

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Joseph Victor Maselli

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

Official School Name Bolton High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 72 Brandy Street

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

City Bolton                      State CT                      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06043-7602

County Tolland County

Telephone (860) 643-2768                      Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL http://www.boltonpublicschools.com    E-mail joseph.maselli@boltonct.org

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, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Mrs. Kristin Heckt                      E-mail kristin.heckt@boltonct.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bolton                      Tel. (860) 643-2768

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

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

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

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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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 public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) 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 2010 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: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
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

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 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	35	35	70
10	37	44	81
11	29	39	68
12 or higher	40	43	83
<b>Total Students</b>	141	161	302

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 6 % Black or African American
  - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 86 % White
  - 6 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 4%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	314
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.045
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10 %  
Total number students who qualify: 29
8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
31 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	20
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	12
Paraprofessionals	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 15:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	95%	90%	98%	95%	95%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	74
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	58%
Enrolled in a community college	32%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	3%
Found employment	5%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
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.

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

We believe in the development of capable, ethical, thoughtful, and responsible citizens and provide a secure environment where students work toward achieving their maximum potential.

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

Bolton High School participates in the Hartford Open Choice program. This program assigns students to school using a lottery process. The nearby town of Columbia has no high school. Bolton High is one of the schools that Columbia families may select to attend. We accept all students from Columbia who wish to enter for their freshman year of high school.

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Bolton, Connecticut is a small, suburban community with a welcoming rural character. The population of approximately five thousand residents supports Bolton Center School, a pre-kindergarten through eighth grade school, and Bolton High School. In 1964 the town of Bolton opened the Junior-Senior High School. In 2011, a total expansion and renovation project included the addition of a student commons, science labs, a culinary lab, a child development lab, a technology education center, and a library media center. Today we enjoy a state-of-the-art building that enhances our ability to actualize our core values and expectations that all students will become capable, ethical, thoughtful, and responsible global citizens. Bolton High School is a school of choice for students from the town of Columbia and those in the Open Choice Program from the city of Hartford.

The school climate reflects a long-standing culture of community and trust. This is exemplified in many ways. The student lockers are without locks and there is an open locker-shelf where students store belongings such as athletic equipment, musical instruments, and student projects without worry. The student body regularly gathers as a whole for events such as the welcome-back barbecue, ice cream socials, and ceremonies recognizing student accomplishments. The small school size fosters a personalized educational experience where students and staff develop lifelong connections. Many of our staff members have strong ties to Bolton High School with 28 percent of our current staff either having graduated from BHS or living in town. Additionally, we have teachers who live in other towns and pay tuition to send their own children to BHS.

Bolton High School also has a well-established tradition of success in supporting our students' growth emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally through a host of academic and co-curricular endeavors. Bolton High School has been named a School of Distinction under Connecticut's Next Generation Accountability System. All curricula are in the process of being aligned to reflect the 21st century skills of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and global citizenship. We continue to promote and foster College Career Pathways, the University of Connecticut Early College Experience, Virtual High School, and AP programs, providing students the opportunity to earn college credit in approximately 25 percent of the courses offered at BHS. Over the last few years we have had launched several new initiatives to support and challenge our students to develop to their full potential including: Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS); a move to mastery-based learning through Core Leader and administrative participation in the League of Innovative Schools; alignment of curricula to the Connecticut Core Standards; a technology initiative to become a Google for Education District; a new bell schedule that allows for extended and flexible learning periods; all ninth through eleventh graders taking the PSAT at no cost; professional development designed to meet the goals of individual teachers; and all staff participating in weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings focused on improving student outcomes.

The school has a long history of outreach to the town including musical and theatrical productions as well as athletic, co-curricular, and community-wide events that involve students, families, and the community. Connections are also strong with the senior citizen community including the annual cookie tasting and choral performances. Parent and community organizations, including Bolton Music Works, Athletic Boosters, Project Graduation, Bolton Community Education Foundation, and the Bolton Scholarship Fund, actively support student activities. Year after year, alumni routinely return to participate in the graduation ceremony presenting the diploma to their family member. The residents of Bolton are very proud of their high school. They understand the close connection between staff and students, value the high quality education we provide, and often attend graduation ceremonies even when they have no children in the school.

