

**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) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Dr. Vincent A. Carella

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

Official School Name Nanuet Senior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 103 Church Street

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

City Nanuet State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 10954-3030

County Rockland County

Telephone (845) 627-9808 Fax (845) 624-5520

Web site/URL http://www.nanuetsd.org E-mail vcarella@nanuetsd.org

Twitter Handle https://twitter.com/NUFSD Facebook Page http://www.facebook.com/NanuetPublicS  
chools Google+ \_\_\_\_\_

YouTube/URL http://www.youtube.com/NanuetS  
chools 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\*Dr. Mark McNeill E-mail mmcneill@nanuetsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Nanuet Union Free School District Tel. (845) 627-9890

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 Dr. Sarah Chauncey DIM  
(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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	89	100	189
10	78	86	164
11	104	72	176
12 or higher	88	77	165
<b>Total Students</b>	359	335	694

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 14 % Asian
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 67 % White
  - 1 % 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: 3%

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	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	20
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	687
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.029
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
6 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16 %  
Total number students who qualify: 107

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
69 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
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 3 Hearing Impairment
- 2 Mental Retardation
- 8 Multiple Disabilities
- 1 Orthopedic Impairment
- 16 Other Health Impaired
- 42 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 2 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 16
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	56
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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 12:1

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%	96%
High school graduation rate	96%	97%	98%	97%	91%

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	185
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	67%
Enrolled in a community college	28%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	1%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
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.

The Nanuet School District is committed to the personal development of each student so that upon graduation, he or she is prepared and inspired to apply learning in a changing, complex, and interdependent world.

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

## PART III – SUMMARY

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Nanuet is a residential suburb north of New York City. It is considered part of the New York metropolitan area. The population of Nanuet is approximately 18,000 and it is the most densely populated hamlet in the Town of Clarkstown. It is a diverse community: residents are 59% white, 15% Hispanic, 13% black, 12% Asian, and 1% two or more races. Among the adult population, 89% have high school diplomas and 41% hold a bachelor's degree. The median household income is \$89,901, which is 34% higher than the state average. The unemployment rate in Nanuet is 4.4%. The median house price is \$388,500, compared to the state median of \$283,700. Approximately 16% of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch services.

The District budget for the 2015 – 2016 school year is \$67,725,699, which represents an increase of 1.86%. For more than forty years, all school budgets and bonds have passed, perhaps the clearest indicator possible of the confidence the community places in the District. In January 2005, a bond of over \$18 million was passed in order to purchase 36 acres of Nanuet property that formerly had been owned by the New York Foundling Sisters of Charity. The voter turnout was triple the amount of yearly budget voters and 80% of the voters approved the purchase. The District established the Nanuet Outdoor Education Center on this site. It has a building that contains a classroom, which is fully equipped with lab equipment; a kitchen with full handicap accessibility; a pond; a greenhouse; a therapeutic riding stable; a garden for learning; athletic fields; and a one mile walking path, which is also used for track events.

In the 2004-2005 school year, a new classroom wing was added to the school. All eight classrooms were equipped with the highest level of school technology available at the time. The library/media center was also transformed into a state-of-the-art facility. Looking forward, there are plans underway to reconstruct the library/media center and cafeteria into a Global Learning Commons.

Nanuet Senior High School offers a rigorous academic program, coupled with rich extra and co-curricular activities, for students in grades 9-12. For the past four years, the school has been recognized by the New York State Department of Education as a Reward School, indicating that we continue to show growth in academic performance by all groups of students. We are proud to have celebrated our 54th graduating class in June 2015.

The philosophy of Nanuet Senior High School is captured in the District mission statement: “The Nanuet School District is committed to the personal development of each student so that upon graduation, he or she is prepared and inspired to apply learning in a changing, complex, and interdependent world.” To achieve this goal, the administrators, teachers, parents and community work collaboratively to provide for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of every student. This collaboration exists in every aspect of our school through our scaffolded approach to learning. Our interconnectedness allows us to communicate through a variety of teams and task forces, and it is this ability to communicate that allows us to educate the whole child and to stand out as a high performing school. We attribute our success in accomplishing our District mission to: a rich and rigorous curriculum that motivates children to learn; access for students and teachers to the latest technology; our use of assessments and assessment data to drive instruction; the numerous and engaging opportunities for enrichment; support services for students; ongoing professional development opportunities; family and community support; school leadership; and a school culture and climate that nurtures and inspires.

