

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2015 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 Mr. Michael Chilcutt

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

Official School Name Smithsburg High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 66 North Main Street

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

City Smithsburg State MD Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 21783-9606

County Washington State School Code Number\* 0701

Telephone 301-766-8341 Fax 301-766-2617

Web site/URL http://wcpsmd.com/schools/high-schools/smithsburg-high E-mail chilcmic@wcps.k12.md.us

Twitter Handle \_\_\_\_\_ 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\*Dr Clayton Wilcox

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr.,

E-mail: wilcocla@wcps.k12.md.us

Other)

District Name Washington County Public Schools Tel. 301-766-2814

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 Mrs. Donna Brightman

(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 and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are 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 2014-2015 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 2009 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: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014.
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):
- 27 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 9 High schools
  - 4 K-12 schools
- 47 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	102	111	213
10	111	104	215
11	87	83	170
12	107	89	196
<b>Total Students</b>	407	387	794

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 91 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2013 - 2014 year: 11%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2013 until the end of the school year	43
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2013 until the end of the school year	48
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	91
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	794
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.115
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
2 Total number ELL  
 Number of non-English languages represented: 2  
 Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Haitian Creole
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %  
 Total number students who qualify: 318

**Information for Public Schools Only - Data Provided by the State**

The state has reported that 40 % of the students enrolled in this school are from low income or disadvantaged families based on the following subgroup(s): Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals

9. Students receiving special education services: 7 %  
57 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.

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>16</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>1</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>23</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>6</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>5</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> 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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers	45
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals	5
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 18:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	96%	96%	95%	93%	93%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2014

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	172
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	31%
Enrolled in a community college	50%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	5%
Found employment	12%
Joined the military or other public service	5%
Other	5%

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.

15. Please summarize your school mission in 25 words or less: To prepare all students to be college and career ready by education, career, and civic engagement.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

---

### Nature of the Community

Smithsburg High School (SHS) continues to evolve and improve to ensure that our students are college and career ready by engaging students in a rigorous course work and career education while teaching what it means to be civically responsible in the 21st Century. While Smithsburg High School has performed at a very high level for several years we are working collaboratively with staff and the community to develop and employ innovative programs without losing the “small town” feel of the community.

The Smithsburg High educational service area is located in the northeastern corner of Washington County. Smithsburg is the only municipality in the service area with a population of 2,975 people per the 2010 census. The student population also draws from several subdivisions surrounding the town of Smithsburg and the village of Cascade, Maryland. As there are limited employment opportunities in the immediate area many work in the surrounding communities of Washington County, Frederick Country, and the area of Pennsylvania to the north. Because of the proximity to Interstate 70 a significant number of community members work in the Washington D.C. and Baltimore areas.

Smithsburg High School benefits from the tradition of great work done in our K-8 feeder schools. Ruth Ann Monroe Primary, Smithsburg Elementary, Cascade Elementary, Eastern Elementary, Old Forge Elementary, Pangborn Elementary, and Smithsburg Middle all prepare students to succeed in our rigorous high school program of study. We build on the academic success of our strong feeder schools to achieve a greater than 97 percent pass rate on the English, Algebra, and Biology High School Assessments. Also, 94.5 percent of students receiving free or reduced meals scored proficient on English and Algebra HSA. During the 2013-2014 school year Advance Placement (AP) participation increased 27 percent while the AP pass rate increased 28 percent. SHS continues to increase and expand rigor, including offering AP United States History to freshmen and expanding participation in AP Government for sophomores through innovative programs like the Smithsburg Academic Leadership Team (SALT) and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

Smithsburg High School is striving to be one of the best schools in Maryland, but we believe that being the best will not matter if our students can't look back one day and remember their time here as one of the best times of their lives. We have a very active student body. Our students participate in many different clubs and organizations to further the interpersonal skills that will ensure success in the future. The various extra curricular activities offered to our students are in many ways the glue that holds us together.

Our student cheer sections at sporting events have the look and feel of a college student section and they have redefined fan support in Washington County. The effort to show “Leopard Pride” is almost completely student organized and it has become a very positive force for the school.

Smithsburg High School has a proud winning tradition on the sports field. Since the building opened on the current location in 1965 we have won 54 state championships and over 200 individual state championships. Our success is due in part to the community support and community based athletic programs that help to develop the whole child through athletics.

