

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 Ms. Nanine McLaughlin

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

Official School Name Garden City High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 170 Rockaway Avenue

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

City Garden City State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 11530-1499

County Nassau County

Telephone (516) 478-2006 Fax (516) 294-2639

Web site/URL http://www.gardencity.k12.ny.us/Do E-mail mclaughlin@gcufsd.net
main/8

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. Alan Groveman E-mail grovemanna@gcufsd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Garden City Union Free School District Tel. (516) 478-1000

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. Angela Heinemann
(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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	131	148	279
10	129	140	269
11	132	148	280
12 or higher	148	147	295
Total Students	540	583	1123

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90 % White
 - 1 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 1%

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	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	1166
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.011
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4 %
Total number students who qualify: 48

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
91 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.

- 7 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 2 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 2 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 32 Other Health Impaired
- 40 Specific Learning Disability
- 8 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: 9
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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	95
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	19
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.	11

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 22:1
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	96%	96%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	99%	95%	98%	97%	99%

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	311
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	92%
Enrolled in a community college	4%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	4%

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 Garden City High School is to provide a physically safe and emotionally secure environment, where students are challenged to strive for personal excellence through educational, athletic,

creative and extra-curricular pursuits. Our goals and responsibility is to help each student develop an enthusiasm for learning, a respect for self and others, and the skills to become a creative independent thinker and problem solver.

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

Garden City is a community of approximately 22,500 people, located twenty miles east of Manhattan in the heart of Nassau County, Long Island. Ours is a suburban setting that includes estates, single-family dwellings, condominiums, apartment homes, and businesses. According to niche.com, 95% of residents are homeowners. Garden City is an incorporated village, nearly coterminous with the school district. The majority of the adult population is comprised of college graduates engaged in business or professional careers. Approximately 66% of our population possess a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Close to 3,900 students, attend Garden City Public Schools in grades kindergarten through 12. There are three primary schools (grades K and 1), two elementary schools (grades 2-5), one middle school (grades 6-8), and one high school (grades 9-12). The high school population totals 1,125 and all students are provided with challenging programs to enable them to be college and career ready.

Garden City High School is known for our strong academic and athletic programs. Additionally, we have thriving art and music programs. We offer a robust selection of co-curricular activities. These activities include special interest clubs, service organizations, student publications, concerts and art exhibitions. At least 70% of our students participate in inter-scholastic sports.

Garden City High School values our traditions. Some of the more unusual include that girls wear white dresses at Graduation exercises and carry a single red rose. Boys wear white tuxedo jackets with black pants. We hold our Commencement Exercises on The Warren King Memorial Field on campus and it is a beautiful event. Members of our community attend annually, even though they may not have a family member participating. Another tradition is our senior parents host a skit night celebration for the senior students. This involves weeks of planning and practice that culminate with a performance unlike any other. Parents perform dance routines and skits representing their children's interests at GCHS. This tradition has been in place for many years. Each morning, music welcomes students and staff to school, with students responsible for the music choice and editing. This starts off the school day in a positive manner. Our yearbook is outstanding. Students work tirelessly to produce a book called "The Mast". We have been selected for numerous awards and the book usually exceeds 340 pages.

Garden City High School was established in 1925 and we have been serving students in our current location since 1955.

In the past ten years, Garden City High School has adopted a philosophy of offering challenging opportunities to all students. We offer almost 30 college-level courses for our students. In 2014-2015, 860 students took advantage of a college-level course offering. Our average score on an Advanced Placement exams was 4.27 and 238 of our students earned the distinction of AP Scholar. 90% of our students earned the rigorous New York State Advanced Regents Diploma and 97% of our graduates attended college. We pride ourselves on offering rigorous opportunities for students to ensure that they are prepared for success once they leave us.

Our Best Buddies Club and Breakfast for Champions student recognition program recognizes students across the achievement spectrum. These activities celebrate students for their character, effort, perseverance, grit and other non-quantitative contributions to our school community.

Eight years ago, we formed a 6-12 committee to address research and writing at our Middle and High Schools, across content areas. The result of this endeavor was an articulated research and writing curriculum used by English, Social Studies and Science teachers. Every student that attends our schools benefits from this project. Our Library Media Specialists play a critical role in this process. Because of this program enhancement, our graduates have reported a dramatic increase in preparedness for college research and writing.

