails a core class (math, English, science) is placed back in a repeat class. This class does not go back through the same material but reteaches and offers more practice time for the high priority standards they did not pass in the first semester. Since students who fail first semester are automatically placed in repeat courses, they also get the opportunity to catch back up with their peers through summer school. The second semester they missed is immediately taught to students after the end of second semester. This continuation of class allows students to regain credit lost and catch up, academically, with their peers before the start of the next school year.

Students that fail multiple classes are often placed into a credit recovery program. Though we utilize an online platform to help student learn at their own paces, we also assign a teacher to each kid. This teacher monitors progress and help students one-on-one as they struggle or need help with activities. Northwestern High School constantly looks for engaging materials/programs when considering online learning platforms.

Another support below grade level students receive is after school tutoring. We have two dedicated teachers that help with online classes after school is over; parents can sign their children up for this hour-long after school tutoring. The teachers work one-on-one with students and help them with their online learning activities from the credit recovery platform.

Northwestern's National Honor Society students also spend two days a week to help remediate and tutor any individuals below grade level. This peer tutoring is also monitored by two different teachers that sponsor National Honor Society. This is often well attended by students that need a lot to a little academic help.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students at Northwestern High School that are above grade level experience enrichment activities. Teachers in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) regularly adjust curriculum to enhance a student's experience in all classes. If a student is passing formative assessments on high priority standards, s/he is challenged with activities that allow the student to explore the standard more in-depth.

Beyond enrichment opportunities for students, Northwestern High School has an abundance of accelerated learning opportunities. Students have the ability to take more than 61 direct college or university credits from high school teachers at Northwestern. The school offers fundamental university classes to challenge sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Beyond in-house college credits, Northwestern partners with an area school to offer post-secondary training and credits. These credits are offered in the fields of nursing, auto-mechanics, criminal justice, and culinary arts, just to name a few. Combined, students are challenged at the career center to accelerate their learning and graduate with a certification or advanced degree.

Northwestern High School does not keep track of a traditional top-five or top twenty percent for class rank. Instead, the high school utilizes the Latin honors system to motivate and encourage all students. Students can challenge themselves in their freshmen year and realize their high school academic goals at graduation. As well, students can be awarded into the Northwestern chapter of National Honor Society. This distinct society is awarded to students, beginning their junior year, who excel academically. National Honor Society supports students above grade level by encouraging a higher level of class participation.

3c. Special education:

Special education students are supported throughout their high school career at Northwestern. We have two licensed special education teachers at the high school, and each teacher has a teacher's aid to help with instruction and classroom accommodations. Often our teachers or aids will push into a class and offer accommodations to special needs students. These needs can range from a physical to mental impairment, and the teachers at Northwestern High School are specifically trained and certified to meet the needs of all students.

Kids identified for the special education program at the high school are separated by grade level. The first teacher is the case worker for Freshmen and Sophomore students. This teacher instructs and supports those two grade levels so she can go in-depth with the subjects covered in typical Freshmen and Sophomore classes. The class she teaches is a resource study hall. All of the students on her case load take general education classes, but they get customized support based on specific student need. The second teacher instructs Juniors and Seniors, and she supports students in the same manner, pushing into classes for support as needed. Both teachers are highly qualified and provide grade-level support for all students identified as special needs at Northwestern.

Students that are designated as non-diploma track based on testing are supported in a life-skills program that focuses on service, character, and attitude. This program is located in a county-wide special education cooperative classroom in a neighboring school. The combined spending power of all county schools allows ample support and creative activities for special needs students.

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

Though Northwestern High School does not have an English Language Learners program, we provide testing (WIDA) for identified students every year. The only students we have that require ELL testing are the foreign exchange students that enter Northwestern on an exchange contract. All of these kids are pushing for academic classes to transfer to a college or university in the United States. Northwestern's foreign exchange students make up about one percent of the population, yearly.

