

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2017 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 [X] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Anita Berger

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

Official School Name Benjamin Banneker Academic High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 800 Euclid Street, N.W.

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

City Washington State DC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20001-2228

County District Of Columbia

Telephone (202) 671-6320 Fax (202) 673-2231

Web site/URL http://www.benjaminbanneker.org E-mail anita.berger@dc.gov

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\*Mr. Antwan Wilson E-mail antwan.wilson@dc.gov  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name District Of Columbia Public School District Tel. (202) 442-5885

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 Mr. John-Paul Hayworth  
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

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

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

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
  - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
  - Suburban
  - Small city or town in a rural area
  - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 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	36	97	133
10	37	96	133
11	29	86	115
12 or higher	22	75	97
<b>Total Students</b>	124	354	478

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 78 % Black or African American
  - 17 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 1 % White
  - 2 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 2%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	494
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.018
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %  
Total number students who qualify: 494

8. Students receiving special education services: 3 %  
11 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.

- 0 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 10 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 0 Other Health Impaired
- 0 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 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: 12
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	5
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
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 21:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	93%	94%	95%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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 2016.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	72
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	98%
Enrolled in a community college	2%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes X No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2007

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

Develop students as life-long learners, regard for the community, equipped with education for admission to a four-year college/university, and prepare future global competitive leaders.

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

Students apply and interview and if selected, become a member of a 160 member class. The process begins with submission of an online application to the District office. Students who feel they meet the criteria for acceptance apply. Applications are read and vetted by a selection committee (alumnae, retired teachers and administrators, and community partners). The committee recommends applicants using a scoring rubric on the following criteria: academic achievement, proficient or above standardized test scores, favorable teacher, counselor and school leader recommendation. An interview is then conducted by a panel of Banneker teachers. The student and parent(s) are interviewed and the panel makes a recommendation based on the interview. A successful interview equates to an invitation to attend. This process is conducted in early spring.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Benjamin Banneker Academic High School accepts students from all Wards (1-8) of the District of Columbia. The majority of the student population qualifies for free and reduced-price meals and consist of students who desire a highly structured four year academic program of study. This college preparatory program equips many first generation college bound students with a variety of educational tools needed to achieve academic excellence at a four year college or university. This support network opens scholarship opportunities and awards, ensuring financial possibilities as they pursue their post-secondary goals.

Benjamin Banneker Academic High School was institutionalized as a selective high school in 1981 in which students engage in rigorous academic experiences. The environment is designed to provide students, grades 9 -12, with challenges commensurate with their abilities and interest. The curriculum offers students experiences directed toward the development of independent, productive, and responsible individuals who exhibits such characteristics. Banneker is partnered with several universities and colleges that seek students of ability and promise whose qualities of mind and heart indicate that they will thrive in an atmosphere of intellectual, creative, and physical vitality intended to foster strength of character and concern for others. The goal continues to maintain a diverse community superior in teaching and learning that engages all students to become outstanding scholars and citizens. The results have produced a long standing tradition of 100% college acceptance and 100% graduation. These milestones contribute to the development of many outstanding citizens and leaders in the global community.

Key strategies used within the school includes adherence to specific school policies, personalization, community service, academic options, and extended day offerings.

Experiences gained through enrollment at Benjamin Banneker Academic High School (AHS) will allow students to examine values and formulate a more consistent set of values through seminars in which students talk freely with one another about their beliefs and ideas; use of issues that arise between members of groups to examine and question values and behavior, and use peer mediation/support alternatives as viable resolutions to conflict. Banneker students are well versed on the "Banneker Code of Conduct" expectations, from the dress standards to the honor code policy. The Banneker Summer Institute (BSI) serves as a catalyst of understanding the "Code" for all incoming students. In addition, specific school policies are stated, and agreed upon as part of the enrollment contract and provided to every student by way of the Parent/Student Handbook.