### Key Strategies: SALT.

The Smithsburg Academic Leadership Team (SALT) is an academy at Smithsburg High School with the mission: Challenge students with academic rigor and cultivate leadership qualities to fully prepare them to go to a four-year college/university. SALT students are those who wish to challenge themselves academically by taking on rigorous courses that are different than other Honors courses. Throughout their freshman and sophomore years, SALT students are engaged in instruction/learning that includes: project-based learning, student-student collaboration, innovation, and convergent/divergent thinking. SALT students immediately begin taking AP courses in order to experience the rigor and challenges of the AP workload for future success in passing AP courses and exams.

## AVID

Smithsburg High School is incorporating the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program to guide students beginning in grade 9. The goal is for the school to become AVID certified and continue to promote college and career readiness in all content areas. During the summer of 2014, nine staff members attended the AVID summer institute to learn how the school could promote strategies for a college-ready student body. These staff members and others assist across curriculae to engage students and encourage effort for personal academic results. Students specifically enrolled in the first Smithsburg High School cohort are taking AP US History in their freshman year. The backbone of the AVID program is the AVID Essential strategies that revolve around writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading to learn (WICOR).

## “Fabulous Five”

SHS’s transition to AVID has gone relatively smoothly because we started utilizing what we call the “Fabulous Five” strategies during the previous school year. The “Fab Five” are five key strategies based on the best practices from Robert Marzano’s work, the AVID Essentials, Springboard Strategies, and the principles of Universal Design for Learning. The strategies include close analytic reading, learning logs, structured note taking (such as Cornell Notes), student produced questions, and shared inquiry.

## Instructional Help and Summer Transition

For several years Smithsburg High School has implemented a summer transition program for incoming freshmen students. Students work on literacy skills along with organizational strategies. In the 2014-2015 school year Smithsburg expanded on the success of the transition program and created an instructional assistance class which meets every other day. Students have the opportunity to get extra assistance in their core classes during this time. Students were selected based on their middle school assessment results and academic history. While this class is new, the data that we are receiving looks promising. The number of failures dropped from 47 failing classes to 19 based on 8th grade marking period one to 9th grade marking period one data. The instructional assistance students had a 93 percent overall pass rate for marking period one.

## Meet the Challenge

The school motto is “Meet the Challenge.” The challenge is for students to be college and career ready by the time they graduate. The Smithsburg High School climate committee in conjunction with the school improvement team have created school wide expectations that define what it means to be college and career ready. The climate committee created a “Meet the Challenge” incentive program. The program is designed to reward students who meet the appropriate academic, behavioral and attendance goals each marking period. Students receive MTC cards that allow free admission to sporting events and other school based incentives. The Smithsburg Community has supported the event by giving free merchandise and discounts to students who have earned their card. When students have “Met the Challenge” for three marking periods, they are invited to an end of year celebration including a cookout, DJ, and various activities.

## Student Support Team

In the 2011-2012 school year Smithsburg High School revamped Student Support Team meetings, and created an RTI model to meet the needs of students struggling academically and behaviorally. Through this process, SHS has seen a decrease in the number of referrals resulting in suspension from school. In the 2010-2011 school year SHS had 1197 referrals in which 69 referrals resulted in a suspension from school. In the 2013-2014 school year SHS had 454 referrals in which 25 referrals resulted in a suspension. Smithsburg High School has also seen an increase in our graduation rate. The class of 2010 had a graduation rate of 92.66 while the class of 2014 had a graduation rate of 97.8.

## Instructional Technology

We can't honestly say that we are preparing students for college and career without teaching them to utilize 21st century technology. SHS is currently working to redefine learning through the use of technology in the following ways:

- Utilize technology to bring more knowledgeable professionals into the classroom such as authors, scientists and other professionals,
- Facilitating progressive ways to teach and learn while building on what is working
- Training teachers, staff, administration, and students for current and future reality
- Customizing learning to meet the needs of individual students
- Increase the use of technology based delivery tools such as Agile Minds for initial instruction and

APEX for remediation

- Extend the learning day before and after our current schedule to create more “non-traditional” blending learning.
- Establishing the use of Google Classroom in more learning situation across the school

Ultimately we are working to seamlessly integrate instructional technology into our daily operations. We are entering a period where “mass-customization” of learning can for the first time in history take place on a large scale.

