

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs Shawntay Riley White

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

Official School Name Buist Academy for Advanced Studies

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 103 Calhoun Street

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

City Charleston State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29401-3511

County Charleston County

Telephone (843) 724-7750 Fax (843) 724-1493

Web site/URL https://buist.ccsdschools.com/ E-mail shawntay_white@charleston.k12.sc.us

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*Ms. Gerrita Postlewait E-mail Gerrita_Postlewait@charleston.k12.sc.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Charleston School District 01 Tel. (843) 937-6571

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 Ms. Kate Darby
(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):
- 111 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 13 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 15 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 140 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	28	27	55
1	27	26	53
2	26	25	51
3	26	26	52
4	28	28	56
5	27	29	56
6	28	27	55
7	27	25	52
8	31	21	52
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	248	234	482

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 10 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80 % White
 - 3 % 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	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	6
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	473
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.013
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
14 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, Tagalog, Russian, Arabic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %
Total number students who qualify: 39

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %
6 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 0 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 0 Other Health Impaired
- 0 Specific Learning Disability
- 6 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: 5
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 16:1
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	97%	97%	98%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
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.

Buist Academy for Advanced Studies aims to challenge students in a rigorous environment which emphasizes achievement, encourages academic excellence, and promotes respect for individual differences.

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

Buist Academy for Advanced Studies is a countywide magnet school. Interested families are required to submit an application for attendance. These applications are received electronically by our school district office and entered into a database that contains fields for student name, address, telephone number, and list indicator. List indicators include sibling (for students who have a sibling attending our school), constituent districts (each area of the county is represented by a smaller entity referred to as a constituent), other designated schools (students whose home school has been designated as under achieving), and general applicant. Kindergarten applicants are assigned a number, and then numbers are selected via a lottery-type process to determine a list of students who will be tested for admission. The first thirteen students from each list receiving a score of at least 75th percentile or above on the assessment will be accepted for admission. Applications received each year for grades one through eight are assigned a number via the lottery. Students who meet the criteria are invited to attend our school based on seat availability. The amount of seats open for grades K-8 is predetermined by the school district. Students who qualify but do not attend due to unavailable seats are put on a waiting list. To honor The Interstate Compact on Education Opportunity for Military Children, this process is waived for military families whose children meet the eligibility criteria.

PART III – SUMMARY

International Baccalaureate, countywide magnet, academic excellence and rigor: these are just a few descriptors used to distinguish Buist Academy for Advanced Studies from any other. Located in Charleston, South Carolina, we have been proudly serving families for 96 years. Though we are now an academic magnet, our beginnings were that of a neighborhood school. Buist Academy opened in 1920 with an enrollment of 700 African American students in grades 1-7. Over the years, the community went through many changes that led to an increase in student population and facility renovation. In 1985, in an effort to diversify our district, Buist became a countywide academic magnet serving students in K - 8th grade. No longer zoned for a particular attendance area, we are proud to serve families representing a blend of urban, suburban, and rural areas that span 1,000 square miles of coastal lands. Some of our students live within walking distance, while others travel 20 to 30 minutes one way as our county is one of the largest in the state.

Due to our expanding needs, a massive renovation and addition was made to our location beginning in 2010. Buist Academy is a now a state-of-the-art, award-winning facility with modern classrooms; a gymnasium located on the second floor above the library with a soundproof, floating floor; and a performance stage with a high-tech sound system. The library and all classrooms have large windows that allow for natural lighting and views of the historic city. The building was designed with the needs of its student population in mind. Students have access to classrooms with the latest technology, a computer lab on every floor, large fine arts rooms, and hallways that are conducive to group work and cooperative learning. Students attend foreign language class each day and have multiple opportunities to participate in sports, clubs, and school-wide initiatives that highlight our global mission.

Buist is located in the heart of downtown Charleston, voted as a top travel destination, within walking distance of our state's finest museums, performance halls, historical landmarks, and aquarium. The largest employers in the county are Boeing, a joint United States Air Force and Naval base, and our state's teaching hospital. Buist parents are employed throughout the county as doctors, lawyers, educators, manufacturing employees, entrepreneurs, non-profit employees, hospital staff/administration, chefs, musicians, real estate agents, and college professors. Our families come from varied socio-economic circumstances with one common goal: they want their children to have access to the best education in the state. Parents send their children to our school for a stellar foundation that will prepare them for higher-level learning at the secondary and post-secondary level.