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

Northwestern High School does not have a migrant population, but we do have a homeless population. For students with shelter situations or unaccompanied youth, Northwestern High school offers assistance through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This program is administered by Northwestern's Student Services Director. She actively seeks students that fit this description every year and provides academic and social support based upon this Act. Homeless youth are offered free education, food, and travel to and from school and/or work as needed. Northwestern's Student Services Director supports identified students through public and private funding. All aspects of helping create a stable lifestyle for homeless children is taken into account. Clothing items are purchased, and take-home bags of food are given to students in need every week. Every stone is turned in an effort to help manage physical and emotional needs of homeless students.

The Foreign Exchange program at Northwestern High School serves a very specific population, and this population of exchange students seeks to add to the diversity and culture of the school. Students from other countries stay with Northwestern families and a dedicated advisor in the school that helps them with anything they might need. This teacher-advisor acts as a liaison between the school and student but also helps expose Northwestern's American students to different cultures.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Northwestern High School has a very unique way to address social and emotional student needs. The high school has a dedicated time (30 minutes), right after lunch, called Face-to-Face. This is like homeroom for high school, only with a purpose. Every kid is placed in a classroom with no more than 19 other students (20 total) and a teacher. Students are with that teacher and each other for all four years of high school. This time is structured by a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that creates lesson plans geared around social and emotional learning (SEL). This PLC also creates grade check time where teachers check in with individual students and connect struggling students with extra help. Northwestern High School Face-to-Face time has monthly lesson plans. Some of the lesson plans are as follows: how to deal with stress and anxiety, career planning, college/university/trade school planning, appropriate relationships, how to study, how to take good class notes, where to go for help with homework, overcoming fear or grief, and how to manage social media (just to name a few).

As COVID-19 progressed in 2020, Northwestern High School had to close its doors for the final 9 weeks of school. With this closure, the Face-to-Face classes became more valuable. Every time we have had to close because of a COVID outbreak, the Face-to-Face class has been time for teachers to check in with students via Zoom or Google Meet. We have altered some lessons by keeping self-help video online, but teachers are at the core of this all important class.

Along with Face-to-Face, we have certified counselors that check in with each student. Not too many schools can say that an adult touches base with each student, but Northwestern High School has placed a focus on checking in with each student before, during, and after scheduling classes for the next year. Counselors also help the Face-to-Face PLC come up with engaging SEL topics and activities.

Clubs and club time at Northwestern High School play an important role in social and emotional growth. Every month, Northwestern students get an opportunity to connect with each other through a club that meets during school time (30 minutes). These clubs connect kids with likeminded interests and give students time to create relationships.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Since the academic expectation at Northwestern High School is high, families have come to count on Northwestern High School to prepare their children for university level work. Northwestern has a rich tradition of offering high level of work by partnering with Indiana University, Purdue University, and Ivy Tech Community College. These partnerships give students an opportunity to showcase their abilities and provide academic strength to students' schedules.

Northwestern High School's Agriculture program partners with several local business to provide opportunities for students to engage in agricultural processes in and around Howard County. They partner with a waste solutions company, Merrell Brothers, a grain company, Kokomo Grain, and several large farmers. All of these community partners provide summer internships for students and often hire them right out of high school. The valuable experience in the agriculture business and academic support provided by these businesses are the key reasons for the lasting partnerships.

Northwestern High School also partners with other county high schools. To offer more education and training to students, the high school partners with another local high school to offer Career and Technical Education opportunities. Here students find support in traditional academic areas by engaging in hands-on activities like auto-body tech, culinary arts, or welding (to name a few). This partnership ensures Northwestern students stay engaged and focused on the future. Northwestern also partners with all the Howard County schools to form a Special Education Co-operative. The co-op supports all schools and all children identified as special needs. Through this partnership, Northwestern High School can offer many exceptional programs to its students and provide needed support to help create sustainable school

improvement.