We are proud of the academic achievements of our students. In the 2014 - 2015 school year, 93% of the students who took Advanced Placement examinations earned scores of 3 or higher and more than half the senior class graduated with at least one Advanced Placement course on his/her transcript. As our students enter college, many have already taken college courses outside of our Advanced Placement program. On average, over 300 students yearly earn college credits through our partnerships with St. Thomas Aquinas College, Dominican College, Syracuse University, and State Universities of New York at Albany and New Paltz. Eighty-four percent of the Class of 2016 will have taken a college accredited course at Nanuet Senior High School. The average number of credits completed by students who took college courses is 11 credits.

Most post-secondary institutions accept these transfer credits. Our staff is engaged in preparing students for the rigor of college as part of the college and career initiative we have in place.

Our students have experienced strong results in the post-secondary admissions process. From 2011 through 2015, 98% of our graduates attended college upon graduation. Seventy percent attended four year schools and 28% attended two year programs. The four year colleges and universities that our students attend are diverse, with many students accepted to the most selective schools in the country. Our students' academic majors are equally diverse, as many enroll in competitive professional programs or liberal arts programs.

To meet students' needs, Nanuet Senior High School provides multiple levels of courses from Life Skills through Advanced Placement. Students are not locked into programs and can move freely from one level to another. They are encouraged to challenge themselves and receive appropriate guidance. Because we are a small District, we easily identify students who need assistance with social and emotional issues, standardized examinations and graduation requirements. Systems are in place in the form of administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, and social workers to provide support for students in their development.

The Life Skills program provides services to students with severe cognitive, developmental and physical disabilities. The students in our Life Skills program are integrated into our school and our community. In addition to academics, these students participate in physical education, employment training, sports, extracurricular activities, and community service. Every six weeks, these students make dessert for homeless people in Rockland County through the community's Soup Angels Program. In addition to providing a community service, they learn how to follow recipes and cook. The students in our Life Skills class also run and manage our school store, learning all aspects of retail operation while working on speech, language, social and academic goals. In addition, these students spearhead a yearly drive for the local People to People program, and they organize, prepare, and cook an entire Thanksgiving meal for the faculty and administration. The Life Skills Program in Nanuet is essential, and it represents so much of what the Nanuet community is all about.

Nanuet Senior High School is a part of a unified, small community that celebrates its accomplishments and traditions. Through yearly events such as the Family Fun Festival, the Founders Day Celebration, the Black and Gold Hall of Fame Dinner, the McKiernan Run, and Spirit Week we honor our history and achievements. Excellence and citizenship in academics, the arts and athletics are recognized at school assemblies and awards dinners. Our school participates in fundraisers and food drives to support our community. We value our community and the community values the work that we do and the success of our students.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

Nanuet Senior High School’s curriculum follows the New York State Learning Standards for each content area. The curricula in Mathematics and English Language Arts are based on the NYS Common Core Standards. College and career readiness is embedded in the curricula both in terms of content area knowledge and fundamental skills including collaboration, self-reliance, problem-solving, communication, critical reading, and application of technology. All areas of the curriculum support our mission statement: “The Nanuet School District is committed to the personal development of each student so that upon graduation, he or she is prepared and inspired to apply learning in a changing, complex, and interdependent world.”