Students are required to volunteer for a minimum of 50 hours in order to graduate. Last year, accrued community service hours totaled 7,650 hours. We have an extensive Bigs and Littles program that provides mentoring for incoming freshmen and new students. Our Backpack Program is a PTO/teacher led initiative to provide non-perishable food to students in need. We have over one-third of our student body participating in our athletic programs each season and we work with neighboring towns to provide students with additional opportunities to support their athletic interests beyond what is offered at BHS. We have

numerous student-led programs including the Writing and Math Centers, peer tutoring, Unity Group, and academic support for middle school students. We recognize the importance and value of both academic curriculum and co-curricular activities in developing the range of skills and attributes that are important to our students, and as such we have nearly 100 percent participation between athletics and numerous co-curricular activities. With nearly 100 percent of our faculty serving as club advisors or coaches, we continue to focus on high academic standards fostered by strong teacher support and meaningful adult and student relationships that are positive and respectful in a physically and emotionally safe school environment.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

The core curriculum at Bolton High School is based upon Connecticut Core Standards, Connecticut Social Studies Framework, Next Generation Science Standards, and other national standards and competencies. All curricula are grounded in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards of the Common Core State Standards and promote 21st century skills. Google Apps for Education and SMART technology are integrated into all curricula. Instruction and assessment practices are designed to prepare students with the literacy, problem-solving, critical thinking, technology, communication, and collaboration skills necessary for college and career readiness.

All students are challenged and supported through intervention and learning extensions. Student performance data including STAR universal literacy and mathematics screenings, classroom performance, and/or state standardized scores, are analyzed regularly. Students not meeting expectations participate in an RTI (Response to Intervention) class where they receive direct help from teachers who reinforce skills, re-teach concepts, and support independent practice. Students performing above grade level are offered various opportunities to challenge themselves by leading clubs, tutoring peers in the Math or Writing Center, and enrolling in Virtual High School, independent studies, and college credit electives.

The English department teaches critical thinking through writing, reading, viewing, speaking, and listening. As an example, students compare modern dystopian films to the novel *Fahrenheit 451* and finding the common characteristics of dystopian literature. Students learn inquiry-based strategies that enable them to analyze, synthesize, and integrate ideas studied in literature. Students learn to speak and write with clarity and precision in MCC Speech so they may become literate and competent adults. English courses aim to teach the 21st century skill of empathy by imagining the thoughts, emotions, and decisions of other people by studying *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Elie Wiesel's memoir *Night*. Technology integration includes the use of Google Classroom and Edmodo through the creation of class pages where rubrics, assignments, and assessments are given. Turnitin.com is utilized for submission, revision, and peer editing of papers. Students in grades ten through twelve participate in a national Poetry Out Loud competition where they choose, analyze, memorize, and recite a poem. The school champion competes at the state level with the potential to travel to the national competition. With four years of required English, senior students may choose from MCC Speech, Contemporary Issues in Fiction, Studies in Drama, AP English, British Literature, and our newest elective Peace and Conflict Studies, which focuses on community, cultural awareness, peace-making, activism, community service, and encourages reading of nonfiction.

Mathematics prepares students for career and college by teaching students to apply skills, reasoning, and logic to real-world applications. Students become comfortable with mathematical curiosity and are challenged to defend their thinking. For example, students use Excel to track their spending on monthly budget sheets, make various budgets for different ages, investigate real estate and mortgages, retirement savings, and project the expenses for various life situations like weddings, children, hobbies, vacations, and death and make a presentation on PowerPoint. Students find uses for functions in the real world as they utilize similar triangles and indirect measurement to determine distances outside, heights of buildings, and lampposts. Students are required to take four years of mathematics, including select business classes that count towards the graduation requirement. Many students receive college credit through Algebra II, AP Calculus, and Virtual High School AP Statistics. Learning extends beyond the classroom as students organize and staff the Math Center, which provides peer tutoring throughout day. Technology is incorporated into math classes with graphing programs and a web-based math program supporting individualized mastery-based learning.