As an academic magnet, our school is designed for students who learn at a different pace while requiring non-traditional methods of instruction. Students are required to score in the 75th percentile or above on a standardized assessment to be considered for admission. Once admitted, students in grades two through eight must maintain an average of 85 or higher. Buist Academy provides many opportunities that enhance educational experiences and support our students.

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) is an academic and behavioral support system for students. Teachers and/or parents can refer a student about whom there is concern. The MTSS team, led by the school counseling department, reviews each referral by gathering information through conferences, student data, and student academic history. This information is used to provide additional resources and support. School counselors also work with students to develop study skills, test preparation strategies, and conflict resolution development and to resolve other problems that may contribute to lack of academic progress. Teachers in third through eighth grade offer office hours weekly for students. Students can attend to receive additional instruction or skill practice provided in a small group or individual setting. Study hall is available for middle school students during common break times.

Students participate in academic and artistic competitions throughout the year. Participation in these competitions is encouraged through the sponsorship of faculty, staff, and parent volunteers. Students are offered opportunities to participate in Mock Trial, National History Day, You Be the Chemist, SeaPerch, Quiz Bowl, TTC Quest academic competition, and the JI Greeting Card Competition. We believe offering and encouraging these experiences contributes to the growth of our students as lifelong learners.

Buist Academy believes that parent communication and involvement is crucial to student success. Teachers maintain ongoing communication with parents through newsletters and weekly folders with student work sent home for review in our Primary Years Programme (PYP). Middle Years Programme (MYP) parents have access to student grades and attendance through a web-based program. Academic conferences are held regularly to update families on student progress and to address specific areas of concern. Families are invited to the classroom for special days and projects and encouraged to participate in the learning process with their student. These strategies have contributed to Buist Academy being ranked the number one elementary and middle school in the state of South Carolina.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The curriculum at Buist is designed to meet the needs of advanced learners. Each student comes to us with his or her own learning style and academic strengths. Every curriculum decision is made to foster the growth and development of each child. Our school uses the South Carolina College and Career Readiness Standards in all subject areas. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program guides the learning through focused units of study. Standards are used as a foundation for designing these conceptual units of inquiry which help the student construct understanding on a deeper level.

The IB coordinator meets weekly with teachers to guide the implementation of units of inquiry. Unit planners are working documents that continue to develop over time and are laterally designed to build on key concepts and ideas. The Primary Years Programme (PYP) has six units of inquiry that incorporate all subjects: Who We Are, Where We Are in Time and Place, How We Express Ourselves, How the World Works, How We Organize Ourselves, and Sharing the Planet. The Middle Years Programme (MYP) designs subject units based on a statement of inquiry that is connected to one of six global contexts. These are Identities and Relationships, Orientations in Space and Time, Scientific and Technical Innovation, Fairness and Development, and Globalization and Sustainability. The teacher guides student inquiry through the use of factual, conceptual, and debatable questions.

In reading/english language arts, Buist Academy implements a literacy model that balances the instruction of reading and writing in a variety of genres in all content areas. PYP incorporates Literacy by Design to teach foundational skills. This program is supplemented with leveled books, novels, and informational texts. Many of our students enter kindergarten reading independently, so teachers incorporate writing and comprehension strategies requiring evidence through text very early. Teachers use modifications of Words Their Way, Wilson Spelling, and Scholastic Roots and Affixes to differentiate spelling instruction. MYP uses Reading Like A Historian, the DBQ Writing Project, and advanced novel studies to prepare our students for Advanced Placement and Honors instruction in high school.

Our mathematics curriculum is designed to provide rigor and acceleration. PYP math instruction uses My Math and Everyday Math which is supplemented with Project M3 and M2 , Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP) materials, and web based programs Reflex Math, IXL Math, and ALEKS. The MYP program uses Desmos, Glencoe and McGraw-Hill Math Accelerated materials, and the Pearson Algebra I text. Students in the eighth grade take an Algebra I course necessary for high school graduation.

