

U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Eric Michaelsen

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

Official School Name Lemont High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 800 Porter Street

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

City Lemont State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60439-3777

County Cook

Telephone (630) 257-5838 Fax (630) 243-0310

Web site/URL http://www.lhs210.net E-mail emichaelsen@lhs210.net

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. Mary Ticknor E-mail mticknor@lhs210.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Lemont High School District 210 Tel. (630) 243-3260

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Pamela Driscoll
(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

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

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	151	171	322
10	158	173	331
11	205	171	376
12 or higher	193	156	349
Total Students	707	671	1378

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 82 % 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: 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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	37
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	1401
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.026
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
22 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Albanian, American Sign Language, Arabic, Bosnian, Hindi, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Mandarin (Chinese), Polish, Serbian, Spanish, Tagalog

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %
Total number students who qualify: 169
8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
154 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.

- 10 Autism
- 16 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 20 Emotional Disturbance
- 6 Hearing Impairment
- 10 Mental Retardation
- 6 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 29 Other Health Impaired
- 49 Specific Learning Disability
- 6 Speech or Language Impairment
- 2 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: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	9
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	82
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	12

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 17:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	96%	95%	94%	96%	97%

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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	355
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	65%
Enrolled in a community college	27%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	3%
Found employment	3%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

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

Lemont High School's mission is for all students to become life-long, independent learners and productive citizens in a rapidly changing 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

Lemont High School's principal is a graduate of the school. As are his three daughters. And his mother. And his grandparents. One family, four generations, with Lemont High School a common thread among them.

For more than 125 years, Lemont High School has served as the lone public high school in the Village of Lemont. However, over the last 15 years, it has stepped out of the shadows and into the spotlight, affirming its place among the area's top schools.

Located approximately 25 miles from downtown Chicago, Lemont High School serves an average of 1,400 students from four different communities. Compared to most surrounding area high schools, that size - or lack thereof - could be seen as a detriment.

On the contrary, its students' successes are the product of a culture that most schools can't produce at that size. With a majority of students having gone to school together since kindergarten - and many having older siblings, parents or grandparents who are alumni - Lemont High School features a supportive, "hometown" feel.

However, the school also champions innovation and continuous improvement. Teachers are afforded the freedom to take risks in the classroom. Students understand that failing while learning is inevitable, and benefit from hands-on, project-based learning that has cross-curricular connections and real-world applications.

It is no coincidence that Lemont High School's upswing coincided with its full implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and block scheduling.

With block scheduling, students enroll in eight classes each semester and meet in 87-minute class periods on alternating days. Teachers are trained to use this extended time to foster an environment that features varied types of learning experiences and students collaborating to solve problems. Multiple instructional strategies can be used to help students explore rigorous content more deeply than they would in a traditional classroom setting.

As a result, students leave Lemont High School with invaluable experience. College-bound students already have a taste of what to expect in the postgraduate setting, and students who are entering the military or the workforce understand how to work collaboratively to achieve a goal.

Block scheduling gives students the opportunity to explore a variety of curricular and career opportunities. Students whose schedules are littered with Advanced Placement classes express their creativity through courses in art, music, family and consumer sciences, or industrial technology.

While the school incorporates as many as eight school-wide professional development opportunities throughout the year, teachers benefit from weekly professional development in 45-minute departmental PLCs. This time is used to document and design curriculum, align that curriculum to the appropriate learning standards, and formulate and revise common assessments.

Consistently dedicating time to these activities ensures that all students within a particular course have a consistent experience, regardless of which teacher leads the classroom. A key to a dynamic curriculum is reviewing what is taught, why it is taught, and how to assess it. PLCs allow for continual review of data throughout the year.

Lemont High School students benefit from state-of-the-art facilities in athletics and fine arts. More than 70 percent of students are either members of an athletic team or involved in a club or activity. The school boasts the most successful cheerleading program in state history, a two-time baseball state champion, and state champions in activities ranging from journalism to business to entrepreneurship.

All state qualifiers - including those from both athletic and non-athletic competitive extra-curricular activities - are recognized publicly for their accomplishments by the Board of Education. This small gesture takes just 20 minutes each month, but it sends a clear message to the students, their coaches/sponsors, their parents, and the community that all student successes should be celebrated.

School administrators are guided in their decision-making by asking, “What’s best for kids?” On its surface, it sounds like a simple question, but when considering the needs and interests of students with varied backgrounds and levels of ability, it can be a steep challenge. Two emerging programs have student well-being and success as their focus.