The English Department curriculum is based on the NYS Common Core Learning Standards for reading , writing, speaking and listening. In ninth and tenth grades students take Honors or Regents classes that focus on foundational skills, including understanding academic language, writing cohesive essays, and analyzing literature for deeper meaning. Subsequent courses build on these skills, while expecting more independent student work. Eleventh grade students take: Regents, Honors, or Advanced Placement Language & Composition. Additionally, students can take an elective (Writing Workshop or Film). Seniors choose between Advanced Placement Literature & Composition or two semester courses, consisting of English 12 and an elective (Internship, Short Fiction, Public Speaking, or Journalism). Interdisciplinary lessons and units are built into the curriculum. For example, students read *The Things They Carried* in the spring of junior year when they are studying the Vietnam War in Social Studies. The department is aligned vertically so that students can develop their skills over time. For example, students complete a research paper each year; however, in ninth grade they work together to analyze the text and develop a thesis. Each year part of this scaffolding is taken away until, ultimately, seniors read and analyze a classic and write a research paper independently. For students who need additional support we offer co-taught classes, self-contained classes, remedial reading, and English Skills. Within these courses, we use a variety of resources to assist students, including Achieve 3000, abridged texts, AIMSWeb. Students can further develop their skills through enrichment within the classroom and by participating in extracurricular activities, such as the school newspaper, debate team, and literary journal.

Over the past three years the Mathematics Department has implemented the Common Core Curriculum in Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II & Trigonometry. Students can choose from a variety of courses according to their abilities. Other courses offered are Advanced Placement Calculus, Calculus, Precalculus, Advanced Topics in Algebra, Math 12 and Financial Algebra. The majority of students take four years of mathematics, which exceeds the NYS requirement of three years. We offer a two year co-teaching program in Algebra I, which prepares students with special needs to take the exit exam. Tier 2 and Tier 3 strategies are employed throughout the year, which has resulted in high proficiency rates in state examinations. AIMSWeb, is administered three times a year to monitor basic skills in math and ensure proper placement of our students in Algebra. The Math Department uses a variety of approaches to enhance instruction. All teachers use SmartBoards and regularly post online content on their homework websites to assist students and provide enrichment. As an example, all freshmen and some sophomores are required to participate in the online math program IXL to promote mathematical fluency and problem solving. The department also participates in Math Leagues and runs a Chapter of Mu Alpha Theta to motivate and encourage excellence in mathematics.

The Social Studies Department embraces the Common Core Learning Standards reflected in a curriculum that is rich in college, career, and civic preparedness. Students meet their four year requirements in core subject areas and have the opportunity to move among Regents, Honors, and Advanced Placement courses. In addition, students have the opportunity to enroll in electives, including Criminal Justice, Psychology, Business Law, and Sociology, which allow them to receive local and college credit through St. Thomas Aquinas College, Dominican College, and Syracuse University. Students’ foundational skills are fostered in each grade by infusing a variety of research projects, performance assessments, debates, Socratic Seminars, position papers, and authentic assessments that give students an opportunity to demonstrate real world skills.

Students are often engaged in technologically based research, speaker programs, class discussions, and other methods supported by the Understanding by Design Model. Students have the option of exercising their analytical skills in clubs or symposiums such as Model United Nations, National History Day, and the Rockland County History Day Symposium. All courses support the use of an interdisciplinary approach through novels, school plays, music, financial literacy, and economics to engage the students in their educational journey as life long learners.

Nanuet Senior High School offers classes in Earth Science, Living Environment, Chemistry, Physics, and Environmental Science. Our accelerated students begin their core sequence in 8th grade, which provides the option for Advanced Placement and elective courses during senior year. The Earth Science, Living Environment, and Chemistry classes follow the New York State Core Curriculum Standards. Our students are grouped into Honors, Regents, and Co-taught sections. Applications of Chemistry and Conceptual Physics are non-core options for students who have already completed their core requirements. We also offer electives in Advanced Placement Biology, Advanced Placement Environmental Science, and an alternative Environmental Science course that follows a locally developed curriculum. Our physics courses are part of a concurrent enrollment partnership with Dominican College. College Physics 101 and 102 are available at both Regents and Honors levels. The science curriculum builds upon the knowledge, understanding, and ability to apply science learning and strategies that students have acquired in earlier grades. Instruction focuses on understanding important relationships, processes, mechanisms, and applications of concepts. Nanuet also has a fully equipped science classroom at our Outdoor Educational Center, where students can perform authentic experiments using discovery/inquiry-based activities. Students can enhance their scientific abilities and satisfy their scientific curiosity through our Applied Science Research course, offered through SUNY Albany, and our Science Olympiad Club.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Nanuet Senior High School offers students the opportunity to discover a variety of media through its visual arts curriculum in full year and half year courses. Students are offered an encouraging, collaborative, safe environment to explore their creative side and to develop skills that encourage inventive thinking, problem solving, effective communication, visual and digital literacy. Studio Art is a full year foundation course for students in grades 9 and 10. Elective courses offered to students in grades 10-12 include Drawing, Painting, Advanced Drawing and Painting, Ceramics, Photography I & II, and Web Design. Students are also mentored in Independent Study projects. More than one third of the student body is enrolled in elective courses in visual arts. Students in the visual arts program have the opportunity to display their work in the school and local community in District-wide and juried art shows.

