

U.S. Department of Education
2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Jean S. Hitchcock

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

Official School Name Signature School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 610 Main Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Evansville State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 47708-1618

County Vanderburgh State School Code Number* 9315

Telephone 812-421-1820 Fax 812-421-9189

Web site/URL http://www.signature.edu E-mail jean.hitchcock@signature.edu

Twitter Handle
@SignatureSchool Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Ms. Jean Hitchcock, N/A E-mail: jean.hitchcock@signature.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Signature School Tel. 812-421-1820

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

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Robert L. Koch, II
(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 that it is accurate.

Date

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

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, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	40	49	89
10	36	47	83
11	32	47	79
12	30	47	77
Total Students	138	190	328

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 15 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 5%

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, 2012 until the end of the school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	338
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.047
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 12 %
41 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 17
 Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Hindi, Tagalog, Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, German, Kannada, Amoy, Sinhalese, Bengali, Telugu, Korean.
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %
 Total number students who qualify: 30

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 0 %
0 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 categories.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 0 Autism | 0 Orthopedic Impairment |
| 0 Deafness | 0 Other Health Impaired |
| 0 Deaf-Blindness | 0 Specific Learning Disability |
| 0 Emotional Disturbance | 0 Speech or Language Impairment |
| 0 Hearing Impairment | 0 Traumatic Brain Injury |
| 0 Mental Retardation | 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| 0 Multiple Disabilities | 0 Developmentally Delayed |

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	24
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1

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

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	70
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
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. 2008

PART III – SUMMARY

Signature School opened as Indiana's first charter high school in 2002. Our mission is "to meet the needs of self-motivated learners in a progressive environment driven by global concerns. We emphasize rigor and excellence in academics, the arts, integrated technologies, and community service." Signature believes that students, given the opportunity, can achieve a high level of academic success. Consequently, all Signature students, regardless of test scores or other criteria, are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. There are no barriers. Motivation is the only requirement.

Signature's accomplishments are impressive and are the result of a committed faculty and staff. Since 2006, Signature School consistently has been ranked in the top 100 high schools by Newsweek Magazine, U.S. News and World Report, or the Washington Post. The school has consistently been rated number one in the Midwest and in the state of Indiana by the same publications during the same time frame. Signature School is worthy of the National Blue Ribbon Award because of the high levels of performance it has attained and sustained throughout its history.

Signature has established a tradition of high academic performance and achievement by creating a culture of learning based on trust and mutual respect. Students, with their "signatures," attend the school by choice, knowing that the educational opportunities are challenging and meet the academic needs of motivated students. Faculty and staff are committed to helping students meet their educational goals and hold themselves accountable through external assessments, such as state, national, and international testing, as well as through internal evaluation. The results of these assessments are published in an annual report.

Signature's learning environment is unique because of its philosophical assumptions that, given the opportunity, individuals will act responsibly. We have an open campus, located in downtown Evansville. Students eat lunch at local restaurants. They go to the YMCA for PE and to the nearby public library for research. We have no bells, no lockers and no theft. Treated like the young adults that they are, Signature students respond accordingly.

Along with high academic expectations, Signature School promotes global citizenship by requiring students to fulfill 100 hours of community service over the course of four years. Through the community service program Signature School students learn the importance of contributing to their school and to their local and international communities. Collectively, students last year contributed 12,826 hours of their time to organizations such as the Humane Society and Heifer Project International.

In its twelve-year history, Signature has reached many milestones. In 2002, we opened as Indiana's first charter high school with an enrollment of 210 students; the school is now at capacity serving 330 students and has a waiting list. In 2003, the Indiana Department of Education awarded the school its first Four Star Award based on attendance and the state's standardized tests. In 2006, the state-of-art science center opened, and we were approved to implement the IB Programme. In 2008, the school received the National Blue Ribbon Award and graduated its first class of IB Diploma candidates. In 2010, Signature first broke into the ranks of Newsweek's top ten high schools. In 2013, Signature School set the state record for AP performance with 95% of its seniors passing at least one AP exam. Also in 2013, the school celebrated a 92% IB Diploma award rate.