Another important initiative of ours is the on-going goal to improve the percentage of students earning an Advanced Regents Diploma. A group of faculty members studied our data and found that the number one

reason a Garden City High School student does not earn the New York State Advanced Regents Diploma is the failure to complete the Algebra II course and pass the corresponding Regents examination. As a result of these findings, we developed a comprehensive plan to change this. Parents and students were educated about the importance of the successful completion of Algebra II. Our Central Administration and Board of Education honored the Principal's request for additional sections of support for students, and the School Counselors as well as the Principal counsel students who are struggling in the course. Because of this ongoing initiative, the percentage of students who earn an Advanced Regents Diploma has increased from the mid-70s to 90 percent, among the highest rate in Nassau County.

Finally, strong leadership plays an important part in the success of our high school. Our building administration is a team that works collaboratively with Central Administration, The Board of Education, Teachers, Staff, Students, and Parents. The administrators have an open door policy and have created an atmosphere that is welcoming and supportive. The Administrative team communicates very effectively with all stakeholder groups.

As you will see, Garden City High School is a special place. We rise to the challenge of our Mission Statement every day- "Inspiring Minds, Empowering Achievement and Building Community."

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Students are required by New York State to complete four years of English Language Arts (ELA), all driven by the Common Core learning standards. The grade 9 program emphasizes basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, literature and language development, and by 12th grade the students are asked to consider a work's structure, style, and themes, as well as smaller-scale elements such as the use of figurative language, imagery, and symbolism.

The English department offers several elective courses to enhance students' understanding of language and writing. Ethics, Creative Writing, and Journalism all give students the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills related to communication in order to be more productive citizens in our society. English as a Second Language and Reading classes also fall under ELA, each with individualized instruction with strategies and skills for understanding.

The Mathematics department offers courses designed with a focus on students in preparation for New York State Regents exams and reflecting the necessary components of the Common Core standards. The sequenced courses of Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 prepare students for the Regents exams, and each has a support class available for those students needing additional instruction to promote better mathematical understanding. Beyond these courses, students are able to choose an advanced level route, which culminates with Advanced Placement BC Calculus, or a less rigorous route which still focuses on college level math topics and a creates foundation for future studies in mathematics.

Students are also offered the options of elective courses in Statistics Through Sports, AP Statistics, Mathematical Research, and Mathematical Problem Solving. Our Math department also offers several courses at various levels in Computer Science, which are continuously reviewed and modified to reflect current trends in the academic study of technology, computational language, and coding. All of these courses provide authentic learning that prepares students for an understanding of mathematical concepts that exist in areas of society beyond high school.

Our Science department offers sequenced courses in Earth Science, Living Environment, Chemistry, and Physics. There are Regents exams and laboratory study and practice in each of these areas, which also have Advanced Placement levels for those students who elect to challenge themselves with extremely rigorous college level coursework. These courses rely on students' ability to apply mathematical principles and analyze scientific and societal issues using scientific problem solving.

We also offer a number of courses that provide the study of more specialized scientific topics that can be useful in practical ways to students after high school, such as Oceanography, Nutrition, Forensic Science, and Anatomy & Physiology. Our Science Research program challenges students to conduct extensive original science research, outside of class, and enter into local and national competitions such as the Intel and Siemens competitions, among others. In the College Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Engineering program students engage in open-ended problem solving, learn and apply the engineering design process and use industry-leading technology and software.

The Social Studies department offers courses that fulfill requirements in alignment with the New York State standards and curriculum as well as elective and Advanced Placement courses which provide our students with robust with opportunities for civic learning and engagement. The two year Global History & Geography and the United States History & Government courses include content that covers chronological surveys of history while providing students with the analytical skills and enduring understandings necessary to present evidence clearly and persuasively in an essay format and culminate with Regents exams. AP level courses are also available to cover these subject areas.

In their 12th grade year, students take classes related to United States Government, Politics, and Economics. These syllabi include skills and projects that focus on civics and how to become active citizens with an

understanding of active participation in government at a variety of levels. Some of the authentic activities include mock elections and actual elections; when students turn 18 they can vote at the polling place in Garden City High School for the School District Board of Education and budget proposals. Students have written letters to policymakers, attended political forums with high profile members of national politics, hosted local and national politicians for classroom discussions, and enter competitions with a focus on civics and economics.