Agile Mind

The math department embraced the curriculum pilot of Agile Mind in our Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry courses. This online curriculum utilizes technology and is aligned with Common Core Standards and uses rich formative assessments and real time feedback to help students be successful. SHS will build on the success of the Agile Mind pilot as we begin to implement new technology assisted formative assessment tools.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

---

### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### English

The Smithsburg High School English department is comprised of eight teachers with nearly 100 years of experience. Our most veteran teachers regularly collaborate with our youngest, which allows all teachers the opportunity for growth. Our teachers require that all students engage with complex texts, both contemporary and classic; through discussion of aforementioned texts and current events, students are expected to connect literary themes across time and place. Teachers encourage students to engage in various technological platforms that range from scholarly research databases to Twitter chats. Our teachers and students develop deep, meaningful relationships that help students to excel beyond basic assessments. English teachers have worked as instructional leaders at Smithsburg High School by developing and delivering professional development to other contents about the literacy standards in relation to the Common Core. The English department has designed lessons and units that focus on cross-curricular anchor texts (Huckleberry Finn, The Great Gatsby, etc.). These units affords a myriad of opportunities to incorporate ELA, Social Studies CC, or Next Generation Science standards in all classrooms, instead of in the antiquated content-based silos.

#### Math

Math department colleagues collaborate daily and share best practices in order to provide the best student centered instruction. In order to prepare our students to be college and career ready, we have incorporated the eight Mathematical Practices throughout all levels of math courses. Our students have shown improvement on the AP Calculus exam from a passing rate from 44% three years ago to over 90% the past 2 years. We embed Math SAT questions into instruction to help prepare our students to be successful on college entrance exams. For our underperforming students, we began an after school tutoring program where our National Honor Society math students serve as tutors. Math teachers have worked as instructional leaders at Smithsburg High School by developing and delivering professional development to other contents about the math practices in relation to the Common Core. The math department faculty has implemented the common core math standards by stressing conceptual understandings, procedural skills and fluency of math concepts. Each course has developed activities to integrate the skills to application to real-word problems.

#### Science

The science department at Smithsburg High School is unique in that it is comprised of seven talented teachers that have been together for many years. The average time for teaching experience is close to two decades. This pattern of dedication to the school leads to a continuity in a high standard of teaching science. The high expectations set by this staff is validated by the high performances by students on HSA, AP, and SAT scores, which typically are some of the highest in the county and the state. This staff also demonstrates great leadership within their classroom, school, and communities. They are all great role models for students and demonstrate how to live a life well spent serving others for the good of all. The SHS Science department will transition to the Next Generation Science Standards while maintaining their long tradition of student success. The science classes as SHS provide content to be studied at a deep level using the skills developed in English and Math classes. Student in science do real world experiments and utilize deep thinking to analyze the work.

#### Social Studies

The members of the Social Studies Department at Smithsburg High are committed to student success and a rigorous application of the school system curriculum. We are strong in content knowledge and are all willing to do whatever it takes to help our students achieve. We are a diverse department that contribute to the school culture and community in both the scholastic and non- academic worlds. Members of our department lead clubs, organizations and coach athletic teams at the school. The Social Studies department manages, perhaps, the most robust AP program in the school. We offer anywhere between five to seven different AP courses each year and run multiple sections of many of those courses. During the 2014-2015 school year almost 90 freshmen students participated in AP US History. This is an important part of our overall strategy to raise rigor at the school. Students arrive to our courses expecting to be challenged, enjoy the courses and

leave better citizens of the world. Our department-wide reputation allows us to consistently fill our AP and elective courses and we look forward to growing our programs even larger and continued success in the future. Students utilize document based questions to prompt original writing that is at the core of the Common Core standards. The Social Studies classes also provide a rich content and history that students can use in other areas.

#### Common Core

Common Core in Maryland is the College and Career Readiness Standards and they are at the heart of our vision of a school to make sure every student is college and career ready. The College and Career Readiness Standards are infused in all content areas. SHS is seeing our vision come to fruition by raising academic rigor across the curriculum by employing learning strategies typical in our honors and AP in all classes. The expansion of AP courses in 9th and 10th grade is having a ripple affect on many other courses. We are meeting the needs of students by developing and implementing new completer pathways such as Computer Science and a Carpentry Completer based on entrapenaurial skills. The broad based use of writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading to learn (WICOR) strategie are how we will meet the Common Core and College and Career Readiness Standards. We have strong teacher representation on country level committees developing essential and comprehensive curriculums to provide a clear road map of what the standards truly are.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

#### Arts

The Arts program offers a full array of performance ensembles and instructional programs designed to prepare students for pursuit of a career in the Arts or to become Arts consumers and enthusiasts. SHS has an award winning marching and jazz band, a talented orchestra, a chorus, and an active drama department. Over the past two years the drama department has taken trips to the New York area to participate in unique theatre experiences. This trip has given students once in a life time experience that exposed them to cutting edge theatre in a university setting. The visual arts are also well represented at SHS. We have foundational art, advanced studio art, ceramics, and digital art. All utilize a strong critique process to aid in the improvement of artwork while promoting deep thinking.