The social studies department prepares students for success in college and career by challenging students to be informed, engaged, and active global citizens. Students are required to take four years of social studies, including U.S. History and Civics. Inquiry is at the heart of the social studies curricula with a focus on interdisciplinary instruction and the deep and enduring understandings, concepts, and skills of history, civics, economics, psychology, and sociology. In collaboration with the librarian, research skills are taught

beginning freshman year and culminate in the junior year U.S History project. Through the National History Day program, students develop research questions and theses, learn the skills of academic research, and construct pieces of original historical interpretation. Department-wide rubrics assess argumentative writing and the analysis of primary sources in all social studies courses. The department encourages the 21st century skills of active citizenship and global literacy through opportunities with the Social Justice Club, mock elections and debates, and field experiences in Washington D.C. and Bolton, England. College credit opportunities are available through AP United States History and AP European History.

The science department focuses on biological, earth, and physical sciences. Students are required to take three years of science, but most exceed this minimum requirement. Courses emphasize the analysis of scientific data, technical writing, scientific questioning, creative problem solving, collaboration, and the communication of scientific phenomena. For example, students design an experiment exploring the use of biofuels as an alternate energy source. Students also engage in citizen science projects such as analyzing the water quality of a nearby river for the state DEEP (Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). A department-wide rubric assesses and guides the improvement of scientific writing. All courses emphasize student collaboration via inquiry-based activities, laboratory exercises, collaborative technology platforms, and discussion of the influence of science and technology on society. Students engage in independent research projects utilizing a variety of sources and tools to access and synthesize scientific information. Learning opportunities extend outside of the classroom with the Robotics Club, the statewide Envirothon competition, and field experiences to study ecology in locations such as Costa Rica and South Africa.

All students participate in the College Career Pathways initiative which matches student education and workplace needs through partnerships with postsecondary institutions, businesses, and industry. Career clusters and pathways in architecture and construction, business management and administration, education and training, hospitality and tourism, and human services are well established. Students may earn college credit in approximately 25% of the BHS courses through the AP, University of Connecticut Early College Experience, and Manchester Community College (MCC) Career Pathways programs. Additional college credits are available through online courses. Over 50% of 2015 graduates earned college credit. All curricular areas are focused on preparing our students for college and career in a changing economic landscape by focusing on critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity at Bolton High School.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The other curriculum areas use project-based learning to apply the Connecticut Core Standards, National and State Business Education Standards, National Core Arts Standards, Connecticut Career and Technical Education Standards, International Technology and Engineering Educators Association Standards, and CTE Performance Standards and Competencies, and National Standards for Learning Language to real world applications. The focus in the arts, technology education, family and consumer sciences, business, physical education/health, and foreign language is on both incremental and mastery-based learning. All students at Bolton High School must earn two credits through career and technical education and/or fine arts courses prior to graduation along with one credit in world language.

The music department teaches all students to create and/or perform music through instrumental and vocal ensembles, Guitar Performance, and two levels of Music Technology. Music courses support the acquisition of essential skills through the direct application of 21st century skills while focusing on creating, performing, responding, and connecting within a musical context. Critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills are developed through experiences like a pop song study and composition project, where students evaluate and replicate techniques used in popular modern music. Performing students practice self-direction and goal management strategies through selecting, practicing, and refining creative works using rehearsal and performance recordings.

The visual arts promote skills such as creative and critical thinking, development of self-esteem, imagination, discipline, and problem solving techniques. The visual arts encourage students to pose insightful questions about contexts, processes, and set criteria for evaluation of art. As a result, students create deeper and more profound works of visual art that reflect the maturation of their creative and problem

solving skills. Students take turns installing different displays of their work in several high school spaces and central office throughout the year. Through the visual arts students develop vocabularies and concepts, understand the multifaceted interplay of different media, styles, forms, techniques, and processes in the creation of their work, and relate understandings about the historical and cultural contexts of art to situations in contemporary life.

Technology education teaches students to be successful in the classroom and society with a focus on the real world application of skills. Students practice critical thinking using the engineering design process, as well as construct and troubleshoot a variety of projects, such as the construction of sheds for the community. They use a wide range of technologies associated with engineering, manufacturing, and design while developing and using problem solving skills in various projects, including a scaled CAD "Design a Dream House" and rapid prototyping using a 3D printer. In addition, students use systematic problem solving, essential team building skills, and discuss upcoming technologies, including their uses, practicality, and morality.