The elective courses in Social Studies include AP Psychology, Criminal Justice, Contemporary Global Issues, and various history classes such as Long Island History, Greece & Rome, and Sports in History. Many of these classes include project based learning, and opportunities for students to complete authentic tasks, such as mock trials and open debates.

As stated, across all areas of the core curriculum students are challenged with college level material and tasks. There are multiple AP classes in each core area, which offer challenging and insightful curricula while preparing our students for college or career level work. Many of our students graduate with college credits through the AP program or through dual enrollment classes. Every year, former students return to express how prepared they were for their college classes because of the rigor and high demands placed upon them while they were students at Garden City High School.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Garden City High School offers a plethora of courses in visual and performing arts, physical education and health, foreign (world) languages, and business. All students are required to take courses outside of the core curriculum to meet New York State standards. Depending on the number of courses they take in various areas, students can earn a Regents Diploma or Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation.

In the area of visual or performing arts, students are minimally required to take one credit of one or the other. Students choose either Studio Art 1 or one of the music classes (Chorus, band, orchestra) in 9th grade to meet their requirement. Beyond that in the visual arts, we offer to students in all grades the options of Studio in Art 2, 3, 4, Sculpture, Computer Graphics and Advanced Computer Graphics 1 & 2. We also offer Photography 1, 2, 3, 4 and Digital Photography 1 & 2. The most talented 12th grade students are offered Advanced Placement Studio Art, in which they can choose their concentration, either in drawing, animation or photography. The Studio Art and Photography classes are all full year courses, and the others are half-year elective courses.

In the performing arts, students choose either vocal, strings, or band. A few exceptionally talented students are able to succeed at more than one throughout their high school years. We offer a General Orchestra and a Chamber Orchestra for the top string musicians. In vocals, we offer a Concert Choir, Women's Chorus, Chamber Choir and Vocal Jazz Ensemble. We have three concert bands; The Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble and Wind Symphony, as well as a Marching band and Jazz Ensemble. All of the musical groups perform at various concerts, events, ceremonies or parades throughout the year. The Marching Band also competes in regional and national competitions during the fall season, with great success. In addition to the performing arts, Music Theory 1 & 2 and AP Music Theory focus on the rules and principles involved in the language of music.

We also provide Theatre Arts 1, 2, 3, 4 and College Level Scene Study and Analysis, all of which engage students in the practical understanding of all aspects of the theatre, including history, acting, production and more in a setting that is project and group based. All of the coursework in the arts provides practice in the skills and essentials of the world of art in a variety of mediums, which is all around us in society.

Physical Education and Health are included as New York State requirements for graduation. In grades 9 and 10, the activities are primarily instructional with a major emphasis being placed on personal fitness and lifetime wellness. In grades 11 and 12 the program is more activity oriented, arranged to enable each student to become physically educated in a variety of sports and lifetime activity. Our Health course offered places emphasis on the wellness approach to good health by stressing the need for balance in social, physical and emotional development.

Students are required to earn at least one credit in Foreign, or World Languages. We offer 5 levels of coursework in Spanish, German and Italian, and 4 levels in French and Latin. The coursework begins with vocabulary, pronunciation and basic grammatical constructions of each language, then in progressive years emphasizes the three Modes of Language Learning: Interpersonal, Interpretive and Presentational (listening, speaking, reading and writing). By the final year of coursework, students have the option of taking college level classes for credit from a local university.

Our Business department offers classes covering a multitude of essential skills and knowledge for a number of careers. Students may elect to take these courses starting in 9th grade and take as many as possible to enhance their Business sequence. In addition to Business Law, Business Management, Finance and Entrepreneurship, we offer several marketing classes such as Marketing & Advertising, Entertainment & Sports Marketing, Fashion Marketing, and Video Game Marketing. We also have classes incorporating computer based technology; Animation & Video Media, and Multimedia. Upperclassmen students earning a Business sequence of classes for graduation can also choose from college level courses in Accounting, Business Law, Business Management and Marketing.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

In each grade level 9-12, our students are grouped in courses based on ability and achievement in each subject area. We have levels of College and Advanced Placement, Honors, Regents, Co-Taught Special Education, Self Contained Special Education, and then basic level life skills for the most disabled learners. The students in special education classes are assigned based on IEPs (Individual Educational Program). Subject areas are scheduled separately, so a student who may be stronger in math and science would be placed in courses at a higher level than their social studies and language classes.