This year, the school implemented Link Crew, a transition program that features juniors and seniors making new students feel at home throughout their first year on campus. Upperclassmen are entrusted with mentoring activities, which builds leadership and ownership among the students themselves. Building community, connections and compassion among students, Link Crew will have a long-lasting impact on Lemont High School’s culture.

Beginning in 2017-18, Lemont High School will employ a 1:1 teaching and learning environment. More than half of the school’s teachers have served on committees to prepare for this transformative initiative, which has been the focus of most all-school professional development activities over the last two years. This environment will prepare Lemont High School students to thrive in a digitally interconnected world where learning never stops.

Evolving curricula and emerging technologies have been a given since Lemont High School opened in 1890. However, a passionate faculty, driven students and consistent community support have made Lemont High School “home” to families for generations. All signs point to Lemont High School maintaining its status as the crown jewel of the community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Lemont High School’s mission is “for all students to become life-long, independent learners and productive citizens in a rapidly changing world.” Lemont High School lives its mission statement. Regardless of a student’s ambitions for life after high school, the skills students acquire will serve them in college, in their careers, and for a lifetime. Understanding how to listen, hear an opposing viewpoint, critique, and form one’s own opinion are skills that are vital for students as they contribute to their communities and become global citizens.

Despite the fact that students were succeeding under the standard curriculum, Lemont High School’s Mathematics Department overhauled all of its courses by implementing an Integrated Math curriculum. This change was driven by teachers, and administrators provided them with the time and resources to properly execute this significant shift in methodology.

The 2016-17 school year is the final year of a three-year phase-in process for Integrated Math; the Class of 2018 will be the first students who have completed the program, and more than 80 percent of that class will be enrolled as seniors in elective math courses that will give them a chance to earn either Advanced Placement or college credit. Tweaks will continue to be made as longitudinal data becomes available for students’ performances on local and national assessments.

The Mathematics Department’s decision to upend a successful curricular program was not made lightly. However, Lemont High School teachers are encouraged not to fall back on “good enough.” This change was made because teachers and administrators believe that deepened mathematical understanding resulting from an integrated approach will lead to even greater student achievement.

The English Department and Social Studies Department share a common framework for argumentative writing. Expectations and academic vocabulary are consistent across all grade levels and among all courses in these departments. As an example, despite just becoming familiar with the language, students designated as English Language Learners were challenged to meet these standards through the “Letters to the Next President” program last fall.

Teachers at Lemont High School believe that, more than any time in modern history, students must learn at an early age how to take in a variety of information, process it, and then determine what’s useful, what’s extraneous, and what is untrue. Determining the validity of sources is a vital skill that will lead students to being responsible citizens for the balance of their lives.

English and Social Studies teachers collaborate to align standards and establish common expectations for students across their disciplines. Tackling the proliferation of “fake news” is one example of a challenge that these departments address through interdisciplinary efforts.

Socratic seminars may be a standard for advanced classes in many high schools, but they are used in all levels of English and Social Studies courses at Lemont High School. Questions drive the discussion, which helps students develop critical thinking and communication skills that will be beneficial in higher education, their careers, and as citizens participating in their communities.

Becoming informed consumers of information is just one way that students are introduced to their responsibilities as productive citizens. Social Studies courses, including American Problems and Human Rights & World Affairs, require critical analysis on relevant topics and current events on a national and global scale. Students synthesize modern events with both American and world history. This year, the Lemont High School Educational Foundation funded a grant so that all seniors could utilize an online tool to organize and operate their own legislation simulation.

The Next Generation Science Standards were an impetus for the Science Department to rethink its existing

curriculum. As a result, Lemont High School science courses more prominently feature inquiry-based instruction, application of problem solving skills, hands-on experimental design, and community outreach.

Learning extends beyond the boundaries of the school, as science students often have the opportunity to interact with experts in related fields. Top-level students assist Argonne National Laboratory scientists with research, and AP Biology students learn about the latest discoveries in cancer treatment by taking part in a Google Hangout with a renowned researcher thousands of miles away.

Students in all grade levels take part in both volunteer and research activities in their community. AP Environmental Science and Field Ecology students perform chemical analysis of water quality in local lakes and streams, and provide their data and accompanying recommendations to local environmental agencies. Various classes use a remote operated vehicle to map the previously unresearched Lemont quarries. Their discoveries will be incorporated into the curriculum for all levels of science classes for years to come.

The school is partnering with CITGO to restore the local Heritage Quarries Recreation Area. This multi-year project has provided students, staff and community members an opportunity to be involved in an important environmental clean-up effort.