#### Physical Education and Health Education

In the physical education we focus teaching students to be active for a lifetime as well as possible career choices available to students. In the 9th grade, we highlight lifetime activities. Our goal is to find at least one activity that every student enjoys and can continue throughout their life. Students also are exposed to a vast range of terminology and exercise physiology principles during the class. In 10th -12th grades, we continue to explore fitness opportunities while also exploring career opportunities in health, fitness and exercise by researching careers like physical therapy, personal training, sports marketing and dietetics. In Health Education and Life Skills we focus teaching students to be healthy adults along with a focus on College and Career readiness in Life Skills. In Health we emphasize healthy eating, exercise habits and drug/alcohol prevention tips. In conjunction with the Washington County Sherriff's department this year students participated in the Driving Under the Influence simulator. All students are instructed in Hands Only CPR along with the importance of using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). In Life Skills students are taken through the steps of finding a career path, selecting a major and finding a college that offers that degree. All students have the chance to talk to college admissions counselors, military recruiters and technical training advisors from the Pittsburgh Institute for Aeronautics. Students also have the opportunity to take a field trip to Shippensburg Univ and Gettysburg College for an information session and tour. Students must select 4 colleges that match with their career path, major, G.P.A. and financial goals. We also cover scholarships, essay writing and academic resumes. Once completing the career unit the students next step is complete a working resume which highlights their college path to help them obtain future employment. Students are taken through the hiring process with the interview and paperwork signing. Once finding a job using monster.com students are show how to use the internet to search for apartments, cars, schools and other real life scenarios.

## World Languages

Smithsburg High School offers long-term world language learning opportunities for all students. Instruction highlights high expectations and a performance-oriented approach to learning emphasizing what students can do with language (functional use) rather than what students know about the language (rules of the language). Students engage in interpersonal, interpretive and presentational tasks using authentic materials to show evidence of proficiency. There exists a high degree of collaboration among World Language Teachers at Smithsburg. There are infinite uses for technology infusion and we as a department are consistently striving towards exciting new ways to reach our students since we live in a technology driven world. Incorporating technology skills such as use of cell phones to engage students in the language and online projects reflects the department's aim to prepare students for college and equip them with the problem-solving strategies, tools and skills needed for the 21st century and beyond.

## Latin

Latin is alive and well at Smithsburg High. Our students come from diverse backgrounds, but the Latin language and Roman culture join us together as it transcends all curricular areas. Students share Latin experiences from English, history, government, science, and math. Translations and projects relate to these areas as well. The Latin program at SHS is very special and it is an integral part of our rigorous curriculum that promotes deep thinking.

## Career and Technology Education (CTE)

CTE courses are open to all students in grades 9 through 12 and offer project-based, hands-on learning that promotes STEM, research, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, and collaboration among other 21st century skills necessary to compete in a global economy. CTE supports college and career readiness by providing opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials and college credit while still in high school. Learning is enhanced by using specialized equipment and participation in supervised projects outside of the classroom. We support The Common Career Technical Core (CCTC) and the 12 Career Ready Practices which are relevant for all students, regardless of academic pathway. Our lessons and laboratory activities build interdisciplinary understanding and promote deeper learning of concepts in authentic, real-world situations. Also, FFA has been promoting premier leadership, personal growth and career success by encouraging SHS students to learn, to do, to earn, and to serve since 1930.

## Business Education

With so many financial and business careers available, especially in the field of e-commerce, knowledge of business has become essential in today's world. According to ehow.com, business knowledge belongs in the "lifestyle-improvement universe" alongside nutrition, exercise and other life-improving subjects. Business education at Smithsburg High School provides a solid grounding in the basics of business, including business practices, business information systems, finance and accounting. In addition to preparing students for the rigors of a college's business education, high school business courses help make students more employable for entry-level positions.