Teachers are empowered to develop their curricula and fine-tune lesson planning and appropriate techniques based on the needs and learning styles of their students. Across all subjects areas classroom instruction is enhanced by a variety of technology uses, project based learning, authentic learning assignments, and enriching field trips.

Our teachers have adopted many different methods to incorporate technology into their repertoires. We have Chromebook laptops available so that every student in a class can connect with each other and the teacher using programs like Google Classroom, Kahoot, webquests, and other internet based research. Several of our teachers use the Flipped Classroom model, where they create videos or presentations to deliver instructional content that students view online at home before coming into class and engaging in activities of inquiry, application and assessment. In this model, students can review or replay the content videos if they missed something or work at a slower pace. Our teachers also use different apps for communication with students and parents, such as Twitter or Remind, that allow them to take advantage of everyone's use of mobile devices for organization.

Our school also offers specialized computer labs for instruction in the areas of research and foreign language learning. Within the library, one computer lab is dedicated to research based projects. Starting in 9th grade, students are exposed to several databases like GALE, EBSCO and INFOBASE LEARNING. In each progressive year in multiple subjects (English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Health) students' research projects grow in depth, scale and length, so that by the time they are ready to graduate high school they are capable of college level research paper preparation. This focus on research projects helps us remain as a high performing school because it goes above and beyond the scope and sequence of the learning standards required for graduation. Another specialized computer lab we provide is for foreign (world) language learning. This lab allows students to engage interactively with computer programs in conversational assignments. With the equipment provided, an entire class can practice their listening and speaking skills at their own pace and skill level at the same time as their peers. Teachers are able to observe and track their progress and offer support as needed on an individual basis.

Another method of instruction used across all content areas is project based learning. Students may be tasked with a specific problem to solve, and work individually or with peers depending on the project's goal.

In science, we offer the PLTW (Project Lead The Way) engineering program, in which students work to solve authentic problems. One group of students is currently creating a prosthetic hand for a young girl in New Jersey. They modeled their 3-D printed prototype on measurements, and will consequently fine tune it and make adjustments after meeting with the girl and her family in an ongoing process.

Our school offers a multitude of interventions and support to ensure the success of every student. In addition to Resource Room and Teacher Aides for students with IEP plans, we offer Integrated Class Support for students identified through Academic Intervention Services, based on standardized test results and state requirements. Our Student Review Team also reviews students that are struggling and recommends support services. All teachers are required to provide extra-help each week, and teachers are assigned to our Math Lab and Writing Center, which are walk in centers within the school for those students needing assistance with Math and ELA, respectively.

In addition, we have administered the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Our school scored in the top 10% nation-wide. This assessment measures student performance in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy. A comprehensive plan is in place to address the results of the PISA assessment. The PISA results indicated that while our students performed well in math and science courses, students generally do not see the correlation between this coursework and their college major/career. We added a STEM focus to our successful College Major Night program, invited a female engineer to speak with students about potential careers in STEM, and infused STEM activities into our art curriculum. We will administer the PISA assessment again in May 2017.

Teachers administer benchmark assessments. Teams of teachers work collaboratively to create meaningful and appropriate benchmarks. Depending on the course the benchmark can be a task, presentation, essay, lab, or data based question. The data from the benchmarks are used to enhance individual teacher instruction and the instruction of the collaborative team. Subject area supervisors as well as building administrators use this data to ensure that our practice is reflective. We are committed to continuous improvement.