In accordance with Indiana Charter School law, enrollment at Signature School is open to any Indiana resident. Interested families from surrounding counties and a wide variety of educational, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds submit applications during an open enrollment period. Since 2008, the number of applicants to the school has exceeded the number of spaces, and Signature has conducted a lottery, as prescribed by the Indiana Charter School law. For the last two years, we have been unable to accommodate everyone on the wait list. Signature School has achieved its remarkable results despite the fact that it does not select its students.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

a) Signature School's charter states that the school "will surpass national, state, and local averages in student performance" on the Indiana Department of Education's mandated ISTEP+ End-of-Course Assessments (ECAs), the PSAT, the SAT, the ACT, the PLAN, and Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) tests. The school consistently meets this goal. The criterion-referenced state-wide tests (ECAs) are administered at the end of Algebra 1, Biology 1, and English 10. Achievement levels are categorized as did not pass, pass, or pass plus and are measured by "cut-scores" established by the IDOE in 2010. Approximately two-thirds of Signature School students have already taken the Algebra 1 ECA by the time they enter ninth grade, but all Signature School students take the Biology 1 and the English 10 exams.

The school measures PSAT, SAT, ACT, PLAN, and AP test results against national averages while it measures its IB exam scores and IB Diploma rates against international averages. AP test scores are reported as a number from 1 to 5, with a 3 defined by the College Board indicating, "Qualified to receive college credit and a 5 indicating, "Extremely well qualified to receive college credit." Individual IB test scores are reported as a number from 1 to 7, with a 4 indicating, "Good" and a 7 indicating "Excellent." Successful IB Diploma candidates score from 24 to 45 points based on results from the six subject area assessments together with "the core" comprised of Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Extended Essay (EE), and Creativity, Action, Service (CAS).

b) Signature School students have consistently scored above the state averages in both components of the ISTEP+ Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE), and, as of 2009, the ISTEP+ End-of-Course Assessments (ECA) since the school opened in 2002. In the fall of 2008, 99% of all Signature School students tested passed the ISTEP+GQE test in language arts compared to an average of 67% statewide. In math of that year, 98% of Signature students passed the ISTEP+GQE compared to an average of 65% for all Indiana. In the spring of 2009-2010, the ISTEP+ECA exams were administered to 10th grade English students and to Algebra I students. That year, 97% of the Signature School students passed the English ECA compared to 63% in the state. In math in 2009, 93% of Signature School students passed the exam compared to 61% of students statewide. In 2010-2011, Signature School students had a 100% pass rate in English and in Algebra I. Statewide, the English and Algebra I pass rates were 72%. In 2011-2012, Signature School's pass rate in 10th grade English was 100% and it was 89% in Algebra I. Statewide, students had a 77% pass rate in English and a 69.4% pass rate in math. In 2012-2013, Signature School students had a 100% pass rate in English and a 95% pass rate in Algebra I. Across the state, students had an overall pass rate of 70% (breakdown per exam is not available).

An examination of Signature School's data tables indicates that there is no achievement gap and that our students consistently perform at high levels. The challenge is to sustain these outstanding performance rates. We have found that the school is best served by comparing our results to the national and international standards of achievement cited in 1a). For example, in May of 2013, 296 Signature School students sat for 667 AP exams, representing a participation rate of 92% of the student body. 69% of these exams were scored at a 3 or higher compared with 47% for the State of Indiana and 59% nationally. The IB program is limited to juniors and seniors. In May of the same year, 107 Signature School juniors and seniors sat for 330 IB exams, representing a participation rate of 71%. 83% of these exams received a score of 4 or higher. The 2013 IB Diploma award rate was 92% compared to a 78% worldwide IB Diploma award rate that year.