The Music Department offers band, chorus, and orchestra, which are all grade 9-12 ensembles. All Music Department courses are electives and meet everyday for a full period. We also offer a basic level Music Theory course and Advanced Placement Music Theory, which are typically taken by students in grades 10-12. The music curriculum is built on a comprehensive approach to music education that proposes students learn beyond notes and rhythms. Our students not only learn about music, they learn through music. Students compose, perform, and improvise while placing music in its social, cultural, and historical context. For example, students research music from their cultural heritage to perform in class, participate in student directed rehearsals, and reflect on current musical events through online discussion boards. Students in performing ensembles maintain a digital portfolio of their progress through quarterly performance assessments. Nanuet offers several extracurricular musical activities: Jazz Band, fall play, spring musical, and music technology club. "Big Musicians" is a music mentor program where high school students work with fifth and sixth grade musicians after school. Exceptional student musicians are selected for Tri-M, the National Music Honor Society.

Nanuet students are required to take one semester of physical education per year. The curriculum aligns with the NYS Learning Standards. Classes, which meet every other day for a full period, are designed for a co-educational setting with emphasis on participation, effort, and character education. The curriculum includes a wide range of activities that engage students in both team and individual/dual activities. The physical education program is committed to developing a balance of activities that will enhance the students'

physical/social development, while also focusing on the students' acquisition of specific knowledge necessary for developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The President's Challenge Fitness Test is given each year and provides students, teachers, and parents with feedback on individual fitness levels and provides data for assessment. Hands-only CPR is taught in all physical education classes to meet the NYS requirement. Our program is designed to foster a lifelong interest in personal fitness, sports, and recreational activities.

The required semester of high school health is offered in grades 10, 11, or 12. The health curriculum provides students with the knowledge, skills and values needed to promote healthy lifestyles in alignment with the NYS Learning Standards. The course is based on units in fitness/nutrition, mental/emotional health, alcohol/tobacco/drugs, and human growth and development. Hands-only CPR is introduced to students in this course. Guest speakers from the community and professional organizations enhance the curriculum. Examples of presentation topics are: organ donation, DWI, careers, healthy relationships, and healthy eating.

The majority of students in Nanuet's Foreign Languages Department complete the graduation requirement of one year of study in Languages Other Than English (LOTE) prior to grade 9. Although it is an elective course, approximately 90% of ninth grade students are enrolled in a second year of study in LOTE and two-thirds of students in grades 9 through 12 are enrolled in French or Spanish. We offer a five year sequence in both languages. The French and Spanish programs offer opportunities for college credit through the State University of New York's University in the High Schools program. In addition, Advanced Placement courses in both languages have been offered in-District and through the Virtual High School. In-District language classes meet every day for a full class period. Virtual High School course offerings include Italian, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese and Russian. Student achievement is fostered and recognized through French and Spanish Honors Societies.

Curriculum and instruction in French and Spanish follow the New York State Curriculum and the NYS Learning Standards for LOTE. Instruction focuses on the four skill areas of language acquisition: speaking, listening, reading and writing, which are essential for communication and provide students with foundational skills for success in college and future employment. Culture is embedded in the curriculum. Students are exposed to culture and language through field trips, videos, newscasts, audio recordings, music, art, film and magazines/newspapers in the target language. Our students have participated in a program through the U.S. Embassy in Panama to teach English to students in remote locations via Skype. Throughout the curriculum students are required to apply what they've learned in real-world scenarios. The use of performance-based assessment is extensive.