Banneker students are provided with personalized support through the Teacher-Advisor Program. The Advisory is an across-grade level grouping, indirectly supervised by the faculty which enables students to interact academically and socially with others on every grade level. This arrangement also gives each student an intermediary for immediate counseling when a professional counselor is unavailable. The Teacher-Advisor Program, therefore, serves to personalize the education of every student attending Banneker. The teacher-advisor will provide assistance and support to all advisees by helping student with their schedules, community projects, extended day classes, future career and educational interests, and as a student liaison with possible solutions for their everyday problems. This is an extension of the learning time and the counseling program which meets twice weekly for an hour. The advisory period is also a time for school wide assemblies, college visits, celebrations and other non-instructional initiatives. In the spring, many of the advisories are dedicated to test prep and one-on-one tutorials for students that are in need of Tier I & II interventions.

The community service project is required for all students to complete and is built into the schedule every Wednesday. Students earn credit by volunteering their services in the community. Volunteer sites include DC Public Schools, hospitals, libraries, daycare centers and other non-profit community agencies. Juniors and seniors are encouraged to arrange their own sites in conjunction with a career goal. Community site supervisors collaborate with the Banneker Community Service Coordinator and provide timely evaluation of the students' performance quarterly. Students earn a community service grade, which appears on the report card.

Banneker offers two highly structured academic programs leading to college admission, the Advanced Placement Program (AP) and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IB). The AP Program, created by College Board, are courses with college-level texts and assignments. Each course ends with an external exam in which many colleges and universities offer course credit for students who earn a passing score. Banneker offers 12 Advanced Placement courses. The IB, founded by a non-profit educational foundation, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), is a two year, college-preparatory curriculum which emphasizes global mindedness and intercultural understanding through a six subject area curriculum. Students undertake in-depth research, explore the nature of knowledge, and enhance their own personal development through the program's three core components: The extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge, and Creativity, Action Service (CAS). IB courses also end with an external exam and provide college credit for successfully passing. Both are difficult and rewarding experiences.

The extended day program at Banneker includes athletics and a number of enrichment clubs/programs designed to integrate skills and abilities of the well-rounded student. These co-curricular activities enable students to enhance their portfolios that promote an intellectual spirit. They are an important aspect of the students' education. They allow them to explore and develop interests and talents outside the classroom. New clubs are added as students express an interest in having them. Colleges seek students who have demonstrated involvement in activities outside the prescribed curriculum, along with academic achievement. In addition, the extended day program incorporates classes such as SAT, AP and IB allotted time to allow students with additional flexibility to participate.

Benjamin Banneker Academic High School is a two time recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School award (1991 and 2007). While the awards have not created any real changes in regards to the curriculum and instruction, school climate and culture, professional development and capacity, school leadership philosophy, and family and community engagement, it has leveraged prestige and honor, because of being one of the select few recognized schools. The recognition has encouraged students to enroll, attracted highly qualified teachers and staff and created a shining example for the community. It has played an integral role in fostering school pride for students and their families. The wearing of the logo attracts conversation and interest, and provides an exemplary marketing tool. The banner, as well as the plaques have been used as the backdrop to many of our recruitment activities. It brings pride and signifies accomplishment to the Banneker family. It continues to create a competitive standard among other DC Public Schools high schools.

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

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

Teachers follow the curriculum and pacing guides that have been established by the District of Columbia Public Schools. These curriculum guides are developed with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as the foundation. The Common Core is the measurement for College and Career Readiness as it establishes the foundational skills for each grade level and ensures the vertical alignment in preparation for the next level. As an academic high school, Benjamin Banneker also offers choice between Advanced Placement Courses (AP) and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma programs for upper classmen.

The English Department has vertically aligned its instruction to equip students with thinking, discussing and writing skills that will meet the rigor and preparation for advanced level classes. In collaboration with the Social Studies department, they engaged in a learning cycle that focused on planning and designing assignments and assessments that required students to comprehend and analyze content-specific, grade-level texts, develop written products for an authentic audience by demonstrating a deep understanding of content through reading and writing processes. In order to build writing capacity, students demonstrate their understanding and awareness through meaningful accountable talk that has been established with required discussion stems and Socratic Seminar which influences higher-level conversations in the classroom. Each speaking and listening as well as writing tasks requires students to build on their ideas using evidence from the text. As underclassmen are required to take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), all writing assignments are scored using the PARCC Scoring Rubric constructed measures of (1) Reading Comprehension of Key Ideas and Details, (2) Writing Written Expression and (3) Writing Knowledge of Language and Conventions. Upper classmen writing assignments are scored using either the SAT Essay Scoring Rubric or the AP Essay Scoring Rubric.

The Social Studies Department curriculum content is embedded with daily reading, writing, and collaborating and historical inquiry. DCPS curriculum for historical inquiry calls for the 5E lesson plan which includes engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate. The department has designed a Pre-AP World History curriculum to be a catalyst for the required AP World History class for the sophomore class. Everyone, in the department, teaches either the Pre-AP course or the AP course which provides a space for disciplinary collaboration. AP students attend an afternoon class one day a week for writing and AP test prep.

The Math Department's curriculum is also grounded in the CCSS which has provided for three shifts from the traditional math instruction. The department has also worked to align their instruction to prepare students for the next level of math. They have done this by focusing on the major skills that students need to know for each level in order to build and extend on previous learning. The norms and strategies that they have developed allow students the opportunity to engage in rigorous learning by solving mathematical concepts with procedural fluency and engage with real world application of the same.

The Science Department uses the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) as the foundation for the curriculum as set forth by DCPS. Each member of the department adheres to the three dimensional learning of practices that describe scientific behavior, cross cutting concepts that have application across all domains of science and the disciplinary core ideas of curriculum, instruction and assessment. The department also utilizes the Discovery Education Tech Book to reinforce and supplement classroom instruction.

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

Benjamin Banneker Academic High School students are offered a variety of visual art electives. Students in the International Baccalaureate diploma program receive two years of visual art. Each IB student produces a culminating solo exhibition of their artwork as one of the final components of their diploma evaluation. Students who are not in the International Baccalaureate program are offered Art A and Drawing and Painting as electives. Nearly all non-International Baccalaureate students select Art A during their junior year.

Throughout their time in visual art classes at Banneker, students increase their ability to address complex issues and to explore multiple perspectives through visual art. Art students are encouraged to be innovative in their approach to contemporary society's most pressing themes, such as identity, as they become savvy consumers and producers of culture. Each unit of study is based on a close examination and analysis of a set of artworks produced by contemporary artists. Students have opportunities to develop expertise in various media and produce original artworks.

The Physical Education courses are designed to provide learning experiences and guidance relevant to human growth and development, nutrition and decision-making styles for life skills. Students demonstrate their ability to plan and implement different types of personal fitness programs to maintain a happy and healthy lifestyle in the future. They design and create DC Public Schools Health and Physical Education Cornerstone Projects to include family engagement and community involvement. Students demonstrate competency in two or more lifetime activities. They describe key concepts associated with successful participation in physical activity while modeling responsible behavior that meets the need for self-expression, challenge, social interaction and enjoyment for three of the seven dimensions of wellness, physical, emotional, and social wellness.

In the tenth grade students are required to complete an independent research health project which consist of 10-12 page research on a specific topic in Health or Physical Education. This project focuses on the student's ability to go in depth researching, health and physical education issues that affect their own communities, examining definitions, causes, case studies, statistics, legal implications and relative careers that are associated with the specific topic. This independent project promotes interaction and networking with governments, private, and community agencies. Students must chart a least 100 hours of library time and computer lab hours to thoroughly research their topics. This independent project allows students to gain research skills and health knowledge in order to provide the basis for good healthy living as well as those tools needed to promote social, emotional and physical health choices and decisions as they navigate college.