Each year Signature School students consistently score above their peers in the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Test (ACT). Last year, for example, Signature School seniors scored an SAT composite of 1,216 as compared to an Indiana composite of 993 and a national composite of 1,010. On the ACT, Signature School seniors had a composite score of 27.6 while statewide Indiana students scored 21.7 and nationally students scored a 20.9. Last year's results are typical of the results of the previous five years. These performance indicators are all the more noteworthy when one recalls that Signature School has an open admissions policy and for the last five years has had to go to a lottery for entry.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Signature's charter not only requires the school to work towards surpassing state, national, and international results in all of the standardized assessments listed above, but it also specifies four other areas in which Signature students must exceed their peers: the number of Indiana Academic Honors Diplomas awarded, graduation rates, participation rates in AP and IB testing and in the IB Diploma program, and community service hours documented.

Signature School's Curriculum Committee meets regularly to keep track of all of these performance indicators and to make recommendations for improvement. Any changes in course offerings and school policy needed to keep a disciplined focus on preparing students for meeting academic challenges are noted in the Program of Studies, published annually. For example, in the spring of 2012, the Committee noted that sophomore AP World History score averages, while exceeding state and national averages, were still below the 3 indicating "Qualified." The Committee recommended that the freshman United States History course be taught at the AP level to give students more experience with historical analysis. The school is now in its second year of implementation of this policy change. In another example, in the fall of 2013, the Committee noted a decrease in the percentage of IB Dance students signed up to take the IB Dance test. As a result, the Committee wrote policy declaring colleges and academic programs would be notified if a student enrolled in an AP or IB course opted not to take the corresponding test. In another example from 2013, the Committee, noticing a decline in the test scores of IB Math students, implemented a new course, Algebra 2, as a choice for students not ready for the Algebra 2 with Trigonometry class. The Committee will monitor the AP World History results, the AP and IB participation rate, and the IB mathematics results over the next two years to ascertain the efficacy of its decisions.

The school uses an online data management software program, PowerSchool, for communicating to parents grades, attendance, and teacher comments on student progress. This information is accessible to parents and students 24 hours a day on the school's website. Signature's website is a vital tool used by both the parents and the school to alert the school community to important academic events such as upcoming exams, posting dates for grades, and college scholarship opportunities. In addition, the school's principal and teachers work closely with the PTSA to ensure the parent community is informed of school-wide initiatives based on assessment results.

The school keeps the public abreast of its progress in numerous ways. Signature School publishes ECA test results and other performance data in the local press, and the results are also posted online at the Indiana Department of Education website. The school informs parents of their child's assessment results via school mailings, and, each year, the principal prepares an Annual Report, compiling all testing data, as well as attendance and graduation rate and community service hours performed. This report is published on the school's website.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Sharing strategies begins in-house, as Signature faculty and staff routinely discuss with one another successful and unsuccessful techniques and practices. At regular faculty meetings, Curriculum Committee, and department meetings, we continually evaluate issues of concern based on data analysis and feedback from teachers, parents, students, alumni, and board members. Our requirement that all students (IB diploma and IB courses) write the 4,000 Extended Essay, for example, has been debated and has remained largely due to feedback from alumni and students who report the tremendous benefits of the EE in applying for and succeeding at college.

Signature publishes an annual report detailing our programs and results that is presented to the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation Board and is distributed to community groups, government officials, area businesses, and colleges. Our Program of Studies is displayed on our web page, allowing easy view of school policies, course offerings, and requirements.

Locally, we have partnered with Joshua Academy, a K-5 charter school, for an online mentoring program in which our upperclassmen were paired with the school's second graders. This partnership was realized through a website connection that Joshua and Signature students developed to help Joshua students prepare for Indiana standardized tests in English and math. In addition to interacting online, the students had opportunities to work together at each other's respective schools. Additionally on the local level, English faculty members have made literary presentations in University of Southern Indiana classrooms, and administrative team members serve on the Chamber of Commerce's Education Committee.

Statewide, Signature juniors and seniors paired with test-takers in Gary, Indiana to help with End of Course Assessment (ECA) skills. A Signature faculty member met with both Gary and Signature students to facilitate the connection. Signature students sent sample ECA questions and communicated about correct and incorrect answers. Although most interaction was done through email, the Signature students and faculty mentor developed a Facebook group for better communication. Additionally at the state level, faculty members presented a workshop entitled "Building a Culture of High Achievement," at the Indiana Charter Conference (October, 2011). Finally, two faculty members have traveled to Indianapolis to assist in writing statewide Social Studies curriculum standards.

Nationally, faculty and staff have twice participated in Miami University of Ohio's Symposium for the Liberal Arts. All Signature School faculty and staff actively participate in IB and AP online communities, and each year faculty members serve as AP graders or IB readers.

4. Engaging Families and Community:

Signature recognizes that involvement of parents and guardians is critical to ensure student success. From our first meeting with prospective freshmen and parents in November of the eighth grade year, we underscore the role of the parent/guardian in the education process and the influence the parent/guardian has on a child's attitude, effort, and success. The school's charter provides that the president of the PTSA sit on the school's Board of Directors, ensuring that parents have a voice in shaping policy.

We hold evening meetings for all levels, including Eighth Grade Open House, Eighth Grade Enrollment, Freshman Orientation, IB Nights for sophomores, juniors, and seniors, evening college guidance, and financial aid presentations. Our Director of Student Services offers weekly evening hours to accommodate parent schedules. The connection between the emphasis on parent/guardian involvement and student success is seen in the increase in student participation in our IB Programme (in 12 diploma candidates in 2009; 39 in 2013), in our consistent 100% college matriculation rate, and through the ten million in scholarship dollars offered to graduating seniors last year.

Administrators meet one-on-one with parents before, during, and after school hours to address issues of concern regarding individual students. Faculty and staff are proactive in involving parents when there is a student concern. The PTSA assists in arranging opportunities for parent, student, and faculty gatherings on an informal basis through activities such as the International Dinner and Main Street Attraction. This opportunity to interact in these settings builds community by allowing time to get to know one another and enjoy time together. Our music and theater program performances allow additional opportunities to gather. Evidence of the success of these formal and informal meetings and the nexus between these interactions is clear in the decrease in student attrition rate.

Signature School students give back to the community through activities such as tutoring, recycling, assisting in domestic abuse shelters and the Rescue Mission. Our alumni report that performing community service was pivotal to their personal and professional development. Signature students participate locally and abroad in programs such as the Deaconess Health Science Institute and the immersion-based Indiana University Honors Program for Foreign Language High School Students. They bring research skills and language fluency, respectively, back to the classroom, raising the bar for peers and faculty. Area organizations (the Red Cross, local hospitals) contact us to request Signature School volunteers, stating that our students are exceptional.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Signature School’s charter requires that the curriculum prepares students for college. Our curricular and extra-curricular offerings provide intellectually rich experiences culminating in widely recognized credentials for every student. Most students work towards an IB Diploma and all work towards the Indiana Academic Honors Diploma (AHD); most amass 20 to 60 college credits based on their AP and IB exam scores. To keep students on course for college, they are re-enrolled in any course in which they earn a grade lower than a C.

Courses in English, math, science, social studies, world language, and fine and performing arts comply with Indiana State, International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement standards. All disciplines foster in students characteristics of “internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world” (IB learner profile). Horizontal and vertical teacher teams ensure that students are encouraged to be “inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective” (IB learner profile).

Underclassmen take courses to prepare them to enter the IB program in grade eleven as IB Diploma candidates. Freshmen immerse themselves in their nation’s history, taking AP US History and studying American literature. They gain experience in analytical thinking and writing, in expressing their point of view and listening to others in class discussions. They begin their work in scientific inquiry, all taking Honors Biology, performing numerous experiments which they write up as lab reports. They develop their mathematical language, each student beginning at his own level of proficiency. They start afresh or continue their study of other cultures through immersion courses in French, German, or Spanish. They learn the reward of exercise through their PE classes, conducted at the nearby YMCA; and they are encouraged to explore their creativity in Fine Arts Connections in which they sing, dance, paint and draw.

As sophomores, their scope broadens with AP World History. They take a closer look at the structure of the English language through AP Language and Composition. All of them take Honors Chemistry and continue their study of French, German, or Spanish, and mathematics. In their health classes, they learn the benefits of sound bodies and in Multi-Cultural America, they discover the advantages of a point of view that includes the perspective of others. Multi-Cultural America students are also introduced to research methods through the Genealogy Project in which they explore their family’s history. They learn how to choose wisely with room in their schedule for just one elective in the fine and performing arts, a second world language, or Honors Physics.

Most upperclassmen participate in the IB Programme as IB Diploma candidates. All of them take AP and IB classes and tests, and all of them work to develop the skills, characteristics, and knowledge needed to become responsible global citizens. They all take IB English HL, the first year of which is AP Literature and Composition. In this course they study world and national literature, develop their voice as writers. They all continue in a world language at least through the junior year and most through the senior year. The emphasis is on understanding other cultures and communication. They all pursue mathematics at the level appropriate to their interest and need. They take at least one more science course at the AP or IB level, and many take two or more. Through these courses, students develop their problem-solving skill and learn scientific inquiry through hypothesis, experiment, and analysis. They all explore the meaning of US citizenship through AP Government and learn the tools of social science through AP Macro- or Microeconomics. Most elect to continue their study of history with AP European History and IB History of the 20th Century, becoming conversant in the forces that have shaped our world today. Many pursue their study of the arts with IB Dance, Art, or Music.

All of the students perform 50 hours of community service and write a 4000 word essay in a subject of their choice, guided by a teacher mentor. IB Diploma candidates also take IB Theory of Knowledge in which they

explore connections across the disciplines and form the principles that will shape their first steps as responsible, educated adults.

2. Reading/English:

b. Signature School's English curriculum is built on the foundations of grammar, reading, rhetorical and literary analysis, all of which begin in grade nine and continue through the completion of IB and AP English testing in grades ten, eleven, and twelve. All students are required to take these advanced courses, beginning in tenth grade with AP Language and Composition, continuing through eleventh grade with both AP Literature and IB English, Higher Level 1 (HL1), the most rigorous courses available, and finishing in grade twelve with English HL2. Students seek to pass external evaluations. The English faculty believes every student can fulfill his or her potential best in these courses with high expectations. The English department meets regularly to assess student progress and to identify those students who are in need of tutoring or remediation. The freshman and sophomore English teachers attend workshops on the ISTEP+ test. In examining standardized test results on ISTEP+, SAT, ACT, and AP, the English scores for Signature School have consistently been well above the state and national averages.

The English teachers' focus is on writing. Students are required to write, get feedback from the teacher, and re-write their assignments if necessary. All teachers work to increase student reading through fiction, non-fiction, and poetry requirements as well as bonus reading. All English teachers work with students individually and in groups to refine grammar skills as they affect writing, and writing skills as they affect analysis and creativity. English classes work in conjunction with their social studies counterparts. For example, freshman English stresses American literature in conjunction with U.S. History; sophomore English stresses argument through AP Language, which pairs with AP World History; junior IB English coordinates with junior IB European History; and the senior year completes IB English HL with poetry and literature skills, both oral and written.

3. Mathematics:

Signature's mathematics curriculum aligns with the school's belief that students learn best when their learning culminates in external assessment. Beginning in 2007, the math sequence for every student terminates in Advanced Placement testing, International Baccalaureate testing, or, in many cases, both. Students performing well use the credential as leverage for entry into college, advanced placement credit, or even scholarship dollars.

Students take four years of mathematics, beginning in Algebra 1, Honors Geometry, or Algebra 2 with Trigonometry. Algebra 1 students take the End-of-Course Assessment (ECA) as prescribed by the state of Indiana. Because most Signature students do well on the assessment (95% passed last year), remediation is offered at the individual level. No Signature student has had to take the Algebra 1 ECA more than once in order to achieve a passing score.

Signature differentiates its mathematics curriculum to serve all students exiting Algebra 2 with Trigonometry. Mathematically precocious students take IB Mathematics, Higher Level, the first year of which is AP Calculus BC. Those who learn at a slower pace but who may go on to pursue math or science in college, take IB Mathematics, Standard Level, and those who need to develop their mathematics further, take IB Math Studies. After IB Mathematics SL, students may take AP Calculus BC or IB Math Studies; and IB Math Studies students take IB Mathematics SL.

Whatever the course chosen, students experience a variety of teaching techniques in their classrooms, from note-taking during traditional lecture, to working problems in colored chalk outside, to solving mathematical modeling questions using software, to working through an interactive lesson from the Kahn Academy website, and from working individually to working in pairs or on teams, to working one-on-one with a teacher.

Professional development is key to a student performing to her/his potential; all but one of our teachers has been trained in AP Calculus or IB Mathematics, and two of our teachers participate in assessment as AP Readers and/or IB Examiners.

The school promotes mathematics learning outside the classroom by offering students the opportunity to join Mu Alpha Theta, a mathematics honor society. Students participate in local and regional competitions and in national competitions such as the American Mathematics Competition 10 and 12.

By offering many levels of mathematical study, terminating in respected, external assessment and by offering students many mathematical experiences outside the classroom, Signature School meets the mathematical needs of all students.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The science curriculum at Signature deserves highlighting because of the extent to which it involves the student body and because of its emphasis on learning through inquiry and original research. All freshmen take Honors Biology. Since 2009, they have taken the state-mandated Biology ECA. Signature students score significantly better than their peers on this exam. Each year Signature students pass at a rate of over 95% while Indiana students pass at a rate of under 50%.

All Signature students take Honors Chemistry as sophomores in order to be eligible to participate in the IB Diploma program. This year, 13% of sophomores also chose to take Honors Physics. After sophomore year, students choose a science to fulfill IB Diploma and Indiana Academic Honors requirements. Some take IB Environmental Systems and Societies or IB Chemistry SL. Both are two year courses; after the first year, students take the corresponding AP exam, and after the second they take the IB exam. Students also may take IB Biology HL, a two-year course at the end of which many take both the AP and the IB exams. Finally, students may take IB Physics SL, a one year course which ends in the AP Physics and/or IB Physics exam. Students are free to take as many science classes as they can fit into their schedule. This year all juniors and 96% of seniors are enrolled in at least one AP or IB science class; juniors take 1.6 science classes per student, and seniors take 1.4 science classes per student. Signature science students perform well on their AP and IB exams. Last year, 68 IB science exams were taken with 81% scoring 4 or above, and 88 AP science exams were taken; 83% scored 3 or above.

All science courses involve extensive lab time, designing and implementing experiments. Students are conversant in traditional lab equipment, lab probes, and software. IB science students are engaged in scientific writing since 15% of the IB mark comes from student lab reports requiring extensive statistical analysis. All students submit a 4000 word essay based on original research. In 2014, 22% of students chose science as their topic. To meet the demand for challenging science courses, IB Chemistry HL was added for the upcoming year.

As a globally-focused school, Signature recognizes that students need to be able to communicate in another language and interact in a diverse world. 97% of current seniors have taken four years of a world language; most have studied the same language during that time. We highlight this area because Signature is one of a few schools requiring students to take four years (unless they cannot because of scheduling issues) and following a strict no-English rule.

Signature's language program is immersion-based. Students communicate exclusively in Spanish, French, or German. Initial emphasis is on oral and aural skills with fundamental grammatical concepts presented in the target language and integrated into introduction of vocabulary. Students practice basic reading and writing exercises in the target language. As students advance, oral and aural interaction becomes progressively sophisticated and reading and writing activities occur with increased regularity and complexity. Classroom activities are communicative in nature; students interact in situations mimicking real-life challenges encountered in travelling, living in another country, or meeting non-English speakers. Cultural studies reflect a global perspective; students learn about francophone, hispanophone, and German-speaking countries in numerous continents.

The fine and performing arts curriculum is remarkable for the variety and academic rigor of the courses offered. Freshmen take Fine Arts Connections, a team taught course run by the visual arts and music departments. Students sample from both disciplines throughout the year. They learn piano keyboarding, drawing and painting techniques, the fundamentals of dance and choral singing. As sophomores, they may take Signature Singers, Signature's choir, Pre-IB Dance, Visual Arts 1, Piano Lab, Musical Theater. Upperclassmen choose from a variety of AP and IB fine and performing arts courses. In 2013, 45 students took AP or IB tests in the fine and performing arts, representing 30% of our upperclassmen, the only group eligible to take AP and IB fine and performing arts exams. Sixty-percent of those exams received a passing score, 3 for AP exams and 4 for IB exams.