In science, students are guided through the inquiry process while engaging in content rich units of study. Our PYP uses district level FOSS kits supplemented with Macmillan/McGraw-Hill textbooks, information texts, Discovery Streaming, and IB unit materials created by classroom teachers to develop self-discovery, critical thinking, investigation, and process skills. MYP uses FOSS kits and Science Education for Public Education Program (SEUP) supplemented with a Glencoe textbook and extensive internet resources. Both Programmes incorporate hands-on experiments; MYP uses guest speakers, field experts, and community resources to make real-world connections to learning.

Buist Academy makes connecting student learning to the global perspective a priority. Teachers use real-world contexts so that students can transfer knowledge outside of the classroom. This is the foundation of our social studies and humanities curriculum. PYP uses Scott Foresman and McGraw-Hill social studies and history textbooks, Scholastic Readers, Times for Kids, and Discovery Streaming as resources. Teacher-created IB units of inquiry are used to develop meaning and provide opportunities for exploring the world around us. In MYP, Glendon McGraw-Hill text, Reading Like A Historian, Centropa, and teacher made materials are used to provide scope and sequence to units of inquiry. Units are research and project based and allow students to investigate the world from the local, national, and global perspective.

As an academic magnet, Buist Academy is designed for students who learn at a different pace while requiring non-traditional methods of instruction. Due to the academic rigor of our curriculum, we provide additional supports for students who need assistance. The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team

meets monthly to review and evaluate student progress and address referrals for students who may need academic support. Teachers and parents can make a referral, which are addressed by gathering student information through conferences, student data, and academic history to determine necessary interventions. ESOL, speech, and special education services are offered for students who qualify.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Buist Academy offers many programs beyond the academic classroom to enhance the growth and development of each student. Our foreign language program provides global perspective and experiences to every student that attends our school. Our goal is for students to develop language proficiency and cultural understanding in their home language and in a second language in order to be successful and productive citizens. We immerse students in an environment that fosters and develops multiliteracy and multiculturalism in real-world situations. Kindergarten and new students are divided equally into French and Spanish classes when they are enrolled. Kindergarten students go to classes two times weekly while students in first through eighth grades attend daily. Teachers use immersion to teach students, speaking English only at specific times during instruction for primary students. Fourth through eighth grade classes are conducted entirely in the language of study. Classroom activities include monthly food samplings, music and movement, and language-based movies already familiar to the students in their home language. Projects include cookbooks and menus in the target language, children's books written and illustrated by students, and video creation to present grammar points and inflection. Eighth grade students receive high school credit for successful completion of their language studies.

Our fine arts program provides many opportunities for students to become involved in the creative process. In order to continue providing our students global viewpoints, art instruction at our school takes on a worldly perspective. The environment encourages and promotes creative thinking, problem-solving, and risk-taking. Before projects begin, instruction focuses on artists and works of art from around the world. Student work is collected through portfolios during the year so that students can reflect on their work to examine strengths and weaknesses. Student work is represented in a school-wide Art Walk each year. Pieces are displayed in a professional gallery-style format displaying framed work from each student. Students participate in many community events that reflect their artistic ability and have many opportunities throughout the year to participate in competitions. In music, students create rhythms and melodies through improvisation. Creative movement is used with students in kindergarten through second grade to express themselves through music. Students learn to read music and perform original pieces they compose using a variety of instruments. Our chorus has 35 members that perform for school-wide events and community programs. The spring musical showcases both musical and artistic talent. The program is a two-night event whose audience includes families, community members, faculty, and staff. Student roles include scripted parts, props design and creation, and stage management. These opportunities provide students an outlet to demonstrate their creative interpretations of the learning they experience each day.

The physical education program at Buist Academy is designed to help students become skillful movers who are physically fit. It recognizes the need for exercise and the importance of attaining and maintaining optimum health and fitness for living. We provide opportunities for children to develop their potential for physical movement in all kinds of ways, not just within the rules of games. By challenging children to think, to operate creatively within their own abilities, to solve problems, to share thoughtfully, and to show consideration for others, our program provides a meaningful experience to the total education of the student.