Nanuet Senior High School offers engineering and technology electives through our Technology Education Department. Students can enroll in Design and Drawing for Production, Principles of Engineering, Media Production, Robotics I and II, Computer Aided Design, and Architectural Drawing. The engineering classes use industry standard software and the design process to create original products. Student ideas are taken all the way through the manufacturing process using equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, and CNC machines. Robotics I and II introduce students to programming languages and robotics competitions. Media Production gives students a platform for authentic publication through our school website, YouTube, and social media channels. The Technology Club meets after school where interested students learn computer animation, game design, robotics, coding, and how to make podcasts.

### 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Nanuet Senior High School addresses the individual needs of all students in a variety of ways. Every classroom has a SmartBoard and students have full access to laptops, Chromebooks, and content-specific technology. In the science classrooms, students are trained to use the same Vernier Probeware used in college and industry to collect and analyze data. A variety of instructional methods are used, such as differentiated and direct instructional approaches, cooperative groups, and inquiry-based activities. Teachers create instructional resources such as graphic organizers, Venn diagrams, cause and effect charts, tiered assignments, close readings, study guides and other differentiated materials to assist all students in the learning process and to promote high levels of student achievement. Materials are developed for students in

multiple languages to assist ELL students. Our school-wide curriculum is developed using the Understanding by Design model, supporting the NYS Learning Standards. Curriculum maps are accessible for parents and students via Rubicon Atlas, providing the key concepts, ideas and essential questions that form the framework of each unit. Teachers maintain individual web pages that provide students and parents with access to a variety of web-based resources to support the learning process.

Every academic discipline is engaged in the Data Driven Instruction process. Teams of teachers analyze the results of interim and terminal assessments in order to inform instruction. This is an ongoing, year-long process that allows teachers to identify areas of strength and weakness, so that students can achieve high levels of success.

All students have the opportunity to enroll in Advanced Placement, Honors, college-level and elective courses within each discipline. For students who wish to challenge themselves or pursue a specific area of interest, we offer clubs that provide enrichment opportunities. Multiple interventions have been implemented for students who need additional academic support. Co-taught and self-contained classes are offered in the core academic subjects for identified students. Intervention classes in Earth Science have been designed to target identified areas of difficulty specific to entry-level science students. Students receive support and extra help in a resource room setting, during office hours within the school day, and after school. At-risk students are placed in Academic Intervention Services throughout the school year and peer tutoring is available to all students.

The Special Education Department provides services in accordance with local, state and federal laws. Meetings of the Committee of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Support Team assist in the development of IEP and 504 plans for students. Students with learning disabilities and physical challenges use communication devices, programs, and other adaptable technologies and materials to assist their development as life-long learners. For example, an app called Proloquo 2 Go on I-pads helps students with speech impairments verbalize through typing. In various situations, we have altered the physical environment so that all students have access to programs, lockers, bathrooms, classrooms, desks, chairs, etc.

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

Nanuet Senior High School uses both formative and summative assessments to monitor students' progress and to determine whether students achieve designated benchmarks. Assessments include NYS Regents Exams, common interim assessments modeled on state exams, and performance assessments.

All academic disciplines are engaged in the Data Driven Instruction (DDI) model. In this model, teachers create rigorous assessments, which reflect the NYS Learning Standards. Data teams, led by Department Coordinators, analyze the results of these assessments. This analysis not only identifies areas of student weakness, but is used to modify instruction, revise curriculum, and improve student achievement. This same process is used to analyze the results of state exams. Throughout the year, teachers use formative assessments to capture snapshots of students' progress and to inform instruction. For example, after analyzing a tenth grade common assessment, we recognized that students had difficulty understanding figurative language and the central idea when studying poetry. As a result, we developed lessons to address these weaknesses, not only in tenth grade, but throughout the English curriculum.