The fine and performing arts activities and classes involve a large portion of Signature's population. Signature's Instrumental Music class, offered before school, involves 28% of the student body. Signature Singers involves 13% of the student body. Two large-scale theatrical productions are sponsored each year. The most recent, *The Pirates of Penzance*, was cast with 9% of the student body. Three dance productions this year along with numerous choir events, 11 entries into Evansville Museum's High School Art Show, and two instrumental concerts justify the claim that Signature students contribute to the local arts community all while earning credit in college-level arts classes.

5. Instructional Methods:

Signature believes that students learn best in small classes with well-trained, enthusiastic, caring educators who vary instruction based on student need. Signature's instructional methods are supported through sequenced vertical teaming among the faculty, horizontal teaming, team teaching, blocks of learning time (block scheduling), a democratic learning environment, independent research at each grade level, learning through traveling, experiencing, and exposure to technology, an international emphasis in each subject, Socratic Seminars, total immersion in world languages, and a technology-rich learning environment.

Individualized instruction approaches include allowing individualized curriculum choices. For example, although we offer only SL world language courses, a student returning from a summer home stay experience in Spain successfully petitioned the Curriculum Committee to take HL Spanish independently. Teachers vary technique to accommodate specific classes or students. The HL mathematics teacher, for example, works with students of differing ability by splitting HL 1 classes into groups taking AB Calculus or BC Calculus. Students work in small groups with structured lessons while the teacher divides her time back and forth during the class period, as needed. In the science classroom, teachers insist that students learn by doing; students spend hundreds of hours designing and performing laboratory experiments.

Technology is a vital part of the school's academic program. The school provides Wi-Fi to all students and loans out laptops to students needing computer access. Examples of how Signature teachers use technology to enhance and differentiate instruction include: the AP US History classes and AP Microeconomics and AP Macroeconomics classes use teacher-produced videos to introduce and reinforce content, allowing a differentiated learning experience. Students watch the videos at home and spend time in class discussing and analyzing content. Music students use software in the piano keyboard lab to listen to and compose music. In the mathematics classroom, advanced students may work ahead of the class by acquiring proficiency via Kahn Academy videos. Technology makes abstract mathematics accessible to all students by enabling them to visualize concepts through graphing software.

Signature School meets the needs of, and provides instructional accommodations for, special education students. A teacher certified in special education serves as the teacher of record for any students who are identified as needing special education services. Special provisions and accommodations are provided as specified in each student's Individual Educational Program. Students who are determined to be disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 receive accommodations and/or related services.

6. Professional Development:

Signature's professional development program is designed to comply with IDOE guidelines and state statute which describe professional growth as a continuous individual responsibility that provides a clear focus on specific identified goals. Annual teacher evaluations ensure that the professional growth program encourages and rewards diverse teaching techniques, networking, coaching, and reflection.

Because Signature is a charter school, Signature students come from a variety of schools in surrounding counties and thus have different levels of preparation. The school's challenge is to make sure that each child receives the support necessary to perform at the high level demanded by Signature's curriculum and AP and IB academic programs and assessments. Thus, one of the primary components of the professional development plan is a program for teacher training sponsored by professional organizations. In the past two years, every teacher and administrator has received formal training in IB, AP, or discipline-related content. Much of this training occurs out-of-state and occasionally out of the country, and all is fully funded and supported with release time.

A second component of the professional development plan involves in-house training. Signature has established a culture whereby the administration and teachers work collaboratively. The school has established a Mentor/Mentee program for new teachers, and teachers are encouraged with stipends and release time to plan in-house workshops allowing them to share expertise in subject knowledge and teaching strategies. For example, our AP US History teacher was provided a stipend to develop modules in which teachers learn how to prepare online videos for a "flipped" classroom experience. As a result, teachers in calculus, biology, and Macro/Microeconomics have begun experimenting with this innovative classroom technique that allows for greater differentiation of instruction and complements Signature's efforts to enable its diverse student population to succeed.