Family and consumer sciences empower students to effectively manage life issues by applying skills, analyzing options, and strengthening interpersonal competencies through an interrelated curriculum in Culinary, Bakeshop, Early Childhood Education, Human Development, Human Services, and Parenting. Students engage in hands-on and real-world applications that prepare them for life and careers in family and consumer sciences by providing opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed for becoming responsible citizens and leaders in family, community, and work settings. For example, our playschool program gives students the opportunity to work with preschool children twice a week in a child lab setting.

The business program prepares students to become productive and contributing members of society capable of economic self-sufficiency, lifelong learning, and adaptability to change. Business courses aid in the development of contemporary knowledge and skills for successful entry-level employment and advancement in business careers, as well as promote the development of interpersonal, decision-making, technological, time management, and problem-solving skills. Business courses familiarize students with critical contemporary office procedures, software applications, terminologies, concepts, principles, and practices. Students relate specific business related skills to careers through Stock Market simulations, a checking account project using Quicken, and the creation of an entrepreneurial business plan.

The physical education and health program is designed to provide in-depth knowledge of health and wellness. Students have a variety of opportunities to develop physical and social skills while learning the benefits associated with participating in team and individual sports. Students are taught skills and strategies to make informed, appropriate, and healthful choices that will lead to a productive life. Physical/health education in grades nine and ten meets daily and regularly integrates technology through the use of heart rate monitors, pedometers, and body fat analyzers, as well as iPads to monitor student achievement and to assess movement patterns. In addition, all students at BHS become CPR and AED certified.

World language students read, write, produce, and speak for a variety of purposes as well as utilize collaboration and digital literacy skills to enhance communication in Spanish, French, and Latin. Students also use language skills to examine and experience diverse global perspectives, develop cultural awareness, and to develop valuable real-world skills. AP college credit is available in French, Latin, and Spanish. In addition, there are numerous opportunities for BHS students to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment through field experiences to France, Italy, and Spain.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Our collective emphasis has been on the process of moving toward mastery-based learning in order to better meet the needs of all learners while maintaining flexibility, responsiveness, and creativity in the classroom. We prioritize and assess the most vitally important knowledge and transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, creative and practical problem solving, global citizenship, and self-direction.

All learning expectations, both short- and long-term, are clearly and consistently communicated to students. Teachers use a variety of strategies to optimize student learning including differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, technology, feedback, and independent practice to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers utilize hands-on lessons that require students to use multiple learning skills and higher order thinking to construct meaning and knowledge and provide real world applications of learning. Student achievement is evaluated against common learning standards and performance expectations. A variety of formative and summative assessment techniques inform instruction and assess mastery of material. These techniques include, but are not limited to, technology enhanced experiences such as Kahoot and Socrative. Math teachers utilize ALEKS, a web based program to support individualized mastery-based learning. Students regularly create and monitor individualized learning goals in history, English, and music courses. Students have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of graduation requirements which are assessed using school-wide rubrics. One example is the oral communication graduation requirement which can be assessed in MCC Speech, Culinary, Early Childhood Education, and Civics.

Twice a week our modified block schedule provides extended learning times and a 40-minute flexible work period called Connections, which allows students the flexibility to meet with any teacher for remediation, enrichment, and make-up work. Connections periods may also be used for enrichment activities such as assemblies and guest speakers. The extended learning time allows for more problem-based learning activities, differentiated and personalized instruction, and real world application of skills and content.

We offer a continuum of services to meet the needs of students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws from least restrictive environment to self-contained programs. After receipt of a referral, a Planning and Placement Team (PPT), comprising parents, student, general and special education teachers, related services staff, and administrators, meet to review the referral and determine if an initial evaluation for special education eligibility is required. If the evaluation is conducted and the student is found eligible, the team develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students with 504 plans are provided accommodations that give them access to their education to the same extent as a student without a disability.

#### 4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Bolton High School uses a variety of assessment data to systematically analyze and improve student and school performance. Student achievement is evaluated against common learning standards and performance expectations. All teachers develop student learning objectives for the year, targeting areas of student growth and achievement. Formative assessments in all classes measure learning progress during the instructional process and the data is used to inform instructional adjustments, teaching practices, and academic enrichment and support. Common rubrics and summative assessments are utilized across the curriculum to evaluate learning achievement. Writing across all disciplines is emphasized. Grades are updated constantly with both formative and summative assessment data and real time access on our online grading program that includes student and parent access.

