

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

Name of Principal Ms. Christine Austen

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

Official School Name Earl L. Vandermeulen High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 350 Old Post Road

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

City Port Jefferson State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11777-2099

County Suffolk County

Telephone (631) 791-4421 Fax (631) 476-4408

Web site/URL [http://www.portjeffschools.org/our-schools/earl\\_l\\_vandermeulen\\_high\\_school](http://www.portjeffschools.org/our-schools/earl_l_vandermeulen_high_school) E-mail causten@portjeffschools.org

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. Paul Casciano Ed.D. E-mail pcascian@portjeffschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Port Jefferson Union Free School District Tel. (631) 791-4221

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. Kathleen Brennan  
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	45	42	87
10	42	48	90
11	48	40	88
12 or higher	43	55	98
<b>Total Students</b>	178	185	363

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 86 % 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	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	360
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.028
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %  
Total number students who qualify: 28

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %  
34 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.

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed               |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	27
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13:1
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	98%	96%	97%	92%	95%
High school graduation rate	98%	98%	97%	99%	98%

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	82
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	82%
Enrolled in a community college	18%
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    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.

The mission of the Vandermeulen High School is to provide a personalized learning environment which supports the academic, social and emotional growth of all students.

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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The Earl L. Vandermeulen High School is located in the harbor side village of Port Jefferson. Our mission is to promote the academic, social and emotional growth and development of all our students in order that they may reach their full potential and be college and/or career ready. The history, character, and strong sense of community play an important role in the education of our students and we recognize our families' partnership in this endeavor. Generations of students choose to remain in Port Jefferson to raise and educate their children, a testament to the sustained tradition of excellence that our community has come to expect. With approximately 360 students in grades 9-12, we are proud of our ability to provide each pupil with a personalized educational experience as they prepare for college and/or career. Typically, an average of 95% of each year's graduating class enroll in a two or four year college. Last year, 82% of the graduating class enrolled in a 4-year college or university and 18% enrolled in a community college. The Earl L. Vandermeulen High School has consistently provided a rigorous educational program with a diverse selection of athletics and co-curricular activities.

speakers on topics such as Internet Safety and Drug Awareness in order to reinforce that the safety and well-being of our students is the number one priority of our community. Each of these organizations contribute to the overall positive climate of the school where each member of the school community feels supported and valued.

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

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

The core curriculum at Earl L. Vandermeulen High School is an extension of the skills and knowledge developed in our elementary and middle school programs. Our middle school and high school are in one building which creates a seamless transition from the middle school to the high school for our students due to the collaboration between the faculty members of the two schools. This shared commitment ensures that our students are appropriately challenged and engaged in coursework suited to their individual academic, social and emotional needs. Our core curriculum in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Social Studies and Science is aligned with the New York State Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and provides students with opportunities to develop their critical-thinking and problem solving skills to support the goal of college and career readiness.

The ELA curriculum includes fiction and informational texts selected for their ability to advance our students' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Units are developed to provide students with experience in analyzing texts, identifying supporting evidence, and developing inferences. The ELA curriculum is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Students who perform above grade level are encouraged to enroll in advanced courses such as honors or AP courses. Students who require additional support, identified by data analysis of assessment results, evaluating writing samples and STAR testing results, receive extra-help and may be recommended to receive Academic Intervention Services (AIS) by our Instructional Support Team (IST). ELA course electives include SAT Verbal and the Public Speaking and Research course, a graduation requirement which further develops the student's ability to conduct inquiry-based research aligned to the CCSS and hones the skills of speech preparation and delivery that can be applied across the curricula.