As seen through our instructional methods (technology, research, projects), assessments are inherent and play a vital role in guiding that instruction. We administer Regents exams, Advanced Placement exams, and other regional exams (World Languages) that allow us to gauge what classes and supports are needed, and determine what staff is necessary to close any gaps and ensure that our high level of success continues.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students at Garden City High School come from families that value education. The majority of our students plan to attend college and as a result are motivated to get the most from their high school experience. As teenagers though, maintaining that motivation can be difficult. Garden City High School offers a robust course catalog for students to choose classes that interest them. We offer a strong athletic program, co-curricular opportunities and art and music classes that are second to none. We value student voice and provide students with opportunities to have their input considered. A variety of support services are in place to help all students meet or exceed their potential. We staff a Writing Center during lunch periods where students can seek assistance with any type of written assignment, including college application essays. We also staff a Math lab during lunch periods so that students may self-select and obtain support with their math coursework five days each week. Additionally, we offer specific math support classes for students in Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II. These are small classes with the express purpose of helping students who struggle in these mathematics courses achieve success. We offer Integrated Support classes that help students with study skills, time management and content area concerns. Our goal is for all students to find success.

We celebrate many great things at Garden City High School. Students and clubs are a focus of our Parent Teacher Association meetings. Students present the highlights of their club's achievements on an invitation basis. This helps educate parents about the wonderful activities that our clubs sponsor and participate in. Service is an over-arching theme here at Garden City High School. Our students feel fortunate to live in our community and attend our school and try to give back to those who are not as fortunate. For example, we received a thank you email from a Captain aboard the USS Somerset thanking Garden City High School for the large amount of packages that we sent to his soldiers recently. Our students work tirelessly at a local homeless shelter and food kitchen to help our neighbors in need. We donate thousands of dollars each year to support cancer research and we help fund the Honor Flight program, which sends World War II Veteran's to Washington DC to visit the World War II memorial.

Our students and parents report that our teachers make the difference in student's lives. Our faculty is very dedicated and they feel strongly that each student deserves the chance to challenge him or herself in order to reach his/her potential. Our faculty has input in many ways. From membership on the Site Based Team to our Union leadership, teachers have an important voice in our school. We function as a team and as a result, we care about one another. Teacher concerns are strongly considered. If a teacher has a family emergency, the building administration, department leadership as well as colleagues provide coverage. We avoid wasting our teacher's time; if we can sum up a meeting in an email, we do not hold the meeting.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Garden City High School has supportive parents. Our parents are educated, value education and support a high-quality education for their children. Many of our parents volunteer in some capacity to support our school. We e-blast communication with our families often. We post those communications on our website. Our PTA also e-blasts important information regularly. We use a daily bulletin to keep everyone informed about what is happening at school and post it on our website daily. We use an automated phone messaging system to alert parents about emergencies and inclement weather. We use surveys to gather input from parents. Parents are always included on building and district committees including all hiring committees. Our School Counseling Department provides many activities over the course of the school year to help support students and parents. These include grade level parent/student information nights, mock college interview program, financial aid night, College Major Night, Alumni Return program and a transition to college program for seniors. Our PTA has a very helpful committee called the Parent Volunteer Corps. This group provides invaluable assistance with school events, mailings and projects of various types. Another important PTA committee is our building-level Curriculum Committee. Parent representatives on this committee meet with the Principal regularly and address parent concerns/questions regarding curriculum and instruction.

Each month at our Board Meeting, we acknowledge student achievement. We have several local newspapers that cover student awards and honors as well as student service projects. These news outlets work well with our district public relations coordinator and provide tremendous support to our schools by sharing important information and celebrating student achievement with our local community.

Our school communicates with parents individually on an on-going basis. Phone calls, emails, Back to School Night, several Parent-Teacher Conferences, and regular Parent Teacher Association meetings are some of the avenues for open communication at Garden City High School.

3. Professional Development:

Our professional development program is robust. Monthly faculty meetings, staff development sessions organized by Curriculum Coordinators as well as a teacher/administrator self-directed component round out our program. Teachers and administrator set goals for themselves annually, which align with district goals. Staff development has a building, departmental and individual focus, encouraging staff members to grow professionally. In response to a survey administered to staff at our school, stress management evolved as a significant concern. Our school social worker secured an excellent speaker on Mindfulness, who spoke with our staff at a faculty meeting. The feedback from this presentation was very positive. Additionally, a copy of "The Headspace Guide to Meditation & Mindfulness", by Andy Puddicombe was given to staff. Some teachers have voluntarily infused mindfulness techniques in their classes with students. Our Library Media Center has a Stress Reduction Center within. This is a wonderful place for students and staff to decompress from the busyness of life in a competitive high school. Participants play chess, use Rubik's cubes, color, create jewelry as well as many other activities that require participants to focus and provides an escape for a short time from their stress. Last week, our Library Media Specialist was awarded The Pied Piper Award by the New York Library Association for her innovative work with our Stress Reduction Center.