Student progress and achievement are also measured through the use of performance assessments. Students work both individually and in groups to apply their learning to real-world situations. The use of rubrics to assess student work is extensive. Through the "Invent-Innovate Project" Principles of Engineering students apply their learning of the design loop by modifying an existing product or creating a new one. Students engage in the entire process, from planning and design to printing, using the 3D printer. Work is shared by presenting it to an audience of peers, teachers, and administrators.

The school provides feedback to students and parents in a variety of ways. Students are provided with the results of assessments in a timely fashion. Teachers review common assessment errors with students. In addition, teachers meet with individual or small groups of students to re-teach important concepts as necessary. Teachers also use exemplars to provide students with models of high-quality work. Assessment results are accessible to parents through an online grade portal. Teachers and parents communicate regularly regarding student progress and achievement. Teachers meet with parents at scheduled evening parent-teacher conferences twice a year. In addition, parents, teachers, counselors, and students meet as necessary to review student progress and address student needs. Assessment results are also used to help students and parents in decisions regarding course selection and post-secondary options. The community is informed of student achievement through the District and high school websites, newsletters, and the school report card and progress reports. Assessment results are presented at Board of Education meetings and their meaning within the larger context of regional and state-wide results is explained.

Nanuet Senior High School is a high performing school. We use the DDI process to maintain student achievement and work to increase mastery levels in all areas. In the area of English, the mastery level was 43% on the 2014 New York State Regents Exam and 65% on the 2015 assessment. As the state has implemented its new Common Core Standards and assessments, we have made adjustments to the curriculum. Students are required to read and analyze canonical literature in addition to learning the structure of non-fiction essays. Their comprehension is assessed through a variety of ways, including objective tests and written responses. Based on the analysis of assessment data, it is this approach that will prepare students to meet with success on rigorous, high-stakes examinations.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

There exists in Nanuet a culture and climate dedicated to the development of the whole child.

At Nanuet Senior High School we focus on the development of the individual in a nurturing, inclusive, and academically rigorous atmosphere. We place a priority on systemic activities that engage and support students in their social, emotional, and academic development. Programs are in place to form the foundation for student success throughout their high school years. The process of establishing this culture begins very early. Students are provided the opportunity to engage in planning prior to entering the high school in meetings that involve students, parents, administrators, and school counselors, in conjunction with teacher recommendations. This transition activity is a first step for individual students as they assimilate to the high school. Other transition activities include an orientation program, small group goal setting activities and a presentation by a college representative, who discusses college and career readiness. The collaborative approach to the educational process continues throughout their high school years. There is on-going and strong communication among teachers, students, parents, administrators, and counselors regarding individual student needs and goals. It is this approach and the attention to the individual that helps to motivate and engage students.

We adhere to the philosophy that all students will have the opportunity to challenge themselves and explore their academic interests through an open enrollment policy. For example, all students can enroll in Honors, Advanced Placement, college level, and Virtual High School courses. Beyond the classroom, we offer numerous extracurricular activities based on student interest. These activities include interscholastic sports, musical and drama productions and numerous clubs, which allow students to explore their interests in art, technology, languages, academic areas, and social issues. Our school provides for all aspects of our students' development and promotes life-long learning.

Similar to how students are encouraged to challenge themselves, teachers are encouraged to grow professionally and take risks. There are numerous opportunities to engage in professional development. Teachers attend workshops in the development of assessments, use of technology, innovations in pedagogy, and differentiated instruction. Each year teachers formulate individual Professional Growth Plans, creating a goal and an action plan to develop one specific area of their practice. Administrators meet with teachers three times a year to discuss their progress related to their goals and offer support. Teachers are invited and encouraged to make presentations at Board of Education meetings to share best instructional practices, program innovations, and highlight student successes.