The mathematics curriculum is fully aligned with the CCSS and provides our students with learning experiences which develop the skills to think deeply and critically about mathematical concepts. Providing a strong foundation in the Algebra I course is a priority in the high school, for this reason, all non-accelerated 9th grade students are enrolled in Algebra I with an alternate day lab class. The additional 90 periods of Algebra I instruction offers students additional time to deepen and extend their understanding of the content. Students then follow the established sequence of Regents courses including Geometry and Algebra II. Our extensive selection of elective courses accommodates the diverse needs of accelerated and non-accelerated students. They include Pre-Calculus, Introduction to Computer Science, SAT Math, Intermediate Geometry, Intermediate Algebra, and two honors classes consisting of Pre-Calculus X and Calculus X. The AP courses include Calculus AB, Statistics, and Computer Science. Students who perform below grade level are provided extra-help and may be recommended to receive AIS services. We also enroll our 15:1:1 math students in a two-year sequence for Algebra I in order to provide additional time and practice in the curriculum.

The social studies curriculum is designed to encourage the students to consider the social and political ramifications of historical events from the Paleolithic Era through modern times. Lessons are intended to engage and challenge students to consider how certain actions and decisions have impacted history and how their individual actions may be judged in the same context. A major emphasis is placed on historical readings and their interpretation and the students' ability to engage in analytical writing, including document based questions and thematic essays. The partnership between the social studies and ELA departments provides students additional opportunities to develop and strengthen their reading and writing skills as part of the goal of college and career readiness. Our AP course offerings include World History, United States History and Macroeconomics. Other electives include Participation in Government, Economics, Experiencing the Law, Holocaust and Genocide – Facing History and Ourselves, and Movies: A Historical Perspective. Students who are performing below grade level are recommended to receive ELA AIS to improve their reading and writing skills.

The science curriculum includes coursework in Earth Science, Living Environment, Chemistry and Physics. Lessons are designed to engage students in the practice of scientific inquiry and employ hands-on laboratory

experiments with real world applications. All students are encouraged to exceed the number of science credits required for graduation by enrolling in our AP courses and science electives. Accelerated students have a variety of AP courses to select from including Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Environmental Science. Additional electives include Anatomy and Physiology, Forensics, Marine Science and Zoology. The Research Project 1 course is open to all students who wish to design and conduct original research and enter science competitions at the local, regional or national level.

Description of how the curriculum supports college and career readiness:

The Curriculum Development Council (CDC), a group of secondary administrators and teachers from the core and other curriculum areas, meet to review the curriculum across grades 6-12, to ensure we are preparing our students for college and/or career. Discussions have resulted in the collaboration of the middle and high school ELA departments to review and revise the benchmarks for the research and writing process to support college and career readiness and a programmatic change to our math curriculum. Students who do not meet grade level expectations, will be afforded the opportunity to develop and enhance their math skills through extended lab classes in Geometry and Algebra II. Additionally, we plan to implement a new elective, College Statistics, to provide non-accelerated students the opportunity to experience an advanced math course similar to a college-level course.

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

Our comprehensive educational program includes a variety of courses in music and fine arts, physical education, health, languages other than English (LOTE), business, and technology. The courses are offered to all students and provide them with valuable opportunities to explore areas of interest and potential pathways to achieve their college and future career goals. District initiatives have been designed and implemented to enhance the educational experience in all areas of study. These initiatives include the installation of interactive whiteboards in every classroom, the renovation and expansion of our library media center and the implementation of Google Suite throughout the district. To support our high school teachers and students with the implementation of Google Classroom, the district has acquired 160 Google Chromebooks and provided professional development opportunities to all staff.

The music and fine arts program at our school follows the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts and the National Core Arts Standards. Additionally, our district has developed the Port Jefferson Academic Standards for Music and Art and the PreK-12 Scope and Sequence, which focuses on exceeding the standards presented by the major arts organizations through student learning objectives, performance indicators, and sample rubrics. Over 60% of our students participate in music and/or art instruction daily. We offer a comprehensive program of study in visual arts including studio in art, drawing and painting, ceramics, traditional photography, digital photography, and AP Studio Art. The comprehensive program for music study includes concert band, chorus, orchestra, chamber groups/ensembles, classroom music instruction, jazz band, music technology, and AP Music Theory. Students also receive small group instrumental lessons weekly. Special needs students are integrated into all music and fine arts classes with their peers. Enrichment is provided for advanced students through extracurricular offerings, collaborations with Stony Brook's Outreach Program, and the Tri-M Music Honor Society. Through these efforts, we have been recognized by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) as one of the "Best Communities for Music Education" for ten consecutive years.