Teachers who have chosen to incorporate mindfulness in their classes report an improvement in student focus. Students ask for the mindful moments at the beginning of class. Staff too reports that the incorporation of strategies suggested at the professional development session has improved their overall attitude.

There is a district-wide Professional Development Committee, and several high school staff are members. The committee developed a faculty survey and the high school had a very high completion rate (over 80%). Feedback from the participants is shaping the revisions of the district-wide plan.

The High School Principal serves as an officer of the Nassau County High School Principal's Association and hosted a Leadership Institute for new principals and aspiring administrators. Five staff members at the high school participated in this conversation about instructional leadership.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of Garden City High School is collaborative. Our leadership structure includes a Principal, two Assistant Principals, and Curriculum Coordinators (6-12) in the areas of English, Math, Social Studies, Science and World Language. The Art/Music Director, Director of Guidance and Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics supervise teachers K-12. Our group works collaboratively with our teacher leadership as well as a Lead Special Education and English as a New Language Lead Teacher. Our building leaders and teachers believe that offering students opportunities to achieve at the highest level is of paramount importance. We have a strong Parent Teacher Association and the building leaders work closely with the PTA on many projects and initiatives including our Safe Driving Campaign, Anti-drug education, CPR classes for students, Evacuation and other safety drills, mindfulness, building resilience in our students and others. We hold monthly Cabinet meetings, and coordinate our agenda with the Middle School Principal and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction.

One example of how our school's leadership philosophy ensures that student achievement is our top

priority is our current investigation of the College Board's AP Capstone Program. A team comprised of the Principal, both Assistant Principals, a Library Media Specialist, a Social Studies teacher, an English teacher, and the English Curriculum Coordinator are spearheading an investigation into the program. We are investigating how it is running currently at several high schools across Long Island, and if/how this program could benefit our students. We have visited several programs, attended workshops and presentations, sat in on a collegial circle in an effort to judge how this program might help our students be better prepared for college. In these times of limited resources, we take this charge seriously. We will expand our committee soon, adding the Social Studies Coordinator, the Science coordinator and a Science teacher. From there, the building Site Based Team will be brought into the conversation. The Site Based Team Committee is comprised of a representative from every stakeholder group, including parents and students. Ultimately, the Site Based Team Committee will make a recommendation to implement or not to implement the program at our school.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Stakeholders at Garden City High School (GCHS) agree that what is most influential in our school's success has been the building philosophy of access and opportunity for all students to challenge themselves to their fullest extent. Consistent practices (utilizing clear policies and procedures), along with close monitoring, have been instrumental in placing students in appropriate classes that meet their academic needs for college and career readiness.

The GCHS scheduling process begins each year in January with distribution of Course Description Guides for students to review, along with an elective course selection sheet. Students in grades 9-11 are given personal attention through individual meetings with their school counselor (caseload of 1:200) to discuss goals, achievements, and course selection. Students are always encouraged to take the highest level class in which they can meet with success.

By the third marking period, student achievement is assessed and teachers make recommendations concerning placement. These placements are verified by curriculum coordinators and shared with students. Students can continue to strive for an average that will automatically qualify for honors level classes or more rigorous AP classes (Honors policy: 92 average/90 on final). For those students who do not automatically qualify, there is a process by which students may appeal to enter the class where the honors policy applies. Our school also offers students several college level and AP classes that offer open enrollment to all students.

An Add/Drop Policy assists students that may feel overwhelmed when trying to balance their social and academic lives. The flexibility of being able to add/drop a class within a reasonable time frame allows students to take academic risks with the understanding that an efficient exit strategy can be employed if necessary.

Our practice of access and opportunity has led to incredible student outcomes.

- 97% of students go on to higher education
- 93% of graduates attend 4-year colleges
- 99% of graduates receive Regents diplomas
- 90% received Advanced Regents or Advanced Regents with Honors distinctions
- 89% of Class of 2016 that applied to college were accepted to at least one of Princeton Review's "Best Colleges"

We are confident that access and opportunity to rigorous college level classes help students achieve college and career readiness and is a major reason for our success as a school.