Students' world language experience aims to prepare them to become global citizens who effectively communicate and collaborate with diverse audiences. Banneker students have the opportunity to read, write, speak and listen in two languages, Spanish and French, and the romance language of Latin. The world language instruction is aligned with the national American Council on The Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) World Readiness Standards, which seek to link culture and communication through language learning. Students' language proficiency is measured in Level 2 courses using the national STAMP (Standards-Based Measure of Proficiency) and ALIRA (ACTFL Latin Interpretive Reading Assessment) exams. It is the goal to prepare our students for a more connected and interdependent world. The World Language courses aim to foster five core standards: Communities, students will positively contribute to multicultural communities at home and around the world; Communication, students will have the ability in read, write, speak, and listen in their target language(s); Comparisons, students will draw comparisons and contrast different perspectives and lifestyles; Cultures, students will gain an appreciation for a variety of cultures; Connections, students will make connections across content areas using World Language skills.

Technology is an integral part of the curriculum, instruction, and assessments, accommodating different learning styles. Both ninth and tenth graders are required to take two computer courses to develop computer and keyboarding skills that are necessary for college preparation and personal use. In addition, appropriate software for Word Processing, Presentation, and Web Development are used to perform various activities. Students learn to navigate the Internet searches to benefit the many research projects in the core curriculum. The technology program also includes a Microsoft IT Academy which affords students the opportunity to become certified in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Access, Outlook, SharePoint, Word Expert and Excel Expert.

The Banneker music program has expanded to the Advance Placement Music Theory and the Piano Ensemble. Students in AP Music Theory course develop the ability to identify, understand, and describe the basic materials and processes of music. The students develop aural skills including sight-singing and keyboard harmony with performance being an essential component of the learning process. Students also learn how to compose and notate basic musical material.

The Piano Ensemble is comprised of beginning-advance instrumentalist focused on becoming proficient, independent performers on the piano. Students are largely assessed based on their performances. Equally as important, students develop the skills, fortitude, and discipline to prepare for a performance. One of the greatest benefits of this course is that it teaches the student self-reliance as well as collaboration with others to reach a goal.

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

Teacher expertise is measured by the DCPS Essential Practices (EP) framework. There are five Essential Practices which includes nine elements: EP1: Cultivate a responsive learning community- Element 1.A – Supportive Community, Element 1.B – Student Engagement; EP2: Challenge students with rigorous content - Element 2.A – Rigorous Content; EP3: Lead a well-planned, purposeful learning experience- Element 3.A – Skillful Design, Element 3.B – Skillful Facilitation; EP4: Maximize student ownership of learning- Element 4.A – Cognitive Work, Element 4.B – Higher-Level Understanding; EP5: Respond to evidence of student learning- Element 5.A – Evidence of Learning, Element 5.B – Supports and Extensions.

The teachers at BBAHS employ a variety of instructional strategies beyond the textbook in order to engage students and promote higher level thinking and discussion. These strategies include project based learning, cooperative learning, Socratic seminar, science labs, writing labs, annotation and close reading, presentations, academic vocabulary, direct and guided instruction, independent practice, peer review, higher order questioning (teachers and students), and formative assessments.

Teachers address multiple learning styles by providing students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Summative tasks vary in the form of finished products such as science labs, research papers, formal essays, original videos, performances or artwork, portfolios, group and individual products, and online simulation tasks.

The Benjamin Banneker Academic High School Summer Institute (BSI) is an enrichment program that includes writing, math, study skills, etiquette training, ballroom dancing and college tours for incoming freshmen. This five-week program builds student capacity for the transition and rigor of high school. This program is two-fold as it also acclimates them to BBAHS's culture, climate and way of life. Students are introduced to BBAHS's teachers and instructed using school-wide methodologies. The BSI program also serves as an early intervention tool.

Responses to Intervention (RTI) include the Extended Day Program and Advisories in Action. The Extended Day Program consists of before-school, lunch and after-school tutorials. More specifically, students are provided with one-on-one support in collaboration with teachers, counselors, administrators and parents. Students in need of additional interventions (Tier II & Tier III) are referred to community wrap around services.