The study of a foreign language is highly encouraged for all our students and they may pursue a LOTE sequence in French, Italian, Latin or Spanish. We offer a total of five Advanced Placement Language courses including French, Italian, Latin, Spanish Language and Spanish Literature. Our affiliation with a local university enables students to concurrently earn college credit upon the successful completion of the high school LOTE courses in our Level III classes and above. Our LOTE teachers provide students with enrichment activities to enhance our foreign language program. Each year, our Latin students participate in the National Latin Exam and the Latin Certamen academic contest sponsored by the Suffolk County Classical Society and our Italian students participate in the Italian Poetry Contest sponsored by the Long Island Chapter of the American Association of the Teachers of Italian. Students are encouraged to

participate in co-curricular clubs coordinated by the LOTE department members such as our International Club, whose focus is organizing community outreach activities for our non-English speaking students and their families. We are proud that 77% of our students are enrolled in our LOTE program and approximately 50 students study more than one language.

All students participate in our physical education program as required by New York State. The physical education program is designed to increase an awareness of each individual's responsibility to engage in activities that support a healthy and active lifestyle. The department engages students with instructional units which emphasize positive social interactions, good sportsmanship, and physical fitness. Our Wellness and Fitness for Life course focuses on the health-related components of physical education such as cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and body composition. Our physical education program is differentiated for our special needs student through an adaptive physical education curriculum. Our 10th grade students are required to complete a health course which includes units on alcohol and alcoholism, drugs and substance abuse, mental and emotional health issues, human sexuality, suicide prevention and other issues of concern to our students.

Our technology and business programs are open to all students. We currently have 104 students enrolled in electives such as robotics, aeronautics, broadcasting, sports marketing, and college accounting. These courses enhance our educational program and allow students to explore areas of interest outside the core curriculum. Classes are held in dedicated classrooms, a wood shop, and a fully equipped broadcast studio where students create, edit and produce our daily morning show. Our college accounting course is affiliated with a local university which provides our students the opportunity to earn college credit. Our Robotics Club pairs community mentors with our students, in order to prepare them to compete in the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Long Island Regional Competition each year.

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

The high expectation for academic achievement is consistent for our students regardless of their diverse academic or economic backgrounds. The delivery of instruction varies greatly based on the individual needs of our students, however, the rigor of assessment is consistent across the curriculum. Utilizing differentiated instruction in our classrooms provides an opportunity for multiple pathways to be utilized within the same instructional setting. During the bimonthly IST meetings, administrators, teachers, and support staff discuss how to best target individual students' needs. Drawing from research based practices, teachers implement classroom level interventions designed to promote student success. Furthermore, the district's recent Google Initiative promotes the spirit of collaboration within the classroom. Specifically, Google Classroom and G Suite products, used in conjunction with Chromebooks, allow students to cooperate on assignments both in the classroom and at home. Our technology enhances instructional practices by creating interactive ways for students to engage with the various curricula.

Data from AP and State assessments is warehoused in a digital dashboard created by our district data coordinator. This user friendly interface is available to teachers and administrators and allows us to determine specific levels of proficiency for individual students, as well as, various groups of students. As a result, teachers are able to reflect on the data presented and make changes to the way in which information is presented to ensure that our students possess a high level of understanding of the curriculum. The dashboard is also a valuable tool for administrators, allowing for comparisons to be made with a wide range of districts throughout New York State. Our teachers are highly skilled in the use of formative assessment which allows them to constantly take the pulse of the class and provide individual student feedback to enhance the learning experience for students. As a result, our students are given the critical guidance needed throughout each lesson to insure that they successfully master the content.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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

Our school is committed to meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of our students through a personalized program of study and co-curricular activities. It is our priority that all students are comfortable approaching the adults in our school to request support and/or guidance in any situation. To reinforce this belief, the principal and assistant principal visit each social studies class in the first week of school to speak with students about our goal to cultivate a safe, positive, and welcoming environment for all members of the school community. Students are also encouraged to participate in our co-curricular clubs and athletics. We are proud that approximately 75% of our students participate in one or more of our co-curricular activities, service clubs or interscholastic athletic teams. These experiences help to build leadership capacity in our students and provide them with opportunities to meet their community service graduation requirement. The importance of treating all members of our school with dignity and respect is emphasized in classroom discussions.