## Computer Science

Computer Science drives innovation in the US economy and society. According to code.org, computer science courses help nurture problem-solving skills, logic and creativity, thereby providing a foundation for success in any 21st-century career path. The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that in 2014, five of the top ten fastest growing jobs in the US are in the computer science field. The world is changing because we not only use computers more, we are using them in new and excitingly unique ways. Smithsburg High is one of the few high schools in Washington County to offer the Computer Science Completer. High school computer science courses help students think computationally, thus preparing them for success in college and their career.

### **3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:**

#### Instructional Methods

While SHS has traditionally performed at the top of our county and state we still have room to improve. Rigorous learning has always occurred at Smithsburg but it was clear that we need to minimize the "strategic" learning that focused more on grades and maximize the "deep" learning that focuses on truly understanding and applying the knowledge. We have chosen to raise the rigor across all groups of students. This started by studying the data to understand the needs of various groups. We have made the decision to

raise rigor for all while supporting each student's learning needs through great initial instruction and targeted interventions.

Our top students have traditionally performed well on High School Assessments but PARCC performance is, at this time, an unknown. Performance and participation in Advanced Placement courses has room for improvement. We are meeting these challenges by raising the rigour of all courses and offering AP courses to freshmen and sophomores on a wide scale. We offer just under 45% of our freshmen class AP US History and we will be offering 50% of next year's sophomores AP Government. As with the rest of the school, AP students will be engaging with rigorous material through the AVID Essentials and WICOR strategies during initial instruction. We supported the jump in rigor for freshmen by offering three weeks of summer workshops with AP teachers designed to prepare them to read, comprehend, and deeply understand high level texts.

For our students who struggle to meet standards we have utilized WCPS's five week Summer Transition Program. We continue the work from the Summer Transition Program by creating our Instructional Help (IH) course that runs every other day for the entire school year. Students in the summer program and IH were chosen based on MSA and Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) data. The IH course is co-taught by two AVID trained English teachers and supported by math teachers. The goal of the IH is to close the instructional gaps of the students and teach the WICOR strategies. During initial instruction in all content areas, these students can better utilize the WICOR strategies for learning at a deep level.

Through a very teacher driven process we determined that one of our greatest needs was to reach and improve the performance of our "middle kids". These are students with unmet potential. Data showed that some of these students performed well on standardized assessments but did not meet their potential in classes. Other students performed well in class but did not meet expectations on standardized assessments. Many under-scheduled in their courses. They scheduled grade level course when they could, with help perform in honors or AP courses. Many of these students never considered AP nor were they considered by staff to be able to take AP courses. We utilized the same WICOR strategies with these students. Some of the these "middle kids" became our inaugural AVID Cohort group. They were placed in honors or AP course and supported with an AVID elective period where they worked with the WICOR strategies at a deeper level. For these students this includes the use of student led AVID tutorials.

## **PART V – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

---

### **1. Assessment Results Narrative Summary:**

#### Assessment Results Narrative Summary

The Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) are end-of-course tests that students must pass before they can earn a Maryland High School Diploma if they entered grade 9 in fall of 2005 or later. The tests are typically taken by students by the end of grade 10. They help ensure that graduates have mastered the skills they need to continue their success in high school and to succeed in life after high school. There are HSA tests in English 10, algebra/data analysis, biology, and government. The English 10 and algebra/data analysis tests also meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirement for testing in reading and math at the high school level. Students take each test as they complete each course. This includes middle school students taking high school level courses. The tests are based on the High School Core Learning Goals, which were initially created in 1996 and are part of the curriculum in all Maryland public schools. The HSA's include selected response items and constructed response items. Students who have difficulty demonstrating mastery through traditional test-taking means, particularly special education and limited English proficient students, may satisfy the graduation requirement through an alternative process which includes completing content-related projects.

Smithsburg High School's FARM rate has doubled over the past ten years from 14.9% in 2004 to 31.5% in 2014. The estimated FARM rate, given the rates of our feeder schools, is 40%. In this time the students performance data has consistently held steady or risen, breaking the typical trend for schools with rising FARM rates.

Over the past four years Algebra HSA scores have largely remain around or above the 95% pass rate. English HSA has, however, seen an increase from 89.4% in 2010 to 97.7 percent in 2014. The SHS English pass rate for the FARM sub group has increased from 81.8 in 2010 to 94.6 in 2014. Advanced Placement (AP) participation and pass rates have increased to our highest level to date in 2014. The AP participation rate has increased by 27 percent and the AP pass rate increased by 28 percent in 2014. Approximately one third of the class of 2014 passed an AP exam.