Northwestern High School has found that engaging families in the educational process starts with teachers. All teachers place an importance on contacting parents and seeking parental support when children begin falling behind expectations. This open communication creates a driving bond between classroom teachers and parents or guardians.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers at Northwestern High School are supported through Administration and Technology Departments. When the pandemic of 2020 forced Northwestern High School to shut its doors, teachers found themselves isolated and alone while simultaneously trying to educate children virtually. At this time, Northwestern High School administration and technology department decided they needed to step up and support the teachers.

Administration began communicating every other day with teachers via Flipgrid video updates and weekly staff Google Meets. As well, the administration began a book study with the Math department to support their professional development and create social connections, offering emotional support to teachers that were isolated from each other. This support continued to the next year, even though we were back in-person for the start of the 2020-21 school year. The administration continued to support teachers through professional development, with a focus on blended learning since many kids found themselves quarantined from in-person learning. The professional development was often whole-school focused, but there were many times where departments were able to break away and receive special development time. This same support continues today.

The technology department began weekly professional development during the shutdown of 2020. Their development was specific to utilizing technology to enhance distance learning. The technology department focused on using staff and student iPads to deliver content and provide teachers with tools to gather valuable feedback during distance learning, including but not limited to enhancing science labs and virtually assessing students across all grade and subject levels. This support and development continued to the next school year, and teachers have been able to continue quarantined students' education even as they take formative and summative assessments from home.

This year, Northwestern administration realized they needed additional support for teachers by replacing an outdated teaching rubric with a new rubric focused on improving instruction in the classroom. The new rubric, by NIET, places a focus on teacher support, and this allows administrators to spend more time with struggling or new teachers. As well, administration will be able to run reports on the rubric and determine where the greatest staff need is for professional development.

The biggest leap for the professional culture at Northwestern High School has been the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). We have a PLC Leadership Team, focused on the vision and direction of all PLCs, and we have every teacher supported in a productive and meaningful PLC of their own. These PLCs give teachers much needed professional support and allows them to take ownership in their own professional development and the instructional direction of their departments. All of these supports were a result, directly or indirectly, of the pandemic of 2020, and teachers now have adequate support to move forward.

4. School Leadership:

Northwestern High School's leadership model places focus on sustainable change and support that promote student growth. The high school employs four administrators. The high school's principal is the primary support system for all instructional change at Northwestern. The principal is responsible for teacher activity and growth, as well as the director of the school vision and mission. The principal is the primary gatekeeper of student growth data and oversees teacher disaggregation of that data at Northwestern.

The assistant principal's main focus at Northwestern High School is to support and create change in students

and parents and foster working relationships between students, parents, and teachers. It is this focus that allows the assistant principal to focus on restorative justice, and by doing so, students, teachers, and parents build stronger relationships based upon healing. The assistant principal plays an important role in maintaining policies and procedures in regard to students. This position oversees the student handbook, making sure traditional expectations of students and cultural change coexist to support students and provide teachers with needed resources in order to raise student achievement.

The third administrator at Northwestern High School is the Student Services Director. This director oversees the guidance counselors at the high school, and this person also makes sure student data is collected to help achieve school and community goals. In essence, the director oversees the social and emotional growth of all students and monitors all the post-high school data to track the progress of the school after students leave Northwestern.

The fourth administrator is the Athletic Director. This director schedules all athletic events, supervises all home athletic events (along with both principals), manages bussing for athletics, and builds strong community support for Northwestern Athletes. This position, possibly the most time consuming, is directly involved in the support of students and places a large focus on academic excellence. The Athletic Director hires coaches that build into students' lives and create a support system around each student to help student achievement.

All of these administrative role's pale in comparison to the teacher leaders at Northwestern High School. At this school, teachers are given the opportunity to raise their level of influence by participating in a Team Leader or Professional Learning Community Leader position. These major leadership roles direct the school and provide valuable feedback and support to administration, but most of all, these teacher leaders impact and support student achievement through their voice and decisions. These leaders help guide the yearly school improvement plan, and these leaders guide weekly PLCs that focus solely on student achievement and support.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Northwestern High School places importance on being culturally responsive. The teachers that lead the Social Emotional Learning PLC constantly look to integrate all cultures into celebratory activities each month. Whether it is a cultural scavenger hunt for items placed around the school for Black History Month or an Irish-American March madness activity, Northwestern's PLC team gives students an opportunity to interact and in different cultures and celebrates/supports the students of different backgrounds. This team has a list of monthly celebrations, starting with National Hispanic Heritage Month in September and ending with Asian/Pacific Heritage Month in May, and all the others in between.