This year, we began an initiative to support the social and emotional needs of our students and staff by implementing a national, research-based program, Sources of Strength (SOS). SOS trains peer leaders and teachers to positively influence the school climate in order to prevent suicide, bullying, violence and substance abuse. Our SOS program has engaged students and adults in activities designed to build rapport and strengthen relationships. Our peer leaders also scripted and filmed a video to share with students and staff highlighting the importance of identifying their sources of strength, whether it be family, friends, mentors, or a healthy activity. This increased awareness has created an environment where students and staff are more sensitive to changes in the demeanor or behavior of our students in order to take positive action to provide guidance and support.

Our teachers are integral to sustaining a positive and productive climate in the school. Counselors and teachers reinforce the importance of building a strong academic transcript and resume in order to prepare our students for college and career and they take a personal interest in the well-being of each child. We believe the distribution of leadership encourages collaborative decision-making opportunities between school administrators and faculty regarding student policies and programmatic changes to our curriculum. This model empowers teachers to assume responsibility for developing their budgets, suggesting new courses or revising existing curriculum, and planning field trips which enhance the educational program. The shared responsibility between teachers and administrators is instrumental in garnering and sustaining support for our instructional decisions.

Proactively communicating with families and the community is an important component to cultivating a positive climate. Our principal shares pertinent information regarding school programs, activities and achievements through written correspondence, mass emails to parents, postings to the district website and a Twitter account. Our Board of Education includes a student representative who provides updates about the academic and co-curricular accomplishments of our students and our teachers maintain websites to keep families apprised of assignments and classroom activities. Our personalized approach to providing our students a strong foundation contributes to the overall success of our school.

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

Our success can be attributed to the collaboration between all stakeholders in the Port Jefferson community. To keep our families apprised of the importance of college and career readiness, our counseling office publishes a Post-Secondary Planning Guide. Our counselors organize two College Fairs each year, the fall program is held during the evening in order to accommodate our parents' work schedules and provide them with the opportunity to meet representatives from over 100 colleges and universities. Counselors meet one-on-one with our juniors and their parents to guide them through the college application process. A follow-up meeting in their senior year ensures that application deadlines are met and parents are aware of financial aid and scholarship application requirements. Parents are invited to respond to surveys about our presentations in order to solicit recommendations for future programs. Our counselors,

psychologist, social worker and faculty work together to engage parents in discussions regarding the academic, social or emotional challenges that a student may be experiencing in order to support the student's needs.

To engage and support our newest members of the school community, our Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organize evening programs to support our non- English speaking families. Activities include inviting the public librarians to speak with our parents about resources in the community, sponsoring a Thanksgiving meal for the students and their families in order to create a support network and coordinating a potluck dinner and "thrift store" for the families to assist them with needed articles of clothing or housewares. Our foreign language students volunteer to serve as interpreters at these events and become ambassadors of good will. To support the emotional and social needs of our non- English speaking population, we created a social skills group which provides our students an outlet to share their concerns and experiences as new residents.

As mentioned in Part III, there is a strong connection between our school and community. The Royal Educational Foundation provides funding for teacher initiatives. The Rotary Club offers service opportunities and the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) develops leadership skills. Our PTSA provides funding for programs on topics such as Internet Safety and Drug Awareness. Our students and residents also benefit from our affiliation with the Village of Port Jefferson. The success of our Go Green Initiative and Homecoming festivities can be attributed to this collaboration. Additionally, our students have a unique academic opportunity to participate in Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) after school programs at the Stony Brook University. Stony Brook faculty guide our students through hands-on explorations in Biotechnology, Computer Programming with Python, Geoscience and Engineering. The collaboration between Stony Brook University and our school provides students with learning experiences which enhance the academic environment and strengthen their research skills. The success of this initiative is evidenced by the number of students who apply to the program each fall.