### **2. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:**

#### Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results

Student achievement results are accessed through a local data warehouse system, the College Board website, and the MSDE site at [www.mdreportcard.org](http://www.mdreportcard.org). In addition to the strand results of the high school assessments in English, algebra, biology, and government, teachers collaborate to examine results on countywide exams, as well as common classroom assessments. Teachers of Advanced Placement (AP) classes administer diagnostic tests and AP practice exams to target instruction. By triangulating data available from the large-scale statewide or national tests, local benchmarks, and the common classroom assessments, teachers are able to analyze and identify significant gaps in student understanding at the school, classroom, and individual student level. Through this close analysis, teachers collaboratively plan action steps to improve student achievement trends by modifying and creating specific lessons. Teachers, parents, and students have access to the data warehouse, which hosts demographic data, grades, benchmark scores, SAT scores, AP scores, PSAT scores, HSA scores, and student Lexile levels.

Smithsburg High School staff works closely with the Smithsburg Middle School staff to identify students for appropriate placement in freshmen courses. MSA and Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) data is studied to place students in the most rigorous classes possible, and proactively provide support to close learning gaps. SHS has more than 70 students, or 35 percent, of the freshmen class enrolled in AP US History. Students who are behind their peers academically are placed in our instructional help course that focuses on literacy and other academic skills that will make their time in high school more successful. Data gained from the PSAT during students' sophomore year through AP Potential helps to match AP courses to students individual strengths. These strategies all lead to further increases in participation and success on AP exams. It is our belief that AP success is the best indicator of college readiness.

## Part VI School Support

---

### 1. School Climate/Culture

Smithsburg High recognizes the importance of having a positive school climate. SHS participated in the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3) school climate grant. The grant was funded through the Office of Safe and Drug-free Schools at the United States Department of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education.

Through the MDS3 grant SHS has had access to the climate survey and a School Climate Profile Score. The MDS3 School Climate Profile Score was calculated using 71 items from the MDS3 School Climate Survey, which is comprised of three scale scores:

- Safety (an average of 4 subscales: physical safety, bullying, substance use, social-emotional wellbeing),
- Engagement (an average of 4 subscales: connectedness, academic emphasis, parent involvement, culture of inclusion), and
- Environment (an average of 3 subscales: order & discipline, physical environment, support services).

The MDS3 School Climate Profile Score is calculated on a scale from 1 to 7, with 7 indicating a more favorable school climate. Over the past four years, Smithsburg has seen an increase in the climate from 4.84 to 5.04.

Through the grant, SHS developed a climate committee which promotes positive decision making concerning academics, attendance, and behavior. Throughout the year, the committee hosts various activities including a college and career fair, and career exploration activities. The committee created a college and career readiness framework based on skills sets students will need to be successful.

Innovative programs like SALT and AVID and the restructuring of our Career and Technology courses was done to engage all students in learning at a high level in subjects that they are interested in pursuing. While we work to customize learning for students in the class room we also offer many clubs, sports, and activities to engage students in the school and often causes larger them themselves.

We build relationships between students and staff around great teaching and learning, a proactive approach to managing behavior, and extremely positive school climate that is accepting to all. Our "Meet the Challenge" positive behavior reinforcement program has been key to positive relationships and student engage. In recent years we have collaborated with Smithsburg Middle School to begin building relationships with students prior high school. We work with middle school staff to identify students in need of attention in this areas of behavior and learning. This has improved the transition form middle school to high school and made the students feel more engaged and ready to learn.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community

#### Engaging Families and Community

Smithsburg High School is blessed with a great deal of family and community support. The Smithsburg School feeder pattern, including the elementary and middle schools, is the centerpiece of the Smithsburg community.

The entire feeder school pattern regularly collaborates to hold well attended "Feeder Information Nights" for the families and school stakeholders. The feeder has recently conducted information sessions on Maryland's College and Career Readiness Standards and the PARCC assessments. Feeder principals presented information on the topics and facilitated the exploration of practice PARCC assessments by families.