Nanuet Senior High School celebrates its school climate and culture every year during Spirit Week. This week long celebration is a true showcase of the culture that exists here in Nanuet. Through the academic, artistic, and athletic competitions, there are opportunities for every student to get involved and to be part of the school community.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

In Nanuet, we attribute much of the students' success to the close communication among administrators, faculty, parents, students, and the greater community. Through technology, we are able to share information related to students' performance. This is accomplished utilizing an online portal for grades and assignments, interim reports, report cards, and school transcripts. In addition, information is shared through Twitter, the District's webpage, and Naviance. The Principal's Newsletter and a Guidance Newsletter go home monthly to communicate information regarding upcoming programs and highlight students' successes. The availability of information enables us to work as a whole to support the students in the best way possible.

In addition to in-house meetings, the District has a relationship with the community as a whole. For example, we have established a close relationship with the Nanuet Rotary Club and we started a Career Day involving professionals from the area so that students can begin to think about future pursuits. As a result, students have joined our Senior Seminar class, which provides them opportunities to acquire internships locally. Through this experience, some students are offered positions beyond the internship, while others are able to eliminate an area of future study. Students also have the ability to begin their studies at the college level while still in high school. They are able to earn college credits through partnership programs at Dominican College, St. Thomas Aquinas College, Syracuse University, and the State Universities of New York at Albany and New Paltz.

Several times a year student work to showcase successes is shared with the community . For example, the community is invited to attend the school musical, the fall drama, the art show, sporting events, induction ceremonies for honor societies, and so forth. These opportunities allow the students to demonstrate their passions with the school district and members of the community. In turn, it allows the community to see the products of student learning and achievement. Together, a climate of learning is supported and nurtured.

Every year around the holidays, Nanuet participates in a local drive to buy presents for needy families. Through the support of the community and the hard work of the students, the District has adopted 385 children and raised over \$57,673.59 since 2000. Although this program is spearheaded by our Life Skills students, it is truly a community-wide effort.

The Board of Education, PTA , Black and Gold Club, Music Parents Association, and the Wellness Committee are just a few of the groups that work together to support students. Without this collaboration, Nanuet would not be the community that it is. The success of the students is dependent on the interconnectedness of the community, and we pride ourselves on those relationships.

### 3. Professional Development:

A priority for the Nanuet School District is on-going professional development for building leaders, teachers, and teaching assistants. As we prepare students for success in a complex and rapidly evolving world, the administrators and teachers at Nanuet Senior High School value and seek out professional development in effective instructional practices. Administrators and teachers have engaged and continue to engage in professional development in: curriculum development using the Understanding by Design model; curriculum mapping using Rubicon Atlas; the development and use of rubrics and performance assessments; reading across the content areas; Charlotte Danielson's The Framework for Teaching; teaching Advanced Placement courses; differentiated instruction; and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. Our school has also placed a priority on preparing students to succeed in the digital age. Professional development in the use of technology in instruction is on-going. Teachers have learned how to use SmartBoards, and updated SmartTools, webquests, blogs, discussion boards, laptops, Chromebooks, Google Docs and a variety of presentation platforms. In turn, teachers have used these tools in instruction and in individual and group assignments, helping students in the learning process and preparing them for success in college and future employment.

One recent professional development initiative in Nanuet has focused on the work of Paul Bambrick-Santoyo in Data Driven Instruction (DDI). Administrators and teachers received training in the DDI process and in the development of interim assessments, which reflect the rigor of NYS Learning and Common Core Standards. Each academic department has engaged in multiple DDI cycles, administering and analyzing assessments using this process. Each DDI cycle results in changes in instruction to address areas of students' weaknesses in content and skill. It is our goal to use the DDI model to help our students meet with increased academic success.

The District has a Professional Development Committee with membership comprised of teachers, teaching assistants, and administrative staff. This committee meets yearly and is responsible for the development and implementation of the evaluation procedures. Utilizing a teacher-based Framework for Teaching, we

reflect on the entire instructional cycle, from planning and preparation through evaluation and reflection. This process is at the core of a school environment that promotes collegial sharing and support. Each year, teachers create a Professional Growth Plan in which they choose a goal that focuses on one component of their professional practice. Teachers create an action plan outlining the steps they will take to reach these goals. At the end of each school year, teachers complete reflections on professional practice in order to evaluate the year and drive professional development plans for the upcoming year.