Standardized assessments including SBAC, PSAT, SAT, state science and physical fitness, CTE, and AP data are used where appropriate in conjunction with course-specific assessments to monitor and maintain high levels of achievement. Students are assessed a minimum of three times a year in reading and mathematics using the STAR assessments to identify achievement levels. STAR data informs classroom instruction, tiered interventions, individualized help, and math and English teachers yearly professional goals. Both English and math offer co-taught classes and tiered instruction periods (RTI) specifically designed to provide additional support to students identified as needing intervention through STAR, standardized assessments, and classroom data.

Through our teacher and administrator evaluation process, we are committed to communicating directly with 100% of parents beyond progress reports and report cards. Teachers utilize a variety of communication tools including email, telephone, course websites, and digital newsletters. Graduation requirements are communicated each semester through individualized reports to students and parents. In addition, each teacher submits an article yearly to the school newsletter regarding how each class/subject prepares students for lifelong learning. Parents and students have real-time access to course grades and progress via an online grading portal.

In our continuous efforts to maintain and improve our high performing standards, Bolton High School has shifted toward a formalized mastery-based learning system and is a participating member of the League of Innovative Schools. Graduation requirements are in the process of being revised to reflect transferrable 21st-century learning skills while continuing to reflect academic, social, and civic expectations. The school has increased its focus on engagement strategies through targeted professional development and extended learning periods. It is important to note that an achievement gap does not exist at Bolton High School. Our personalized approach ensures that all students receive the academic support they need to succeed.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Bolton High School's positive and engaging environment is enhanced by meaningful and personalized staff and student relationships. Every faculty member is assigned a group of eight to ten students to advise through the weekly Connections block. Almost 100% of faculty and staff serve as coaches or advisors and regularly attend co-curricular events after school and in the community such as the yearly drama production, music concerts, athletic events, and school celebrations. Students are constantly reinforcing their relationships with faculty and community members by engaging in activities that are inclusive, encouraging, and provide positive experiences for all. Our athletes are regularly recognized at the state level by the Central CT Officials for their sportsmanship. The student council is very active in the school community, working with staff and administration to ensure a positive school climate. Student success is regularly celebrated through honor roll luncheons, board of education acknowledgement, and recognition in the school newsletter.

Teachers are valued by administration, parents, and students. Staff members view their colleagues as their second family. This is demonstrated through their endless support for one another both in professional and personal times of celebrations and need. Teachers are encouraged and supported to continually learn. We embrace the fact that every learner, student and adult alike, is different. As such, we have a school-focused coupled with a personalized approach to professional learning that encourages self-improvement and professionalism which ultimately improve student outcomes. Teacher leadership is fostered through a shared leadership approach by working together to create an engaging school climate that accelerates student learning through active participation in numerous school and district committees. The PLC structure provides a forum for teachers' collaboration, voice, and professional learning.

Diversity is not only accepted, but celebrated as well. A positive classroom and school environment is promoted through clubs such as the Youth Group, Peer Support, Gay Straight Alliance, Connecticut Youth Forum, and a Bigs and Littles program that provide a safe space for students regardless of religion, socioeconomic status, sexuality, or gender identity and have worked to bring nationally recognized programs such as Rachel's Challenge and the Anti-Defamation League's NAME program to the high school. All students have the opportunity to join or create a group based on their interests, including those students who could otherwise feel isolated. Students have a voice that is valued by adults and guides many curricular and co-curricular decisions. Their positive behavior is enforced and rewarded through our PBIS system.

To further promote diversity within the school community, Bolton High School participates in the state supported Open Choice program that includes and educates inner city students from Hartford in suburban schools. The Unity Team is a student-led group with a mission of building capacity and creating a positive and respectful school climate. Student team members participate in cultural diversity training with the goal of bringing back activities to the school to facilitate cultural awareness.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent engagement begins before students enter high school with an eighth grade open house designed to introduce families to the faculty and programs at Bolton High School and help students plan their academic program. Annual open house for all grades occurs at the beginning of each school year, giving parents and faculty members a chance to discuss curricular programs. The BHS guidance department utilizes Naviance, a web-based college and career readiness platform, which allows students, parents, and staff to work together in creating post-secondary plans. Parents are invited to participate in financial aid planning events and attend a transition evening focusing on successful post-secondary options. Our close partnership with the Hartford Open Choice program supports those students who attend BHS beyond the school day, providing transportation to students and parents attending evening and weekend activities.