In 1990 Smithsburg High School saw a need to encourage academic excellence and initiated the STARS program (Success Through Academic Recognition at Smithsburg High) to be similar to sports and music booster organizations. Since then many schools in the county have adopted similar academic recognition

programs. The STARS program invites teacher-nominated students and their parents to be recognized with a picture on the STARS wall, t-shirts, prizes and concludes with a breakfast which is all funded by local businesses. STARS has allowed the school to maintain long-standing relations with our business community.

The community looks forward to homecoming activities that occur every fall. Most of the community and a large number of alumni come to the pancake breakfast, Homecoming Parade, and football game. The community has come together to the Steam and Craft Show every fall for over twenty years. The show includes antique steam machinery, handmade crafts, and traditional food like Leopard Stew. The Steam and Craft Show is a major fundraiser for the athletic boosters.

The athletic boosters, founded in 1967, support one of the most successful high school athletic programs in Maryland. The boosters work closely with the athletic department to provide equipment and uniforms for teams. The boosters provide funding for training to continually improving coaching. The boosters also provide state championship recognition banners, 54 since 1976, to hang in the gymnasium. The athletic boosters were instrumental in providing funding for an athletic trainer to work with student athletes. The Smithsburg community comes together to support various charities and individuals in need of support. If a student needs something the community mobilizes to raise financial support. The school host numerous events to provide support to local food banks. Every fall the school, led by the athletic department, holds the “Dig Pink” fundraiser, honoring cancer survivors in the community, generates awareness, and raises funds to support breast cancer research.

Recently community members have volunteered to help the school with special projects to benefit the school. Community members, including the athletic boosters, have started to work with the athletic staff to begin to plan a comprehensive plan to upgrade the athletic facilities. Other volunteers are working with administration to develop a plan to bring a Junior ROTC program to Smithsburg High School. Smithsburg C.A.R.E.S. is a student-led volunteer organization that provides its members with off-campus opportunities to perform services, build character, and develop leadership. Past events have included trips to work with: Antietam Humane Society, Tabitha’s Table (Smithsburg Food Bank), Golden Living Assisted Living Facility, Hope Alive Women’s Shelter, Habitat for Humanity, and the Smithsburg Hunger Games.

Perhaps the greatest connection between the school and community is the number of teachers who are alumni, live in the community, or have students in the community. Of the 54 staff members, 22 staff members fit into at least one of the categories.

In many ways Smithsburg High School is defined by community, and the community is defined by Smithsburg High School.

### **3. Professional Development**

Professional learning at Smithsburg High School is driven by the fundamental principle that teachers should have choice in their learning and be able to turn around to use their learning immediately in their planning and instruction. With this foundation in place, professional development has evolved at Smithsburg High School as teachers are taking control of their own growth in pursuit of their goals lending them ownership in their futures in teaching. This, in turn, has changed our culture to one where professional learning is active rather than passive: our teachers are the power-source where they tap into their own strengths to teach their colleagues.

In the past two years, SHS teachers have been collaborating way to embed WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading) strategies and provide real-time evidence of student learning. Because the professional development is designed in conference-style agendas, teachers have the ability to choose the sessions that interest them and are most applicable to who they are as instructors and the students they serve. These sessions are designed in a “take-away” format where teachers are able to easily modify the information to cater to their content areas and instructional styles. Teachers are also asked to

give anonymous feedback via Google Forms or Survey Monkey to continue to evolve SHS professional learning to ensure it is meeting the needs of both teachers and students.

Professional development at SHS is not only a tool for teacher learning; it is also a tool for developing teacher leadership. In its current format, teachers are able to showcase their knowledge and experience to their peers putting them at the forefront of professional development, which allows them to build rapport and a culture of learning amongst their peers. Teachers have seen each other taking risks, which has led to a domino effect of teachers stepping up to lead in Smithsburg's goal of preparing all students to be college and career ready.

Professional learning at Smithsburg High School will continue to evolve into a true teacher-led, teacher-inspired, and teacher-focused system allowing for true impact in the classroom.

#### **4. School Leadership**

##### **School Leadership**

Smithsburg High School is committed to a distributive approach to school leadership. The business of educational leadership is far too important to be left in the hands of the school administrators alone. SHS has a number of initiatives that put teachers at the center of school improvement.

We start every school year by conducting "Seek to Understand" meetings based on Covey's principle to seek first to understand before being understood. The meetings, conducted between the principal and each staff member, are designed to foster communication among all members of the school staff. We believe that it is very important to gain the input from staff because they are the closest to daily instruction and in the best position to define the needs of the school. Through these meetings we are able to begin to establish the most important priorities for our work. We refer to these priorities as the "Big Rocks" that drive all of our decisions.