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

Our district is committed to providing high quality professional development to all members of our educational community with the goal of enhancing classroom instructional practices and building leadership capacity. Each year, our Professional Development Committee, comprised of administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and clerical staff, designs and distributes surveys to all staff in order to identify targeted areas for staff development. As a result of the surveys, we have expanded our Google Suite training for all staff, including paraprofessional and clerical, to ensure a seamless transition to the Google Suite platform. Our in-house Google training is coordinated and delivered by one of our Google certified teachers and the lessons are differentiated and personalized in order to meet the needs of the attendees. Additionally, as part of our Superintendent's Day activities, professional staff developers provided extensive hands-on training on Gmail, Google Calendar and Google Classroom. As a result, our students have benefited from the collaborative environment of Google Classroom across all content areas.

As a community of learners, it is critical that our administrators and teachers work together to continuously examine and improve our educational program and practices. Our administrators and teachers work collaboratively with staff developers to align our curriculum to the CCSS, research new textbooks and investigate new technologies to enhance the instructional program. Our district utilizes a web-based platform to catalog the professional development opportunities that are available within our district and the local Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). Additionally, teachers are encouraged to explore outside resources to engage in meaningful professional development such as summer AP institutes in order to keep apprised of any changes to their AP curriculum. This year, our social studies teachers participated in a series of workshops designed to prepare them for the new Social Studies Framework and the new format of the social studies State assessments.

In order to develop an interest in formal leadership among our teachers, we planned a series of workshops for our teaching staff. Our administrative team designed three interactive seminars to explore topics such as effective leadership, building leadership positions, and district leadership positions. Our teachers and administrators engaged in frank discussions regarding the roles and responsibilities of different leadership

positions and the traits of an effective leader. Additionally, we participated in tabletop exercises to discuss different scenarios that administrators may face during the course of their day to day activities. Our continued commitment to engage in meaningful professional development enhances the academic program for our teachers and students.

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

The administrative team at the high school consists of the building principal and the assistant principal. In the absence of department chairs, our principal oversees the math, science and guidance departments and collaborates with the middle school principal to manage the LOTE department. Our assistant principal is charged with overseeing the ELA, social studies, business and technology departments. Since the high school and middle school share a building, the high school and middle school principal coordinate the scheduling of our shared teachers, staff and facilities. The principal and assistant principal work closely with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, the Director of Music and Fine Arts, the Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics, and the Director of Special Education to review the academic and co-curricular program and implement programmatic changes in order to meet the needs of all students.

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

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Our success as a school can be attributed to our commitment to providing each student a personalized educational experience in a caring, supportive environment. From the development of the master schedule to the selection of our course offerings, our teachers, parents, board of education members and administrators work collaboratively in order to offer a rigorous educational program to support our students' college and career goals.

It is not unusual for our students to request three to four AP courses in a single year. In order to accommodate our students' requests, we extensively review the data in order to reduce conflicts in the master schedule. For the past two years, we have met 97% of our students' requests in their core subjects, not an easy task for a master schedule that is predominately comprised of singleton courses. Additionally, we utilize AP Potential as a tool to identify students who are likely to score a three or higher on a given AP exam. The information provided by AP Potential is used to determine which AP courses we will offer to our students in order to provide them with the opportunity to experience success in challenging coursework. We work diligently to personalize our students' schedules each year; this results in a unique program of study for each child that maximizes the utilization of our resources.

Although we apply data in determining the proper course placement for our students, we also engage our counselors, teachers, administrators and parents in meaningful discussions regarding the emotional demands associated with the student's course load. Our teachers are vested in the success of each student and it is not unusual to find them volunteering to provide extra help during their lunch or prep periods. Many of our teachers also serve as coaches and advisors to co-curricular activities and they take a personal interest in our students' lives outside the classroom. This personal approach is pervasive throughout our school and is a constant reminder of the importance of creating strong connections with our students and families to ensure their success and well-being. It should come as no surprise that our graduates return to Port Jefferson to educate their own children as they understand the importance of our unique approach to education.