The school regularly seeks input from parents and community members through numerous methods, such as participating in a walk-through assessment which examined the school culture to provide actionable feedback on school climate. Parents and community members serve on all major school committees such as the PBIS, Safety Committee, and the District Strategic Planning Committee, actively contributing to the development of our district goals and five year plan. In addition, community members frequently serve as mentors for the senior capstone program and evaluate projects.

Civic engagement is an indicator of student success at Bolton High School where students are expected to engage in community activities. The community consistently supports various charitable activities including donating to blood drives and the establishment of an in school pantry system that ensures students in need have food for the weekend. Whether packing meals for the Stop Hunger Now Campaign or donating goods in the Student Council “Trick or Treat for Canned Goods,” the Bolton Community actively contributes to student success stemming from our shared belief in the importance of community service.

Our small community maximizes resources by building partnerships with local organizations. Teachers regularly invite local experts to present on smart investments and proper etiquette for job and college interviews. Culinary professionals from Johnson and Wales, Lincoln Culinary Institute, and MCC demonstrate multiple advanced preparation techniques during school classes. The Bolton Fire Department, EMS, and State Police work closely with school administration to develop and implement procedures to protect students. Bolton Music Works, the Bolton Booster Club, the Bolton Scholarship Fund (BSF), and the Bolton Community Education Foundation work to provide financial and physical support to facilitate additional learning opportunities leading to increased student success and an overall improved school climate. In 2015, the BSF awarded \$89,115 to students with community members donating over \$1.4 million dollars in scholarships since its inception.

### 3. Professional Development:

Professional development (PD) at Bolton High School is teacher driven and focused on building an internal capacity always focused on improving student outcomes. The Bolton Professional Development and Evaluation Committee, comprising teachers and administrators, advises the development of the district and school PD plans. Using the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching Rubric for Effective Teaching, teachers develop a personalized Performance and Practice goal, promoting flexibility, responsibility, and ownership of their own professional growth. For example, to support our transition to extended learning time, teachers explored and shared professional resources and best practices regarding engagement strategies through PLCs, staff meetings, PD from experts, and personalized learning time. Teacher professional learning plans, goals, and feedback regularly determine PD topics.

There is a teacher leader (Core Leader) for every content area. Core Leaders guide professional development decisions using student and teacher data and communicate those to the faculty as a whole and their respective departments as needed. Additionally, Core Leaders facilitate a monthly meeting where information is disseminated, feedback is gathered and communicated back to administration, student data is analyzed and discussed, budgetary decisions are made, and curricula are revised and updated. Core Leaders also use this time to discuss educational books, resources, and current trends in education to support our work towards a move to mastery-based learning.

Teachers and administrators regularly take advantage of external sources to learn about research-based best practices. Representatives from all disciplines take advantage of programs offered through the League of Innovative Schools on mastery-based learning, PBIS training, cultural-proficiency training, and a regional book club discussing Dr. Tyrone Howard’s *Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools*, Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) training to support beginning teachers, state and regional curriculum councils, as well as technology integration conferences such as International Society of Technology and Education (ISTE). Our other curricular areas take advantage of various professional opportunities, such as Career and Technology Education Conference on Rigorous Assessment and UCONN Art Workshop. Our music department participates in regional, state, and international level educational conferences. Wellness initiatives are supported by Mindfulness in Education conference and Yoga 4 Classrooms. A BHS science

teacher is currently serving as a member on the State of Connecticut Next Generation Science Standards District Advisory Council and two teachers have recently served on an advisory committee with the State Commissioner of Education.

In addition, teachers often lead professional development workshops, including the annual teacher-led technology professional development day. For example, the Technology Committee employs a trainer of trainers model for Google Apps for Education. As a result all departments now integrate Google Classroom as part of their regular instruction. We accomplish this through our school calendar which features five full days, monthly early release days, and individual, team, and department selected days for professional learning that supports student achievement and school improvement.