In order to prepare our students for the 21st century global workforce, we provide meaningful and purposeful experiences using technology. Classrooms have one to one iPad technology for every student and teacher. Our school has three computer labs located on each floor for multi-class accessibility. One lab is designated for computer classes while the other labs are available for teachers to use for whole-class instruction and project-based learning. Students in kindergarten through sixth grade go to computer class weekly and participate in lessons on topics such as keyboarding, digital responsibility, and internet safety. Seventh- and eighth-grade students take one semester of Google Basics and one semester of Digital Literacy. Students learn about document and spreadsheet creation, web design, and coding. Career planning through digital portfolios and website creation are culminating projects in the course. Students receive a high school credit after successfully completing these two semesters.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

The instructional methods at Buist are designed to best meet the needs of the South Carolina graduate using the South Carolina Career and College Readiness Standards (SCCCRS) as our foundation and the International Baccalaureate Programme (IB) as our framework. We provide instruction that includes all state standards while using the IB model to present and cultivate the information. The primary approach to teaching is inquiry. A teacher provokes curiosity and provides opportunities for hands-on exploration that leads to independent research. The approaches to learning provide students with a set of skills that they work to develop over time and across subject areas. A teacher-created provocation engages student in each unit. Teachers often engage students by guiding student learning as a facilitator rather than instructor. Project-based and research-based learning are two methods used in classrooms frequently. Reflection and research are not only an integral part of our classroom instruction; these concepts drive our search for the best methods of instruction to serve our student population.

Three-fourths of our student population in grades three through eight have been identified as academically gifted and talented. These students begin pull-out instruction with a certified gifted and talented teacher in the third grade. Our school has at least one gifted and talented endorsed teacher per grade level in fourth through eighth grade. Our school works with Duke TIP to provide students with additional supports and opportunities to be challenged. This program coordinates the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) testing and workshops for test preparation. The PSAT is administered each year to our eighth-grade students to provide information for secondary placement and college and career readiness. In order to meet the unique academic needs of our students, teachers incorporate Project M2 and M3 into their math instruction. In reading, teachers provide classroom reading material based on Lexile scores. It is not uncommon for students to read one or more grade levels above their current grade level. Reading is cross-curricular, and units of study include multiple print sources to gather information. Reflection and research is an integral part of our classroom instruction. These concepts also drive our search to provide current research-based methods of instruction to serve every student

In order to prepare our students for the 21st century global workforce, we provide meaningful and purposeful experiences using technology. Classrooms have one to one iPad technology for every student and teacher. This technology has successfully helped teachers provide innovative teaching practices, differentiated instruction, and varying assessment practices.

Quantitative data is collected systematically in a variety of ways throughout each school year. This data is norm referenced, formative, summative, standardized, and teacher created. Data is shared and reviewed to steer classroom instruction, assist with individual student supports, and provide building blocks for professional development. State-mandated standardized testing data is used at the beginning of each school year to review instructional practices from the previous year, identify patterns in academic strengths or weaknesses, and identify student needs. Our teachers use Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments data to differentiate instruction, establish small groups, and communicate student strengths and weaknesses to our families.

Qualitative data is collected and maintained for each student during each instructional year. Teachers maintain two learning portfolios for each student. The first is a working portfolio that contains student work for the current school year. This portfolio is organized chronologically and by IB unit of inquiry. Teachers provide feedback about artifacts as they are completed. Students are also given the opportunity to receive peer feedback and reflect on their work. The second portfolio is cumulative. Student work is added to this portfolio at the completion of a unit of inquiry. Two to three artifacts are added per unit and are selected by teacher and student. As students select a piece, they reflect on IB Learner Profile attributes exhibited during their study. At the end of each year, students review their portfolio and reflect on their overall progress in developing the attributes. This takes place during a student led conference organized by teachers but directed by students. Students invite family and friends to discuss their process of learning using their portfolio as a guide. Students and guests collaborate to write new academic and social/emotional goals. Portfolios are assessed by progress, not outcomes, during this collaboration.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Buist Academy creates personalized pathways for learning to develop student academic, social, and emotional growth and talents. Students are encouraged to explore their own interests and talents within the written and taught curriculum. Students are asked to reflect on knowledge acquired, skills developed, and attributes demonstrated during a task or the unit of inquiry.

Our House system enhances instruction and student learning. Students are sorted into seven houses when they enter our school. Each house, named for a famous international castle, meets throughout the year. Activities are planned to create community among the members and awareness of their chosen service project for the year. Through this house system, students participate in philanthropy by educating themselves about service organizations of interest to its members. Each house chooses a focus and determines how to actively participate to promote change.