Last year, Northwestern High School imparted on a journey to be more culturally responsible by entering into a compact with the Indiana Department of Education and their cultural specialist. He came to the school for several visits, meeting first with the administration and then the Team Leaders. We discussed cultural responsibility and student support. With his help, Northwestern High School successfully integrated supports into the student handbook and changed the culture of the classrooms to be more inviting and supportive of students with different backgrounds.

Along with this, Northwestern High School offers an Ethnic Studies class every year. This class focuses on historical and current social practices of different ethnic and racial groups in the United States. Topics are often political in nature and allow students to explore their own ideas on social agendas. The standards covered in this class include but are not limited to cultural awareness, cultural histories, lived experiences, and historical and contemporary contributions, to name a few. A great support tool for students of different backgrounds, this class' overarching goal is to provide all students with a different lens to view the current world.

Northwestern High School recognizes that being culturally responsive and making sure equity is at the forefront of assessments, classroom instruction, and student discipline is not just about color or religion. The high school and the adults that instruct students understand that all children fit into the category of different

and diverse cultures. The evolution of culture in society has played a large role in the students that walk the hall at Northwestern. Just because a lot of the kids that walk the hall look the same on the outside, they all come from diverse experiences and bring with them diverse expectations for school. Northwestern High school recognizes this and seeks to celebrate everyone's differences. We focus on acceptance. This mindset has helped all adults and children reach a mutual understanding of love and forgiveness, the ultimate support for all children of diverse backgrounds.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at Northwestern High School is the one practice that has been the most instrumental in supporting student success and creating sustainable change for classroom instruction.

Professional Learning communities are split into departments. We have Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, Musical Arts, Physical Education, Social Emotional Learning (SEL or Face-to-Face), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) PLCs. Each of these PLCs has a leader, and their focus is to be student centered when adjust instructional practices, identifying priority standards, creating formative assessments, and readjusting instruction in response to student performance. Even the SEL professional learning community, comprised of Northwestern High School's special education and media center teachers, makes student achievement and support their number one goal.

This overarching practice has a direct impact on planning for students' futures and helps foster positive relationships among students. Northwestern High School's SEL PLC creates monthly activities where students engage in future planning and career exploration. The goal for these activities is to alleviate stress as kids approach graduation, determining what their next step will be in life after school. The SEL group also focuses on team building activities that help reinforce positive student to student relationships. Many students come to Northwestern High School with a misconception of positive, healthy relationships, and another goal for this PLC is to help kids understand what it looks, and sounds like to have positive relationships in life. Through the professional learning community process the SEL PLC creates monthly activities that directly focus on many supports for students.

Along the same lines, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) PLC focuses on helping students learn and strengthen their employability skills. Employability skills are defined by the Governor's Workforce in Indiana, and these skills are identified as essential by Northwestern High School's CTE PLC. This PLC has created a Google spreadsheet that has every student in the high school, and they, as a group of teachers, monitor all the kids and mark student progress of employability skills until each is mastered by each student. This group plays an important role in the gathering of data and preparation of students as they enter the workforce or move to a college or university.

The rest of the PLCs place their focus on instruction and student support. Every other PLC has identified priority standards within their content and for each class. Then every PLC adjusts their curriculum maps and includes formative assessments to test students on content knowledge. Northwestern teachers then identify students that need more support and restructure their instruction to help meet those students. Students that pass formative assessments are given an opportunity to go deeper into those standards through enrichment projects. The rest of these groups provide a much needed support system for students performing below and above grade level.

The introduction of PLCs at Northwestern High School is the number one practice that leads to the school's success.