Science teachers routinely receive messages from alumni thanking them for preparing them for the rigors of college. Many graduates report they are ahead of the curve in comparison to their peers, both in terms of content knowledge and laboratory protocol.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students are provided with a well-rounded educational experience that gives them the license to explore their passions. All curricular areas are open to students in all grade levels.

World Languages studies are commonplace for almost all Lemont High School students. Nearly 80 percent of freshmen and 85 percent of sophomores are enrolled in an elective World Languages course this year. However, this program is so in-demand that nearly 50 percent of seniors are enrolled in a World Languages course even after earning the two credits recommended for college-bound students.

The recently revamped World Languages curriculum features authentic language resources that foster a deep sense of cultural competency and awareness. Students are encouraged to enroll in World Languages courses to prepare for the cognitive demands of the workplace and hone the interpersonal skills necessary to be successful in higher education or the workforce.

While many schools were taking resources away from the three career-based curricular areas found in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department, Lemont High School significantly increased its investment thanks to a community-supported referendum in 2006.

The Industrial Technology Department covers classes ranging from Woodworking to Robotics. No classes in this curricular area are required for graduation, but approximately 15 percent of all students are enrolled in at least one Industrial Technology course. Students pursue their interests and collaborate to tackle real-world projects in areas such as architecture and computer aided design.

Family and Consumer Sciences electives are increasingly attractive to many students. More than 40 percent of sophomores are enrolled in a FACS course this year, as are more than 20 percent of seniors. Whether learning about child development or being introduced to different cuisines, students develop life-long skills.

Business Education is a frequent elective choice among students from all grade levels. One Business class is required for all freshmen, but the department offers courses that maintain students' interest throughout their careers. Nearly 50 percent of all juniors and seniors are enrolled in a Business elective, and this level of participation has led to Lemont High School winning multiple titles in Future Business Leaders of America state competition.

Lemont High School students are required to take two credits in the “Creative” category, which makes courses in the Fine Arts Department popular among students in all grade levels. Art and music not only provide students an outlet for their creativity, but also develop problem solving skills, perseverance and confidence.

The school has produced several all-state musicians, and its marching band annually is among the state’s best. More than 15 percent of all students are enrolled in a music course. The department not only offers performance opportunities in band and choir, but also courses in music theory and composition.

Outside of World Languages, no elective area is as popular with students as art. With the world’s information at their fingertips, it’s likely a surprise for students that things aren’t created instantly. Developing fundamentals is paramount to achieving a long-term goal, and art courses drive this fact home. More than 45 percent of all students are enrolled in an art class, including more than half of freshmen, sophomores and seniors.

Courses in Physical Education and Health are required throughout students’ careers, and introduce students to important wellness concepts such as relieving stress, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and following a proper nutritional plan. Selected juniors and seniors develop leadership skills by working with younger students, as well as those in the Adaptive Physical Education class, through the Physical Education Leadership program.

One of the school’s most unique features is that it houses the Deaf & Hard of Hearing regional high school program, which attracts both in-district and out-of-district students to succeed in the exceptional deaf community the school has established over the last 10 years. DHH students benefit from all of the school’s curricular and extracurricular offerings.

Lemont High School is one of five school districts that owns and operates the Wilco Area Career Center. Participating schools offer students quality vocational and technical education programs in a cost-effective manner. Between 40-50 junior- or senior-level students annually take advantage of career-based courses, ranging from welding to veterinary assistant. These courses transition students to apprenticeship programs or community college, or directly to the workforce.

The responsible use of technology is integrated into all curricular areas. While a required Business course covers some basic technology concepts for freshmen, digital citizenship is reinforced at all grade levels. Technology will become even more integral in 2017-18 when Lemont High School implements a 1:1 teaching and learning environment.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Like fingerprints, every student is unique and brings his or her own set of challenges for a teacher, and expecting the same instructional techniques to work for each student is unreasonable. Lemont High School’s faculty and staff are the greatest asset when it comes to instructional intervention. They know their students well, which makes it easier to identify when a change in strategy may unlock greater success.

checks for comprehension and application of newly taught concepts before moving ahead. These formative assessments ensure students receive more timely and specific feedback around what they know and what they have yet to master. Teachers also gather valuable information from formative assessment data about how effective instruction has been, and how they may need to pivot their instruction to address students' needs.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

A young Lemont High School Spanish teacher is charged with teaching sections of Spanish I and Spanish III Honors. Whether teaching beginner-level students or those who are on their way to mastering the language, she builds a rapport with learners of all abilities. In class, she speaks only in Spanish, but not in a way that confuses students. Instead, they are motivated to figure out what is being said, and eagerly participate in the activities she has designed in the target language.