Other opportunities for professional development exist in the form of graduate and in-service courses, professional conferences, book studies, workshops, and departmental meetings in which teachers share best practices. In addition, teachers and Department Coordinators meet with colleagues throughout the county to discuss curriculum and share instructional practices. Nanuet teachers and administrators value professional development. We consider it a vital part of our practice as we help our students meet with success in high school and prepare them for college and future employment in an ever-changing world.

#### 4. School Leadership:

Part of Nanuet's success hinges on the various leadership roles we have within the school community and the value that is placed on those roles. Our philosophy is that there is open communication among all levels of school leadership and that we work collaboratively to promote student achievement and develop life-long learners.

The Board of Education and central administrators support building-level leaders. The principal and assistant principal work with Department Coordinators, who are teacher-leaders, to provide leadership in instruction, assessment, and programming. Constant, open communication among administrators, teachers, counselors, students, and parents drives the success of the high school. Together we work to ensure all aspects of school life run smoothly, from school procedures, policies, and regulations, to grades, assessments, master scheduling, and attending to the social and emotional needs of our students. Students have confidence in and value their relationships with building administrators, which in large part is due to administrators' availability to them and their involvement in curricular and extra-curricular programs.

The Mentor Program supports teachers who are new to the District in various ways. Through monthly meetings, teachers discuss classroom management, grading, procedures, delivery of instruction, parent communication, and so forth. Within the program, mentees are required to observe their peers, which enables them to witness the best practices of colleagues. The support that is given to teachers who are new to the District is a key factor in helping those teachers become successful, integral members of the professional staff.

To promote collaboration and cohesiveness, various groups meet throughout the year. Teachers meet regularly to plan curriculum, develop assessments, review data, and reflect on teaching methods. These conversations promote a more unified approach to the delivery of instruction and result in a stronger program. Department and high school faculty meetings promote articulation of initiatives. The dialogue among District and building leaders and teachers provides the support that is necessary for the effective implementation of new initiatives. For example, the decision to purchase SmartBoards for all classrooms led to professional development in the use of instructional technology. This has driven innovations in the delivery of instruction and has impacted student learning. Another example is in the purchase and development of an Outdoor Education Center. This has led to changes in the science curriculum and in opportunities for students to engage in hands-on activities. A third example is in the implementation of the Data Driven Instruction model. Teachers have been trained in the development of rigorous assessments that adhere to the NYS Learning Standards, in the collection and analysis of data and in the use of test results to drive instruction.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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At Nanuet Senior High School, we provide a developmentally appropriate, scaffolded approach to help students as they transition from middle school, navigate through high school, and ultimately become college and career ready members of society. Because we are a small community, we are able to offer individualized student support through a nurturing environment. We focus on fostering academic and social independence by teaching students skills they need and holding students accountable to employing them. Our goal is to create lifelong, independent learners who take personal responsibility for their learning.

In the academic arena, scaffolding exists in the form of collaboration among teachers within and across disciplines to help students develop essential skills. Within each course, teachers work together using the Understanding by Design model to create units, lessons, and assessments that are rigorous, yet are appropriate for the developmental stage of the students. Several times a year students across the disciplines take common assessments, which are connected to the Common Core New York State Standards. The results of these assessments provide teachers with the necessary data to measure students' success and inform future instruction. This practice supports the academic achievement of students. In addition, teachers use differentiated materials and a variety of assessments to meet the needs of all students. Interdisciplinary units are incorporated throughout the high school curriculum to help students understand the practical application of their learning.

Our Guidance Department works closely with students to counsel them throughout their high school career. The freshmen are involved in various conversations about the expectations of high school, planning for the future, and dealing with the social and emotional challenges of teenage life. These discussions continue as students mature, and students are guided to make decisions more independently as they become young adults.

The success of the practice of scaffolding all aspects of a student's high school career is evident in our graduation rates and students' post-secondary plans. Last year, the graduation rate was 99% and 95% of the graduates went on to post-secondary education.