Advisories in Action utilize data to improve student instruction, target areas of growth and promote peer instruction. Data is continually gathered and reviewed in order to re-evaluate student needs. Ninth and tenth grade students use this space for Math and ELA PARCC preparation; tenth and eleventh grade students SAT preparation; eleventh and twelve grade students AP/IB exam preparation as well as college applications.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

School climate is a product of intrinsic motivation and personal actions of teachers and leaders laying positive foundation for long term academic input. Banneker's conceptual analysis of the school workplace include examining the organizational climate for creativity, innovations, skill building, healthy competition that enhances the students social/emotional, intellectual, and physical development in order to flourish academically and improve student achievement. Students social support is gained through positive and professional student-teacher-school relationships as well as civic education, student respect for rules and philosophy and family support. Teachable moments afford teacher/students the opportunity to share and bond through varied experiences: Poetry Out Loud, revealing emotions through poetry; drama club creates social/emotional outlet responding to prejudice bias and stereo typing; expansion of the athletic program to include the Student Athlete Advisory Board (SAAB) in effort to grow the athletic culture and enhance the spirit of team work. Another innovative practice is the "Principal's all Male Advisory" (PAMA), providing academic assistance for a select group of "at risk" males.

School assemblies such as "Celebrate Success", Senior Awards and Science Fair Partners are conducted to recognized student achievements. Honor roll and Principal's Commendation lists are posted, celebrating student's with high honors. Tee shirts, plaques and trophies are awarded as mementos of success. Bulletin and PA announcements are made in real time for immediate recognition of accomplishments (i.e. - science fair winners). The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) assist in the facilitation of fundraisers to financially support the annual Winter Ball (an elegant student dance) and school ski trips to promote academic support. Student discipline policy supports restorative justice activities versus suspensions, allowing students to be reflective and creating second chances.

Teachers are honored and celebrated at the beginning of each school year for their successes through staff retreats and team building activities. We value them by empowering them into leadership position, validating their ability to move school wide initiatives. They are recognized during "American Education Week" through small token gifts and a celebratory luncheon. New teachers meetings are held monthly to provide them with an avenue of input. In collaboration with the PTO, teachers are recognized for all of their hard work during "Teacher Appreciation Week". They are provided gear and other memorability to celebrate their achievements.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Benjamin Banneker Academic High School cannot operate successfully without the enthusiastic cooperation of its parents. All parents are urged to become an integral part of the school and its programs. Parents monitor student progress through direct contact with the school, which includes counselors, teachers and administrators and through an online grading data base system (ASPEN). ASPEN allows parents to track real-time progress and to message and received messages from teachers. Monthly parent collaboratives are held as an opportunity for parents to have meaningful conversation regarding their child's progress, a successful strategy between formal parent/teacher conferences.

The Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) is a group of elected and appointed members of the Banneker family that consists of parents, teachers, non-instructional staff, a community member, and the President of the Student Government Association (SGA), to advise the principal on matters that promote high expectations and achievement for all students. An example of this is providing valuable feedback regarding budget recommendations. LSAT's are an integral part of ensuring strong connections within their local school community.

The Banneker Guidance Department facilitates monthly meetings with parents and teachers to address academic concerns and to create academic plans. The Department also facilitates one-on-one parent/teacher conferences to support student academics. Seniors meet one-on-one with his/her counselor and parent for individual counseling to review graduation requirements, college and scholarship

applications, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to navigate the senior year. The Guidance Department host grade level parent meetings quarterly to keep parents informed of each grade level expectation.

The extended day program depends upon a cadre of volunteers. Parents who wish to assist with an extracurricular activity are invited to offer their services, thus leading the way in fostering school spirit. Parents must sign an agreement when enrolling, about their involvement in the student's education experience.

Community partnerships have been one of the pillars of the community service volunteer program. These partnerships provide students with learning opportunities outside the classroom, a broader vision of the world, and an awareness of and interaction with positive role models. The community service volunteer program promotes service learning and extends the academic learning. It promotes good citizenship, increases knowledge of the world of work and promotes awareness of career goals. Students embrace community involvement by completing a minimum of 270 volunteer hours.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Benjamin Banneker Academic High School's mission is to develop, equip, ensure, prepare and empower our students. We have implemented and sustained this mission through the Professional Development of our faculty. Our Professional Development workshops focus on adopting a growth mindset that develops life-long skills; fostering the teacher as a learner who equips students with skills and strategies; extending best practices that ensure experimentation, collaboration and cognition; promoting andragogy that prepares students with knowledge, practice and application; and building pedagogy that empowers students to not only set goals but to also achieve them.

Before BBAHS could drive its mission, it first had to establish a growth mindset among its faculty by increasing faculty morale. Instituting the growth mindset paradigm began during pre-planning and continued throughout the year. The catalyst for this are the Faculty Retreats which are designed to highlight the successes of the previous year, outline the goals for the upcoming year and most importantly, team building in the form of leisure activities.

BBAHS's growth mindset has been established through school-wide initiatives and collaboration, such as the Understanding by Design (UbD) unit planning which is an example of backward design, the practice of looking at the outcomes in order to design curriculum units, performance assessments, and classroom instruction and focuses on teaching to achieve understanding; as well as, EQuIP (Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products) an initiative designed to identify high-quality materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

UbD and EQuIP are the catalyst for fostering the teacher as a learner. UbD captures each teacher's knowledge and identifies obstacles to be addressed; while, EQuIP fosters collaboration while enhancing the school culture of quality and high achievement.

BBAHS academic initiatives in addition to supporting and implementing district programs such as LEarning together to Advance of Practice (LEAP) extend best practices for all content areas. For instance, the entire faculty comes together periodically to norm the criteria for success in student writing as set forth by the PARCC Scoring Rubric for Prose Constructed Response Items – Research Simulation Task and Literary Analysis Task using the EQuIP as the norming tool. We also support the Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum by partnering with the College Board to provide a Pre-AP workshop in topics related to teaching a course in Pre-AP: Effective Thinking Strategies for All Students.

Our PD sessions are strategically designed to promote andragogy that influences student outcomes. Through teacher-led and collaborative work sessions, teachers within and outside of the same content areas were afforded opportunities to have difficult conversations around vertical and horizontal planning and alignment which have pushed them out of their comfort zone. For instance, some topics may not have initially appeared to have immediate relevance to their work; however, they were able to recognize its

significance to student achievement and growth.

Our PD not only focuses on content, its main purpose was the pedagogy that addressed misconceptions, and its disjointed application to student understanding. As a result, our teachers were very receptive to learning and growing from their peers.

The Instructional Coach (IC) , Teacher Leaders (TL) and teachers (T) alike are afforded many opportunities to share best practices as described: Analyzing Student work using EQuIP student work protocol (T), Big Ideas vs. Essential Questions (TL), Using complex text to drive Common Core Instruction (IC), Aligning instruction with content objective and instructional practice (T), Improving Student Writing Skills PARCC (TL), UbD Grasp (T), UbD Where to (IC), Project Based Learning (T), Higher Level Understanding through Effective Questioning (T), Bloom's and Depth of Knowledge Crosswalk (T), Complex Text – From Strategy to Effective Implementation (IC), Using Data to Drive Instruction (IC), Engage Students through the Instructional Conversation (T), How to Write Effective Driving Questions for Project Based Learning (T), Developing Language Across the Curriculum (IC), and Challenge students toward cognitive complexity (IC).

The LEAP team consists of the IC who serves as the LEAP Leader along with four TL's for each of the core content areas, English, Math, Science and Social Studies. LEAP consists of four, six-week modules. Each module is organized and managed in the same manner – the seminar is a 90-minute seminar where TL's provide their content area teachers with the overview, objectives and outcomes and criteria for success. Teachers work through each module collectively with discussion and collaboration to produce a product or artifact that can be applied to the curriculum; the TL then conducts bi-weekly observations and a 5P debrief of Praise, Process, Prioritize, Plan and Practice. The TL also assigns T next steps and T's are afforded the opportunity to reflect on the seminar as well as their individual observation using the LEAP digital platform, Whetstone.