By developing personal connections, holding students to high expectations, and varying her instructional techniques based on the needs of her students, she has made her classroom a place where students collaborate and seek out opportunities for success.

A variation of what happens in her classroom takes place throughout the building. With the support of administrators and department chairs, Lemont High School teachers make their classrooms “can’t miss” environments where students are able to explore their passions.

Students are most engaged and motivated when they are afforded choices to shape their own education, and Lemont High School teachers believe that effectively using technology allows students to do just that. Giving students the opportunity to collaborate with each other and investigate their own solutions to real world problems expands the walls of the classroom and provides them with authentic learning experiences. Students can choose how to demonstrate what they have learned, which exposes their classmates to new content and diverse ways of thinking.

Though 91 percent of the school’s faculty have earned master’s degrees, Lemont High School teachers seize upon the reality that they can learn from their students and, in turn, become better instructors. The resulting mutual respect between students and teachers makes the classroom a welcoming environment that is not the exception at Lemont High School, but rather the norm.

Students aren’t the only ones who are afforded the opportunity to explore their passions. Teachers seek exciting ways to engage their students and are encouraged to pursue unique opportunities to grow professionally. For example, two teachers have received sabbatical opportunities to participate in ocean exploration and research aboard the E/V Nautilus. Another has helped shape the development of the Big History Project, a science-based history course taught across the world that was spearheaded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Teachers are able to take advantage of these opportunities with the backing of school administrators, and thanks to a generous network of community supporters that invests in the success of students and teachers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Passionate faculty and dedicated students are at the core of Lemont High School’s success, but the seeds for that success were planted at home and cultivated by many along the way. Students’ families are their top influence, but an enduring level of support comes from other entities.

The school and parents mutually benefit from two-way communication. Administrators promote the many positives that are happening within the building, and proactively communicate information that is important both to the school’s families and the community at-large. Teachers frequently communicate with parents about students’ progress, intervening in academic matters when appropriate. Lemont High School also features an increasing social media presence, with teachers, sponsors and coaches all spreading awareness of what goes on in and out of the classroom.

However, the feedback that the school’s faculty, administrators and Board of Education receive from parents is just as vital. Parents serve on committees ranging from curriculum to student parking, and all

parents have the opportunity to communicate directly with their students' teachers through a parent Web portal.

Several support organizations have a direct hand in students' success. For ten years, the Lemont High School Educational Foundation has enhanced educational opportunities and enriched the overall experience for students by funding teachers' grant proposals. With a board that features mostly current and future Lemont High School parents, the LHSEF has funded more than \$400,000 in grants since 2007, with supplemental opportunities provided across all curricular areas.

Additionally, the Band Parents Association is committed to providing assistance to the highly successful music department, while the parent-driven Blue & Gold Backers provide supplemental financial support to all 24 of the school's athletic programs. The Special Education Department's parent outreach program provides networking opportunities and connections to resources.

Lemont High School students are fortunate to take advantage of collaborations with local businesses and research facilities. Students have the opportunity to work with world-class scientists at Argonne National Laboratory and contribute to environmental enhancement activities with CITGO. Many special education students are employed by local businesses such as Walgreens through the Student Transitional Education Program.

The Lemont community has shown a prolonged commitment to ensuring that Lemont High School students have the best resources at their disposal. Within the past decade, a community-approved construction project expanded or revamped spaces for career and technical education, athletics and fine arts, and added 30 classrooms to accommodate student growth.

A long-standing commitment from the community helps Lemont High School students to reach their full potential.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is an opportunity for teachers to sharpen their skills, or learn new skills altogether, with the expectation that those skills will be put to good use in the classroom. The best professional development activities make an immediate impact on student engagement and student achievement. Lemont High School provides its faculty with meaningful professional development in areas ranging from instructional practices and assessment to school safety and mental health.

Lemont High School has increasingly relied on a "train the trainers" philosophy over the last two years, specifically in the area of 1:1 teaching and learning. The school develops local experts by empowering teachers to pursue training and share their expertise with their peers by leading professional development activities. Building internal capacity ensures that change efforts are sustainable, and also promotes continuity as new teachers join the faculty.

Many school districts have provided their students with mobile devices without providing sufficient teacher training, but Lemont High School administrators vowed teachers would be well prepared to teach in such an environment long before every student comes to class with a mobile device. This training started by selected faculty becoming "Google Certified Educators;" those faculty became the building experts.