The culture of Buist Academy is one of positive, caring professionals who work towards a shared vision and mission to ensure the academic growth, success, and safety of all students. It is a respectful environment of purpose and collegiality where leadership is valued and encouraged. The principal has made it a priority to build a healthy culture based on a positive professional learning environment that allows the entire school community to thrive.

The creation of a positive productive culture began by implementing a faculty senate/leadership team that represents various grade levels and departments throughout the school. The group provides input on school-wide initiatives and instructional programs and represents a structured voice for teachers. These members also lead PLC meetings, data reviews, and a variety of professional development opportunities throughout the school. The principal creates a weekly report for the faculty and staff that includes upcoming news, information, good news, and positive quotes, videos or stories to inspire teachers. The staff has a Shout Out board to recognize outstanding acts of kindness. The principal collects the comments monthly for prize drawings. Coffee and Conversation is held quarterly for parents to discuss programs, answer questions, and address concerns. Communication is a key component in building a positive school culture that meets the needs of the entire school and local community. We are proud to say our school culture is always evolving.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our families come from all walks of life, so we use this diversity to work together to ensure our students have a challenging environment that emphasizes academic excellence and promotes respect for individual differences. The parent association at Buist Academy is a volunteer-driven non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization created to serve and support the children, educators, and families within our school. Specifically, it supports the development of our students into responsible and effective citizens of a global society by assisting with funding of our International Baccalaureate programs and providing educational and curriculum enhancement materials directly to the classrooms. The Buist Academy Foundation publishes a weekly newsletter to keep families updated on school news, events, and fundraisers. This group hosts the Fall Festival, Special Persons Day, and Teacher Appreciation Week and helps fund Foreign Language Week, Eighth-Grade Graduation, the house system, and Field Day. In order to best organize and facilitate these events, coordinators enlist room parents to work with each classroom and involve parents, grandparents, and other interested supporters with opportunities to volunteer.

We invite government leaders, including our city's mayor, members of our state legislature, and county and city government officials, to speak and read with our students. In 2015, our school administration made a goal to further improve community relationships and enhance the community's awareness of our magnet program. Our School Improvement Council was tasked with providing information about our application process throughout the community in an effort to diversify our applicant pool. The school reached out to community leaders to discuss ways to increase our school's presence in diverse communities. This is an

on-going effort to increase awareness about our countywide magnet program. The community uses our school for a variety of programs, including a health fair, crisis support centers, and vacation Bible school.

Teachers frequently ask community volunteers and leaders to be a part of the classroom. Our school counseling program invited city emergency and medical professionals, Department of Natural Resources, and local law enforcement to the school for Career Vehicle Day so our students could better learn about importance of these professions within our community. Second-grade students read the book *Chicken Sunday* to learn about pride in heritage in addition to cultural differences. Students then create a family-style dinner to celebrate our community and dine together as one family. Community members are invited to participate in this lesson of tolerance, love, and acceptance.

3. Professional Development:

As an IB World School, understanding the needs and learning styles of each student is necessary to develop all students as globally minded learners. Using our district's classroom observation tool, Buist Academy has chosen to work on student engagement as our professional development focus. We made the decision to prioritize differentiated instruction and personalized learning in planning and instruction. Teachers have participated in a variety of professional development opportunities to broaden their skill in these areas. These opportunities included a seminar led by Dr. Carol Ann Tomlinson, teacher-led workshops, participation in a district-led digital learning cohort, visits to other classrooms in the district, and collaboration with educational consultants. Teachers obtained knowledge on tiered instruction, the four elements of differentiation, and how classroom environment and assessments are key to the process. Teachers used this knowledge to evaluate their instruction and its reception so that development of lesson plans and units of study is an ongoing process. Teachers continue to search for innovative ways to assess student growth, learning more about non-traditional classroom arrangements as we move forward with this initiative. We are confident that the plan of action to attain these goals will produce results in the quality of our programming.

The entire school is a professional learning community that strives to collaborate frequently through a variety of smaller learning communities within the school. These smaller communities are defined as academic departments, grade-level teams, book study groups, committees and house advisors. Teachers meet once a week with the IB Coordinator to plan units, review standards, and reflect on teaching and learning. These meetings primarily consist of same grade-level or subject-area teachers. Fine arts teachers often join core content teachers to create innovative lessons that infuse fine arts to meet the needs of a wide range of learning modalities. The master schedule provides time for teachers to have common planning within their grade levels. Working Wednesdays was established after school to allow collaboration with different departments that do not have common planning during the day. This time allows for vertical articulation and transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary planning. Built-in early release days provide professional growth opportunities through workshops developed based on teacher feedback, observation, and student achievement data. Select groups of teachers also participate in book studies that focus on instructional practices. Books have included *Guided Math* and *The Formative Assessment Action Plan*. Professional learning communities are continuously working throughout the school to maintain an environment of lifelong learners and purpose driven teaching.

4. School Leadership:

Instructional leadership is a shared responsibility among our faculty to ensure that our school mission and vision is being fulfilled within the learning community. Buist Academy's organizational goal is to prepare every child with the critical skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college and the 21st century global workforce. Our administration supports this by fostering a professional and family-friendly learning community centered on student academic achievement, growth, authentic field experiences, and service learning. The principal and assistant principal strive to sustain an environment in which all individuals are respected and encouraged to reach their full potential. They support the development of a community of lifelong learners who care about their local and global communities. Our principal's vision for the school is shared and supported by all stakeholders through professional development and professional learning communities. The principal also actively participates in professional growth opportunities and shares her

endeavors and goals with the school community. She is a firm believer in leading by example and continually instilling the concept of lifelong learning. The principal's vision for a professional learning community that supports student achievement guides the daily instructional practices. School administrators also have quarterly reviews with classroom teachers to monitor progress and provide support.

The school has an International Baccalaureate (IB) Coordinator who meets with teachers weekly to review IB unit planners, reflect on teaching and student learning, and guide best practices. She provides category one IB training to all newly hired teachers, ensures that faculty receive IB professional development on a rotating schedule, and provides opportunities to attend national, international, and in-state conferences.

The school has a teacher leadership team that assists in instructional decision making. This team also guides the professional development of other teachers by coordinating and leading workshops. Teachers are encouraged to lead professional development workshops in their areas of curricular expertise. The principal meets with the teacher leadership team monthly and the IB coordinator weekly to review and guide the direction of the program and instructional practices in the classroom. Creating a culture of lifelong learners takes the support of our entire community as instructional leaders.

The parents elected to the School Improvement Council (SIC) have also taken leadership roles to assist our administration and educators. The Buist Academy SIC works with stakeholders to develop goals and strategies to improve their service to our learning environment. The council created a "Parent Database" to identify parent skills, talents, and knowledge and match them with volunteer opportunities in classroom programs and projects.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The students at Buist Academy are inspired to extend what they learn beyond the classroom and take action in the world around them. Buist curriculum develops internationally minded people who will “help create a better and more peaceful world.” This philanthropic mission is what is most influential in the success of our program. Individuals, classrooms, grade levels, and K-8 Houses participate in both large and small acts of service throughout the school year.

Units of inquiry encourage students to make a difference with their learning by applying it to new contexts. They are exposed to local, national, and global issues related to their studies. For example, second grade studied animals in their habitats. When students were curious about human impact on these habitats, one scholar traveled to the local sea turtle hospital to gather additional information, and this information was shared with his class. Students collected money for the hospital, reduced the use of plastics in the school cafeteria, and educated the school about the dangers of plastics.

In addition, middle school students are asked to complete 45 hours of community service out of school. Buist partners with a variety of local and global organizations to provide opportunities for students to apply the knowledge, skills, and attributes developed in the IB program to areas of interest. Students develop a plan of action for a service learning project and work with mentors on campus to support the project’s development. They are granted time to research and taking action with community partners in related fields. When students have completed their service learning goals, they present a reflection to their advisory team. For example, one middle school student noticed that community parks near his home were littered with trash. Being too young to participate in larger clean up initiatives, he created Kids Keep Charleston Clean. This program encourages children to safely clean up area parks. He has recruited other students within our school developed a model to share with other schools in the downtown area that can help him reach his service goal.

House meetings are used to educate and inspire action among all students. Students learn about organizations and charities that give back to the local, national, and global community. Each house selects an organization or area of need to work on every school year. Gathering supplies for a local animal shelter, selling handmade crafts to raise money for an international orphanage, and providing meals for people receiving outpatient medical treatment at a local hospital are just a few of many projects that students have participated in to take action. Our school has been able to make a positive impact on our local and global community.