The Academic Leadership Team (ALT) consist of the Principal (P), Assistant Principal (AP), LEAP Leaders and TL's and Department Chairs (DC). The ALT meets periodically to discuss the academic progress of the students and its alignment to teacher practice. They do this by analyzing data points for the PARCC, AP and IB exams. UbD unit plans are also examined for alignment. Additionally, the ALT engages in Learning Walks where teachers can view teaching in content areas other than their own. This allows teachers to view and examine teaching in practice beyond the theoretical discussions. The ALT debriefs after each Learning Walk to further strengthen the discussion around alignment and achievement.

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

The Benjamin Banneker Academic Leadership team believes that every child has the ability to learn and must be provided an educational environment that affords them the opportunity for developing knowledge, talents and skills for success. Our goal is to maintain a diverse community that engages all students in rigorous and varied experiences that will propel them to become outstanding scholars and citizens. The Academic Leadership Team (ALT) has two entities; the ALT Management; the administrators; Principal, Assistant Principals, International Baccalaureate/Advanced Program (IB/AP) Coordinator and the all-inclusive ALT Team; Administrators, Department Chairs, Instructional Coach, counselor and IB/AP program coordinator. These two teams incorporate a complimentary, collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to instruction.

Team members are assigned leadership roles and responsibilities by the ALT management team to build their leadership capacity. The school is organized so that the total staff is engaged actively in planning and decision making across grade levels and subject areas. Plenary sessions start during the pre-service professional development week of the new school year and continue throughout the year. Team members are presented with International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Reading Inventory (SR)I and Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) data to analyze and develop departmental action plans. The team meets bi-weekly throughout the year collecting and analyzing data, reviewing goals, selecting instructional strategies and determining instructional adjustments as needed. The team

facilitates and guides improvement of instruction and learning based on student achievement data.

The instructional leaders also design and facilitate professional development sessions and conduct LEAP (LEarning together to Advance our Practice) seminars in their areas of expertise. The ALT all- inclusive team members conduct focus walks and “look for’s” to analyze the instructional practices, observe classes and provide non-evaluative feedback to their peers. Instructional resources such as “Understanding by Design” (UBD) are adopted by the ALT as a school-wide lesson planning alignment tool. Lesson plans are reviewed and scored by using a UBD lesson plan rubric. Student work is scored, using the PARCC writing rubric and the EQUIP protocol which affords the ALT to look at student work vertically and horizontally across grades, teachers and subjects to monitor and assess progress.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Since School Year 09/10 (SY), all sophomore students at Banneker are required to take Advanced Placement World History (APWH), a course that not only exposes students to a college level survey of historical content knowledge but also requires analytical skills such as comparison, interpretation, contextualization, periodization, and argumentation. Students show these skills through several types of essays on the Advanced Placement (AP) exam at the end of the year. The pass rate was less than 25% of this initiative.

In SY-14/15, the APWH teachers implemented After School Writing, a required component for all sophomore students to stay after school one day a week to write a timed AP-style essay. The students know the essay topic in advance and must complete an outline to prepare. Weekly, the entire sophomore class reports, submits their outlines, and writes for 35-45 minutes, depending on the style of essay. Students use special writing packets that include the rubric and tips for how to meet the requirements.

Since SY-15/16, all sophomore students participate in After School Writing for the entire year. Essays are graded and students are encouraged to revise and resubmit weak essays. Student performance data is kept on each type of essay, monitoring student growth and provide regular feedback to students and families.

After School Writing is one of the primary reasons the student pass rate on the APWH exam increased from 33% pass rate in 2015 to 57% pass rate in 2016, which is above the national norm. Additionally, the average score and the number of students scoring 4s and 5s on the exam increased. The AP US History (APUSH) teacher also implemented After School Writing for juniors and the passing rate increased from 3% in SY-13/14 to 50% in SY-14/15. After School Writing requires students to review course content throughout the year and practice the historical thinking skills more than traditional class time would allow.

Additionally, the effects of such an extensive reading and writing program in AP Social Studies help to support students across the curriculum and on other standardized assessments measuring reading and writing. For example, the average SAT score for Reading increased from 477 in SY-13/14 to 486 in SY-14/15 and 518 in SY-15/16; average SAT score for writing increased from 485 in SY-13/14 to 497 in SY-14/15 to 513 in SY-15/16.