During the 2013-2014 school year the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) was established at SHS. The ILT consists of administrators, department leaders, lead teachers, and other key staff such as the special education case manager. The team meets every two weeks to work collaboratively to understand the school's current realities, assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that will affect our progress as a school. The ILT has led to much more teacher input for decisions.

SHS has diversified the work of our School Improvement Team by breaking the team into several sub-committees designed to address the issues identified in the "seek to understand" meetings and defined by the Instructional Leadership Team. The SIT sub-committees include: Advanced Learning, School Climate, Instructional Technology, Interventions, and Community Involvement. Each committee is facilitated by a teacher with administrative support as needed.

The backbone of our professional development is the Professional Learning Teams made up of teachers with common planning. During the past year teachers led professional development sessions on various aspects of instructional technology related to Google Classroom instructional tools. The teachers' development and delivery of the professional development has greatly increased the staff buy-in for the use of technology.

Teachers hold key roles in special projects and programs for students. Our standardized assessment and credit remediation plans have been developed and delivered to students by our teachers. Teachers are empowered to make decisions in our Smithsburg Academic Leadership Team and Advancement Via Individual Determination programs. All three of these initiatives are designed to meet the needs of students that were identified through a distributive leadership approach.

## PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

### STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

<b>Subject:</b> <u>Math</u>	<b>Test:</b> <u>Algebra/Data Analysis</u>
<b>All Students Tested/Grade:</b> <u>12</u>	<b>Edition/Publication Year:</b> <u>2014</u>
<b>Publisher:</b>	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	98	96	96	94	96
Proficiency Level 3	43	46	57	49	70
Number of students tested	161	175	171	183	154
Percent of total students tested	96	97	96	96	96
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	100	100	100		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	95	94	97	96	91
Proficiency Level 3	29	33	46	31	60
Number of students tested	55	52	33	43	31
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	81	85	86	88	80
Proficiency Level 3	25	13		6	
Number of students tested	16	13	6	17	5
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	50		100		
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested	1		1		
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	86	82	91	83	100
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested	6	9	10	5	5
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	83	100	70	70	88
Proficiency Level 3			40		
Number of students tested	6	8	10	7	8
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	100	80	100	100	100
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested	7	4	1	3	3

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
<b>7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above			100	100	
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested			2	1	
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					
<b>9. White Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	96	97	98	96	96
Proficiency Level 3	43	47	58	49	
Number of students tested	138	146	142	159	130
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	80	100	100	100	100
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested	4	8	6	5	8
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:**

**STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS**

<b>Subject:</b> <u>Reading/ELA</u>	<b>Test:</b> <u>English</u>
<b>All Students Tested/Grade:</b> <u>12</u>	<b>Edition/Publication Year:</b> <u>N/A</u>
<b>Publisher:</b>	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES*</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	98	97	93	94	90
Proficiency Level 3	44	38	35	33	41
Number of students tested	165	176	169	183	156
Percent of total students tested	99	98	95	97	98
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	100	100	100		
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	95	91	91	96	82
Proficiency Level 3	30	18	23	20	24
Number of students tested	52	51	33	43	31
<b>2. Students receiving Special Education</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	88	88	86	6	80
Proficiency Level 3	13	6		6	
Number of students tested	16	16	6	18	5
<b>3. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	50		0		
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested	1		1		
<b>4. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	86	91	91	83	100
Proficiency Level 3		30	73		
Number of students tested	6	10	10	5	5
<b>5. African- American Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	100	75	70	80	88
Proficiency Level 3			9		
Number of students tested	6	6	10	8	8
<b>6. Asian Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	100	100	100	100	67
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested	7	5	1	3	3
<b>7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above			100	100	
Proficiency Level 3					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Number of students tested			2	1	
<b>8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					
<b>9. White Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	98	99	96	95	90
Proficiency Level 3	44	39	35	33	
Number of students tested	141	147	141	161	132
<b>10. Two or More Races identified Students</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above	100	88	83	100	88
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested		8	5	5	8
<b>11. Other 1: Other 1</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					
<b>12. Other 2: Other 2</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					
<b>13. Other 3: Other 3</b>					
Proficiency Level 2 and above					
Proficiency Level 3					
Number of students tested					

**NOTES:**