The results of the professional development program are reflected in the fact that Signature School students consistently score above state, national, and international averages in standardized testing, including Indiana's ECAs (state-mandated testing), SATs, ACTs, AP, and IB testing. We attribute this high rate of success to the strict alignment of Signature's professional development program with academic standards set by the state and with the AP and IB programs. Students often enter college with sophomore standing, having acquired college credit for courses taken at Signature. Based on an analysis of these results, it can be concluded that Signature's program of professional development pays off in the success of its students.

7. School Leadership

Signature School's leadership structure is predicated on the belief that Board members, administrators, faculty and staff share the focused goal of ensuring student success. We all play a role in creating the positive climate and culture, pivotal to the school's success.

The Signature School Board has high expectations for integrity and academic excellence and believes all students can succeed when willing to put forth the effort and when faculty are dedicated to working with them and helping as necessary. The Board charges the Executive Director with the responsibility of ensuring that these expectations are articulated and implemented in short and long term decisions.

The Executive Director and Director of Student Services, in turn, work to empower and support teachers so they can provide students with the tools they need for success. Our Curriculum/IB Coordinator facilitates ongoing review of course offerings and ensures professional development training for the faculty while our AP Coordinator arranges AP professional training. All teachers have tremendous autonomy and great accountability. In accordance with our charter, most courses culminate in an external IB or AP assessment, and test results are published in our Annual Report. Teachers and administrators carefully analyze results and adjust course instruction when needed. When the AP US Government instructor noted a pattern of lower student performance on the "political parties and elections" portion of the AP exam, the teacher adjusted her approach in presenting this information.

If data analysis and feedback from students and faculty indicate the need for curriculum adjustments, proposals are brought to and considered by our Curriculum Committee (membership is open to all). As a charter school, we are able to change course quickly when needed. For example, we began offering IB Psychology after students indicated the need for another one-year SL course elective and an interest in advanced psychology and following discussion by and approval of the Curriculum Committee. Teachers team horizontally by department and in "Resource" teams to review curriculum and program components, and they move to adjust methods when needed.

Our leadership approach is broad-based and inclusive. Teachers have input and ownership. For example, in accordance with our charter, a faculty member serves an annual term on the Signature School Board of Directors. There is a strong sense of collaboration among faculty, staff, and students, and we are purposeful in our goal of measurable student success and an environment built on mutual trust and respect.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math

Test: ISTEP+: Algebra I End-of-Course Assessment

All Students Tested/Grade: 9

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Questar Inc.

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Pass Plus and Pass	95	88	100	97	98
% Pass	57	59	64	53	68
Number of students tested	21	17	11	30	82
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					

7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass	100	85	100	96	97
% Pass	63	54	70	54	63
Number of students tested	16	13	10	26	65
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Pass Plus and Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: The fall of 2008, the 10th graders sat for the ISTEP+ Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) which measured performance in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Grade 9 skills were assessed. This was a transition year, and in the spring of 2010, the Algebra I and English 10 End Of Course Assessments replaced the GQE.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA

Test: ISTEP+:English 10 Graduation Examination

All Students Tested/Grade: 10

Edition/Publication Year: 2013

Publisher: Questar Assessment, Inc.

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Sep
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass	100	100	100	97	99
% Pass	78	67	91	74	68
Number of students tested	81	85	79	69	68
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass		100			
% Pass		69			
Number of students tested		16			
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					

% Pass					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass	100	100	100	96	98
% Pass	75	67	89	74	78
Number of students tested	63	63	62	57	65
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Pass Plus plus % Pass					
% Pass					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: The fall of 2008, the 10th graders sat for the ISTEP+ Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE) which measured performance in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Grade 9 skills were assessed. This was a transition year, and in the spring of 2010, the Algebra I and English 10 End Of Course Assessments replaced the GQE.