#### 4. School Leadership:

The principal has implemented a shared leadership model that embraces reflective practice and a common purpose focused on an engaging school climate that accelerates both adult and student learning. The team comprises the principal, dean of students, eight academic core leaders, the librarian, and a member of the student support team. The team meets weekly to discuss practices that make students successful, supports for students who are having difficulty, and address issues, plan schedules, develop the school budget, review policies, and collaborate on initiatives. Though this team does not have any supervisory responsibilities, they are a collaborative part of the decision making process. Each Core Leader meets monthly with their department to focus on their needs and share ideas. The guiding philosophy of the group is to make choices based on what is best for students and learning while safeguarding academic time. This leadership team has suggested and implemented substantive changes in the culture at BHS including working towards becoming a mastery-based school and initiating a huge shift in our daily bell schedule to provide more time for engagement as well as establishing flexible time for remediation. This shared leadership model is also embraced by both the director of curriculum who meets monthly with core leaders, and the director of special education who regularly meets with special education teachers, school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists. In addition, the principal, dean of students, director of curriculum, and director of special education share the responsibility of evaluating staff. The dean of students is also responsible for the Positive Behavior Intervention System, student discipline, and regular monitoring of student attendance. This collaborative approach fosters leadership growth and supports a positive school climate that engages adults and students in a shared mission to improve student development.

Faculty members also meet weekly in professional learning communities (PLCs). These meetings allow administrators to meet with small groups of faculty to discuss issues, review student data, share reflections on academic reading, and brainstorm ideas to improve student success. Often PLCs provide opportunities for meaningful conversation on topics generated at the larger monthly faculty meetings, for teachers to share engagement and assessment strategies, and to discuss individual students who might need intervention or support. This sharing of data has proven invaluable in ensuring that the needs of all student are met and to support the move to mastery based learning.

The leadership team has established a school environment that focuses on the safety of students. This safety includes the physical space, but extends to the emotional and academic well-being of students, guaranteeing that all students have one adult, or many, with whom they have a relationship of mutual trust and respect. These relationships between students and faculty ensure that student success is paramount. The faculty, principal, dean of students, director of curriculum, director of pupil services, and the superintendent all believe that in order for students to become successful there must be a welcoming, tolerant, and accepting school atmosphere where students are able to learn, discuss, and grow as people.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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For the last 10 years every graduate from Bolton High School has completed a capstone project. The required project is designed to promote the skills and behaviors necessary for autonomous, life-long learning. Students create a project of their choice that integrates research and synthesizes what they have learned in a culminating learning experience. The project allows students the opportunity to apply and demonstrate interdisciplinary skills and knowledge while investigating a specialized area of interest. The capstone advisors serve as student evaluators throughout the process with the entire faculty contributing to the overall capstone evaluation.

There are five components to capstone including the project proposal, evaluator check-in meetings, a research paper, capstone evening presentation, and a final reflection. The Capstone Manual guides each senior, their faculty advisor, and their mentor through the phases of the process with this information on the school website and placed in the hands of students their junior year.

Each student has both a faculty advisor and mentor. The faculty advisor directs discussions and activities related to the project, collects work to be submitted for the project during connections periods, and communicates to the all senior capstone advisors regarding each student's progress. Unlike the faculty advisor, the mentor is an adult that each senior chooses as an expert in their project's subject matter to help them be successful. A minimum of six meetings with the mentor are required during the year to discuss the proposal, research paper, and the final presentation, all of which require signature pages. In addition, seniors schedule three general meetings to discuss the overall progress of their project.

Each capstone advisor follows student projects from start to finish, reading and evaluating the research paper and the final reflection paper. Periodically, workshops are offered by the Capstone Committee to address common concerns related to the project along with an opportunity to ask questions and brainstorm ideas with peers. Evaluation of each student's project is conducted by the Capstone Committee and includes a thorough review and assessment of the research paper including written feedback, the presentation given during Senior Capstone Evening, the final reflection, and feedback from adult mentors, committee members, and the community.

Numerous capstone projects over the years have led to students pursuing a particular interest in college and the work force as a result of the experience. Students very often connect their projects to community issues or problems and embrace outside-of-school learning experiences. A recent graduate interested in art education designed a project to teach art classes to local senior citizens. Other students have entered the teaching profession after their capstone focused on work with preschoolers in our playschool program. Another student worked with a local solar energy firm and the Board of Education to explore the feasibility of harnessing solar energy at the high school. The Capstone project is a multi-faceted culminating experience for Bolton High School students designed to encourage students to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop a variety of 21st century skills including goal setting, planning, research skills, media literacy, teamwork, public speaking, and self-sufficiency.