In addition to weekly time in Professional Learning Communities and summer curriculum projects, Lemont High School administrators provide each academic department one "release day" each semester. This extended time together as a department allows for a deeper dive into assessment data, reflection on departmental goals, and the opportunity for long-term planning. Most importantly, departments analyze their vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment, and ensure the content being taught is rigorous and aligns to the appropriate learning standards.

The school's professional development committee includes teachers, staff and administrators. This group is charged with planning building-wide professional development activities. While the focus has been on 1:1

teaching and learning the past two years, previous efforts to refine common assessments and establish criteria for teacher evaluation have resulted in more effective classroom instruction and made teachers better at their craft.

In addition to developing its own experts, Lemont High School welcomes external consultants to assist in its school-wide professional development activities. Administrators also support active participation in professional organizations and attendance at local, state and national conferences so that teachers remain current with best practices.

Lemont High School provides its teachers with both the time and financial resources to participate in professional development activities so that students can be engaged by exciting content that aligns to a dynamic, standards-based curriculum.

4. School Leadership:

As a single-school, high school district, Lemont High School's leadership structure is different than most schools. The superintendent's leadership team includes experts in their particular fields who provide daily guidance and long-term vision for the district. They consistently communicate with each other, but also respect the knowledge that each person possesses within his or her area of expertise.

The superintendent's common refrain is, "Tell me what I need to know, not what you think I want to hear." This frees her leadership team to provide direct, honest feedback that is vital to ensure the school's long-term success. The leadership team asks for that same candor from others throughout the building.

The principal has established a clear leadership structure for teachers. He utilizes the assistance of the department chairs, who guide faculty and implement initiatives at the departmental level. He also is very visible to students and teachers alike, as he has committed to visiting more than 100 teachers' classrooms each year to witness instruction firsthand.

The leadership team fosters an environment in which all constituents - including teachers, students, parents and the community - can provide their input in an effort to ensure student success. Initiatives in curriculum development are teacher-driven, and new academic courses, athletic programs and student organizations reflect student interest.

Leadership is not limited to the adults in the building. Leadership opportunities for students include the principal's Student Advisory Committee and the Athletic Council. Lemont High School students lead by example, annually compiling thousands of hours of non-required community service - many that occur while working with younger students in and around Lemont.

Lemont High School manages a balance between promoting innovation and not jumping in too quickly with new initiatives. Administrators and teachers carefully explore both the benefits and potential pitfalls before launching a new program. In recent years, this has been reflected in the development of a new teacher evaluation system, a reevaluation of the structure of the school's assessments, and the reworking of the curriculum in several departments.

By the time the school's 1:1 teaching and learning program is fully implemented in Fall 2017, Lemont High School's administration, faculty and staff will have spent three years preparing for this once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape student engagement.

The average Lemont High School teacher has 13 years of experience working at Lemont High School. The school's teacher retention rate is 97 percent. This is no accident. Lemont High School's leadership team values honest feedback to carefully implement programs that will have a long-term impact on student achievement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Sometimes it takes someone new to describe exactly what makes a place special.

One of Lemont High School's newest faculty members teaches in the Business Education Department. After working at a number of schools, he was new to campus in August. Dropping by the Principal's Office for a chat after Winter Break, he began talking about his experience at Lemont High School.

At one point, he said, "Things just don't fall through the cracks here."

There is no catchy slogan for what makes Lemont High School a special place. Talented, passionate people do their jobs on a daily basis and take pride not only in their own performances, but also in the successes of the students who fill the halls.

The buildings and grounds team ensures that students can learn in a clean, safe environment, and the cafeteria staff provides a wealth of nutritional options for students. Members of the support staff recognize that they often are the first point of contact - especially during stressful times - and serve as school ambassadors with every interaction. Special Education paraeducators patiently assist students who, in many cases, work harder than anyone in the building.

Coaches recognize that winning is secondary to helping their student-athletes deal with both success and failure.

Department chairs provide leadership for the faculty they supervise, and work to ensure that Lemont High School features an academic program that continually evolves to meet the needs of students who will be part of a rapidly changing world for the rest of their lives. Teachers are committed to being experts in their fields.

At school, no one knows students better than their teachers, and those teachers are aware that a wealth of support is available for students who need it. Teachers request assistance from counselors, deans, social workers and the school nurse, all of whom are trained to address the most delicate of situations. In some cases, teachers and counselors collaborate to determine what academic or socioemotional intervention is best to employ given the circumstances.

School administrators push the envelope so that faculty, staff and students constantly can grow. And hard-working students take charge of their education, at times astonishing themselves and their teachers alike with what they can accomplish.

Lemont High School is special because the 1,600-plus people who are in the building each day perform their roles to the best of their abilities, and work tirelessly to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks.