

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Donna L Hayward

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

Official School Name Haddam-Killingworth High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 95 Little City Road

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

Higganum CT 06441-4323
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Middlesex County

Telephone (860) 345-8541

Fax

Web site/URL http://www.rsd17.org

E-mail dhayward@rsd17.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*Mr. Howard Thiery

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail hthiery@rsd17.org

District Name Regional School District 17 Tel. (860) 345-4534

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. Joanne Nesti

(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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 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	97	88	185
10	81	81	162
11	82	83	165
12 or higher	74	88	162
Total Students	334	340	674

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	7
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	674
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
2 Total number ELL

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

Russian, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15 %
Total number students who qualify: 101

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
87 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>9</u> Autism | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>16</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>45</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>11</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	49
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	14
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 14:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	95%	94%	94%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	95%	97%	99%	97%	94%

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 2017.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	147
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	70%
Enrolled in a community college	16%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	5%
Found employment	7%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

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.

Every member of our community is valued. We nurture intellectual curiosity, global responsibility, personal integrity. Our graduates possess knowledge and skills essential to happy lives.

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

Haddam-Killingworth High School is a school of approximately 675 students within a regional school district of 2,082 students serving the towns of Haddam and Killingworth. A middle-income district, the student population is 93% white with approximately 15% of students on Free & Reduced Lunch and 13% qualifying for special education services. HKHS opened in 1975 and is located in a rural, residential neighborhood bordered by open and residential property. Located six miles south of the small city of Middletown, the largest employers to the district are service and retail industries followed by trade and construction.

Several unique aspects of the school day include a hybrid schedule in which all classes meet four times per week with two short and two long meeting times. Lunch/Activity is a daily extended period during which time students can eat, access teachers for help, attend a club, or simply socialize with friends. A weekly Advisory period provides the venue for counselors to meet with students, assemblies, and a variety of academic and social/emotional programs and lessons.

Several common themes encourage and challenge all students to meet their full potential, each of which has been delineated and shared with faculty in the Continuous Improvement Plan. One goal has been for all students to graduate having completed a College and/or Career Experience. Students meet this goal through completion of a dual enrollment course or through an internship experience. As such, we have expanded curricular offerings (i.e., AP Human Geography, AP Music Theory, PLTW Principles of Computer Science) as well as added a Transition Coordinator. Notably, school counselors meet individually with each student during the scheduling process to review postsecondary goals and tailor their requests to meet these goals. To further personalize learning opportunities, we are embarking on a Blended Learning initiative (i.e., courses taught partially online and partially face to face) that will offer opportunities for students to practice skills they will use in college and the workplace as well as independently manage their own time and learning.

A focus on data teams has also been instrumental in helping all students meet academic targets. From baseline data collected in the fall, teachers set academic targets for each student. We have leveraged the master schedule to provide departmental meeting time four times per week so that teachers have adequate time to collect, analyze, and use data to drive instruction and intervention in a timely and consistent fashion. In addition to using data to support student performance in an individual course, teachers have used reading, writing, and math data effectively to develop and implement SAT preparatory sessions delivered during Advisory periods.

The support model for students in Special Education has moved from a generalized Academic Support model to one of Targeted Instruction in the areas of reading, writing, math, executive functioning, and social development. Dovetailing with data team work and the revision of the Special Education model, the SRBI process is data focused and monitors student growth. A critical component of the SRBI process is the recent addition of a Mentored Study program, a small monitored study hall to assist students with organization and time management. Students are assigned to Mentored Study by way of a 504 plan or an SRBI decision. All freshmen also start the year in Prep for Success, a study period designed to help with organization and to help them access support during Lunch/Activity. Recognizing that academic, social and emotional issues converge, a comprehensive team of administrators, counselors, nurse, department heads, and the Athletic Director meet weekly to review students of concern, monitor academic progress, and craft support plans. The Athletic Director also supports students by overseeing the Academic Eligibility policy which holds students to higher academic expectations than the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC). Students have the opportunity to participate in their sport provided that they meet academic and behavioral standards on a weekly basis.

Our psychologist and social worker are linchpins in providing emotional support for students through individual and group counseling. To enhance opportunities for students to support students, the social worker oversees Peer Advocates and a recently established a formal peer mentoring program. A strong partnership with our middle school staff and a comprehensive transition program is also a significant component of support. A collaborative partnership with Haddam Killingworth Youth and Family Services

further supports our students. A robust menu of clubs meets during the school day, thus enabling all students to participate. A number of clubs including the Human Relations Club and GLASS are invested in making sure that all students feel welcome and supported. Seventy-three percent of our students participate in our athletic program which offers all CIAC sanctioned sports.

Finally, students and faculty have been focused on ways to help students balance the complexities of modern high school life. Having attended a workshop called “Balancing the Ride,” students met with faculty to discuss ways that help students balance academic and emotional demands. Seniors also met with freshmen to discuss growth mindset and strategies for success that they’ve learned as resident experts in high school. Likewise, in the afternoon of the School Day SAT, in lieu of classes, students will participate in “Brain Break” activities that offer healthy ways to relax and manage stress such as physical activity, art, and relaxation techniques.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our English department's core curriculum spans across English 9, 10, 11, and 12 at both the honors and college prep level and is aligned with the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS). The focus across all courses is to prepare students for personal and professional success, and students are well-prepared for the SAT and Accuplacer through engagement with our content (i.e., as opposed to requiring a distinct SAT preparation course). This is accomplished by teaching strategies that develop critical insight for interpreting and conveying meaning through the written word and through visual and aural mediums. In addition, students have a myriad of elective offerings in their junior and senior years which may replace or complement English 11 and 12. Specifically, we offer British Literature, Creative Writing, Journalism and Broadcasting (a cross-curricular endeavor with our TV/Media department) as well as Film, Speech and Debate, and Media Literacy. To support students with fundamental gaps in literacy, we offer a standalone Reading course. For those who excel in the subject area and desire more advanced topics, we offer AP Language and Composition as well as AP Literature, the latter of which is enhanced through our partnership with the Wesleyan University Humanities program which includes multiple visits to Wesleyan University to enjoy a lecture and film series hosted by university professors.

Students enter HKHS enrolled in Algebra I, Geometry Honors or Algebra II Honors having had the opportunity to earn credit toward graduation in 7th and 8th grade through Algebra I which is identical to our high school course. Each year, several 8th grade students come to the high school to study Geometry Honors on our campus, then entering their freshman year in Algebra II Honors. Through collaboration with the middle school, we phased out our lowest tier math courses over the last three years, so that all HK students are prepared for state and national assessments by the end of their junior year (i.e., completing at least Algebra II in time for the SAT). We follow a traditional pathway through CCS aligned Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II with 85% of our students completing at least four years of math instruction to include any of Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus or AP Statistics, or Personal Finance. In addition, we are currently developing our AP Calculus BC course in response to student need and interest, with implementation planned for 2020.

We are currently engaged in a significant science curriculum revision process to adopt the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Students start either in Integrated Science or Biology Honors and continue through either Chemistry or Physical Science. Seventy-nine percent of our students complete four or more credits of science. Our program is infused with a wide-variety of technology designed to support a comprehensive overview of fundamental scientific principles. Along with core scientific concepts, the science department offers elective courses in specialty fields that provide a personalized experience for students. Advanced courses include Physics, offered at three levels including a four-credit UCONN class, an eight-credit UCONN experience, or a traditional college preparatory level class. In addition, we offer UCONN Horticulture, UCONN Environmental Science, AP Chemistry, and AP Biology. Elective courses include Anatomy and Physiology, Astronomy, Forensics, Marine Science and a college-credit bearing Project Lead the Way course in Environmental Sustainability.

In the study of History and Social Sciences, the focus of our program is to develop critical thinking skills in the application of knowledge and the analysis of complex issues. Most importantly, students are taught that learning is a lifelong process and that active and informed civic participation is a duty. All students follow a progression through two years of World History followed by US History/Civics at either the College Preparatory, Honors, or AP level (for US History). An emphasis through these courses at all levels includes critical thinking and argumentative writing, aligned with the CCS learning standards. Junior and senior year electives then include AP Psychology and AP Human Geography, Criminal Justice, World Geography, or Sociology. Our advisory curriculum complements the development of civic mindedness through our graduation requirement of 30 or more hours of community service along with a community service project completed in groups during their senior year. In addition, we host a voter registration for seniors through advisory each year as well as a group of community leaders who present to our freshmen to encourage civic participation.

The rigor of our course offerings, along with objective measurements of student mastery levels (e.g., AP test scores, SAT scores) are evidence that our curricula support college and career readiness. In addition, we hold an annual school goal that 100% of our students will complete post-secondary level experience prior to their graduation from HKHS. Hence, each is encouraged and supported to complete a college-credit bearing course or perhaps an internship in an area of career interest. We have had high levels of achievement with this goal, seeing 90-100% of the graduates successfully completing a post-secondary endeavor almost every year.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

HKHS's elective courses are open to students in all grades 9-12 and provide depth, breadth, and personalization of learning opportunities. Given that HKHS does not have study halls and that 28 credit opportunities are available to all students prior to graduation, all students have 13 scheduling blocks available for elective credit in the areas outlined below. All are aligned with HKHS's Core Values and Beliefs and dovetail with school Learning Expectations.

The focus of the World Languages department is effective communication through written and oral expression. The curriculum is being revamped as part of a 5-12 initiative such that students will be able to enter high school at the level of Spanish III or French III, thus increasing their ability to reach higher levels of language acquisition. Additionally, a small but popular Latin program allows students to master traditional content while also introducing them to modern vocabulary and oral language.

Our technology program is expansive. A fully-equipped woodshop, metal shop, and automotive shop support beginning and advanced classes in each area. Additionally, students can pursue independent study options if they exhaust curricular offerings in any area. Through the Project Lead the Way program, students can earn college credit in Introduction to Engineering, Principles of Engineering, Civil Engineering & Architecture, Digital Electronics, and Computer Science Principles. The capstone course, Engineering Design & Development, affords the opportunity to design and develop projects of personalized interest through intensive long-term group projects. Recent projects include underwater robots, electric vehicles, rockets, and adaptive technology.

Our library-media center is aligned with a 21st century learning model. Through direct instruction during classes or during Advisory, the library-media specialist actively works with teachers and students to integrate technology. Instructional topics include digital databases that expand traditional research, including proper management of sources, citations and how to avoid plagiarism; and introduction to a variety of digital presentation tools. The library is the hub for students taking online courses through Virtual High School or Middlesex Community College which allow students to pursue interests not offered at the high school. The library-media specialist is an integral component in the development of and support for these courses.

Our Family & Consumer Science department includes Culinary Arts and Child Development. In addition to learning cooking skills, advanced culinary students have opportunities to cater school events. For several years, students and staff have also presented regularly on the CT Styles program. In the Child Development program, our students benefit from an on-site district daycare. Students in Introduction to Child Development and Infant/Toddler, complement classroom learning with observation in the daycare. Students in Early Childhood Education Laboratory Experience and/or Internship spend substantial time working directly with young children as well as developing and implementing instructional lessons.

Our TV studio affords opportunities for students to learn technical and presentational broadcasting skills. Students produce a daily news show as well as the annual Holiday Show, a fundraising event in support of a local charity or family. Under the direction of the TV/Media teacher, students run all aspects of the show including live interviews and prepared videos. The TV program also maintains a cable-access channel which provides students a vehicle to air student produced videos to 22,000 subscribers.

Our Fine Arts department offers a range of courses from Introduction to Studio Art, an introductory survey

class, to AP Studio Art. Two-dimensional offerings include multiple Drawing or Painting courses while three-dimensional skills can be fostered through Sculpture or multiple levels of Ceramics. Additionally, a darkroom allows students to explore traditional photography as well as modern digital techniques. Musically inclined students can pursue choral or instrumental interest through Concert Choir, Select Choir, Concert Band, or Jazz Band. Additionally, students can learn a new instrument through a Piano or Guitar class or to write and/or arrange their own compositions in Music Technology and Music Production. Advanced students can continue their studies through AP Music Theory.

Finally, our students can personalize their interests through a variety of Physical Education courses. All students enjoy the benefits of our pool through a swimming unit in the required Physical Education 1. Beyond that course, students can choose from Team Games which features cooperative and competitive sports; Weight Training, which allows students to develop and track personal strength and endurance goals or Fitness in Today's Society, which provides students opportunities to pursue topics of interest (I.e., yoga, nutrition) in a course that blends components of health and physical education.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Two foundational approaches govern everything we do with respect to instruction, intervention, and assessment: a full data team approach, and personalization of learning. Each August, our Leadership Team (which includes building administration and all department heads) meets for a full day school data team meeting. We analyze and reflect on all summary data from the previous year, from standardized testing outcomes, to student failure data, to discipline and attendance information, to course specific benchmarking information. From that analysis, the team sets the goals for the year, born from a philosophy of continuous improvement. Our goals and corresponding strategies are shared with the whole faculty before students return to school, and then common department goals and individual teacher evaluation goals are created, explicitly aligned with the school wide goals.

All departments meet weekly in common planning time set aside for data team work. Larger assessments (e.g., unit assessments, major writing assignments, final exams) are common with school-wide rubrics used across all faculty to guide and evaluate desired mastery levels in our essential learning expectations. Instructional strategies are regularly discussed among department members and successful, new or innovative strategies are regularly shared at full faculty meetings. That said, instructional strategies are largely left to individual teachers with the clear requirement that they be differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Within the last three years, our teachers have been explicitly trained on quality Tier 1 instruction, with significant improvements made to our SRBI model as a result when students require Tier 2 or Tier 3 support beyond that which can be provided by the classroom teacher. Because of our collective and consistent response to real-time student learning and achievement data, we are able to thoughtfully adjust our instruction, provide relevant and appropriate interventions, and enjoy a steady improvement in our achievement results. Hence, we have been named a School of Distinction by the State of Connecticut and were named to Newsweek's America's Top High Schools for three years in a row – with a significant jump in ranking of approximately 100 places in the third year.

Numerous interventions have been created or redesigned in the last four years, the most significant of which is a revolutionary change in how we deliver special education services to our students. Moving away from the traditional resource room model, we now service students in a targeted instruction approach to specifically address their primary gap area (i.e., reading, writing, mathematics, executive functioning or social/emotional). These Targeted Instruction classes are credit-bearing and explicitly include new learning directly aligned with their learning needs and gaps. As a result, we are watching the gaps actually close as opposed to seeing students struggle just to keep pace with the same deficiency they have had for years. Two things have happened over these last two years of initial implementation that we especially celebrate. First, our achievement gaps have begun to close. In the first year of implementation, special education students closed the gap in performance on the SAT by 10%. Secondly, our exit rate from special education has increased as students are finally “caught up” with their peers and have succeeded in overcoming their previous deficiencies or weaknesses. Prior to implementation, our exit rate from special education was 15%; now it is 22%. We know we still have work to do and we are continuing to do it, anticipating that the gap

will close within the next two years.

Additional interventions that we have implemented for all students in need, not limited to our special education population, include a mentored study which is provided as a Tier 2 intervention to students who need more structure and support in work completion and organization. We also introduced a math skills class which is provided as a second period of math instruction directly aligned to either Algebra I or Algebra II. We offer in-house tutoring in math, provided by a volunteer from the community as well as from peers. Appropriate technology based supports have been introduced including both iReady, ALEKS, and Khan Academy.

Lastly, our Prep for Success program is a structured study monitored by certified teachers to support all freshmen until they demonstrate that they have successfully transitioned to the high school. Teachers help with organization, time management, and mastery of the curriculum. Freshmen may exit Prep for Success if they have all grades of C or better in first quarter; students cycle back into Prep for Success throughout their four years if their grades dip below this mark.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The opening day assembly sets the tone as celebrations from the previous year are shared and students are challenged to set goals for personal growth. Students have numerous opportunities to participate actively. Two student groups including A-Team and Captain's Council meet regularly with various administrators to address student concerns and vet ideas such as an athletic eligibility policy, dress code, and a blended learning initiative. This team also provided input regarding school safety and were instrumental in planning a student-led program for the March 14 "walk-out" that exclusively featured student voice and called for each member the HKHS community perform 17 random acts of kindness to honor the 17 victims of the Parkland school shooting.

Our daily Lunch/Activity period is semi-structured time that supports student life and trusts students to make good decisions. In addition to eating, students can socialize, meet with teachers, or attend a club meeting. More than 80% of students participate in our 26 clubs. Classrooms routinely house students seeking help as well as those who choose to eat with a favorite teacher. Students voice is reflected in clubs such as Student Council, Human Relationship Club, or National Honor Society. Students also regularly start their own clubs such as our most recent additions of an Environmental Club, Financial Club, and Archery Club.

A weekly Advisory period supports academic, social and emotional growth through Developmental Guidance lessons, assemblies (i.e., bullying, social media), SAT preparation, pep rallies and other activities. Student surveys indicate that they feel safe and supported, that they understand how to get help when necessary, and that their teachers care about them as people and as learners. Support for students begins with a robust transition process that incorporates a series of meetings between high school/middle school administrators and high school/middle school support staff. The purpose of each meeting is to communicate information to allow each student to transition with appropriate supports in place.

Teachers are supported in a variety of ways. Common Department time enables departments to meet four times per week to plan collaboratively, review data, and review student performance. Innovative instructional and assessment strategies are featured at faculty meetings. Department heads participate in summer work in which they analyze data to set goals as part of the Continuous Improvement Plan. They also present this work in the initial faculty meeting of the year. Also, teacher input is critical in the development of new courses such as Astronomy, Horticulture, and Human Geography. Finally, to acknowledge the effort and investment of teachers, one Professional Development session each year is dedicated to laughter and play.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

HKHS partners with parents and community members in a variety of ways to support student success and school improvement. Parent involvement begins when students are in middle school. Seventh and eighth grade parents are invited to Preview Night where they are introduced to administrators and department heads. We share the opportunities and supports available to students in academics, athletics and extra-curricular activities. This is followed by an Eighth Grade Parent night in February to acclimate parents to the course selection process. Early in each school year, we hold a traditional Open House to welcome parents, and introduce them to key initiatives or focal points. Evening parent events for each grade level are offered by School Counselors to inform and assist parents with a variety of topics including postsecondary planning.

The Transition Coordinator actively works to establish and maintain relationships with local businesses to support job shadow and internship opportunities. School counselors serve as liaisons with Middlesex Community College to allow students to participate in activities and courses through their Partnership Program. The counseling department also runs an annual HKHS College Fair which supports key relationships with admissions counselors from colleges and other post-secondary institutions.

We communicate with parents about academic success and struggle regularly and through a variety of modalities. PowerSchool Gradebooks are updated weekly such that academic feedback is available to parents in a timely manner. Report cards and progress reports are provided to parents on a regular schedule with personalized comments specific to any areas of concern or need required. Parents are typically active partners in plans developed by the SRBI/STAT team to address students referred for academic or behavioral concerns. Parent conferences are held twice a year to facilitate face-to-face conversations with teachers. Student academic success is celebrated publicly through award ceremonies and recognition at Board of Education meetings. The annual Scholarship Night is another event that celebrates student success and recognizes a high level of support by community organizations.

Parents are surveyed annually for feedback on school-home communication and school safety and this feedback is used during the Continuous Improvement Process. The School Climate Committee includes an active parent member. On occasion, parents are invited to participate in focus groups to help craft and/or provide feedback on new policy or procedure (i.e., a new Academic Eligibility policy). Additionally, parents are heavily involved in support of individual extra-curricular activities such as the Touchdown Club, Parents of Drama, and Project Graduation.

The principal's monthly newsletter informs parents of upcoming events and highlights students accomplishments. Departments also contribute articles that feature innovative instructional activities. Our district Facebook page features student accomplishments to the community and contribute articles to Haddam Now, a local online newspaper. Additionally, there is parent representation on the district Curriculum Council which serves as a vehicle to present and discuss initiatives such as the adoption of new state standards, proposed new courses and textbooks.

3. Professional Development:

Regional School District #17's approach to Professional Development is grounded deeply in our philosophy of continuous improvement, with alignment clearly visible between district, school, and individual goals and development. At the district level, our Assistant Superintendent leads the professional development committee including teachers and administrators. This committee oversees the professional development activities of each school. They also facilitate larger initiatives such as the district-wide redesign of our World Language program and the revision of science curriculum to align with NGSS. In addition, significant endeavors involving one or more schools are often supported in district-wide "think tank" sessions wherein the entire administrative team collaborates to identify strategies and resources for progress as well as obstacles to avoid. Annually, the district improvement plan is presented to our Board of Education.

At the building level, our continuous improvement plan is born from our full data team model which begins in the summer with the school's Leadership Team. Our collective analysis and reflection leads us to our improvement goals and strategies for the upcoming year, with professional development slated to support the articulated strategies. For example, our analysis of the performance of our special education population three years ago led to a complete restructure of our intervention program, which required training for both our special education teachers and our mainstream teachers. Training was tailored to the audience such that each teacher received what she or he needed. Special education staff received training and resources in a targeted instruction approach designed to address each of five primary gap areas (i.e., math, reading, writing, executive functioning and social/emotional needs). Mainstream teachers received training in appropriate modifications and accommodations, with a focus on differentiating in the mainstream classroom. Results of our efforts are then shared so that the faculty and administration can see the effects of our efforts and adjust our approach as needed.

Both individual and building needs are readily identifiable through the data team and evaluation models. For example, last year it became clear through the use of our school-wide writing rubric that our rubric needed to be redesigned. Time was afforded to English and Social Studies teachers to adjust the rubric and then those same teachers trained the whole faculty at a faculty meeting on the use of the new rubric. Professional sharing in faculty meetings is the norm. Recent examples include an Educational technology

session in which a teacher who had recently presented at a state conference shared digital tools that can support most subject areas. In the next meeting, our English department head refreshed our faculty on how to avoid common grammar errors so as to best support students on the editing portion of the SAT.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership structure of our school includes the principal, assistant principal and department heads for nine academic departments plus athletics. Our philosophy is one of collaboration around continuous improvement. The principal's role is to facilitate the school-wide data team, guide the development of the Continuous Improvement Plan, and then lead and manage the actions to meet our improvement goals. In addition, she leads the regular review and revision of the school's mission/vision alongside essential learning expectations of all students. The assistant principal supports this work and the department heads serve as liaisons to the teachers in their department and often take a building leadership role through professional example and support of best practices within their department.

The Continuous Improvement Plan and the Learning Expectations of the school then drive everything we do and are directly connected to the instructional data teams. Our student achievement over the last four years clearly indicates that this structure and function is effective.

Our focus on student achievement goes far beyond test scores. For the last two years, part of our CIP has included a focus on student wellness, supporting healthy student growth and individual development. We purposefully included the indicator, "The faculty will explore strategies to mindfully nurture habits and dispositions which help our students thrive within and beyond school walls." We traveled with student leaders to conferences entitled "Balancing the Ride" and "Mindset and Grit" – both of which were designed for students and educators to brainstorm and share strategies to help students navigate the high-pressure 21st century learning environment. Students returned to our school with presentations and suggestions for peers and faculty. In addition, we have explicitly partnered with our local Youth and Family Services organization around this initiative, who have worked with us to bring therapy dogs into our school monthly and at particularly high-stress times (e.g., exam weeks). Yoga and meditation have been regularly scheduled activities through this organization as well as innovative programming around substance use and abuse.

Another recent example of how our building and district leadership supports student achievement is our blended learning initiative, wherein we are developing courses to be taught in a mix of in-class instruction, online learning, and collaboration with peers and/or experts. We began by shadowing students in all different grades and class levels for a full day to fully appreciate the student experience. Reflecting on feedback from student surveys and student leadership groups relative to their struggle with the limited resource of time and competing demands for it, we embraced a new way to structure the learning in some classes. A volunteer committee of cross representative faculty began the work and were joined by a district-wide administrative "think tank" for a full day of analysis and planning for a successful design and launch of this program. We are looking forward to piloting this program in 2018-19 and believe it will lead to greater student ownership, autonomy and engagement for the learners who choose it.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice HKHS employs that is most instrumental to our success is our personalization of the student experience across both the academic and socio-emotional domains. Academically, our variety of instructional arrangements is a source of pride for us, especially given the size of our student body. We offer an impressive array of “traditional” courses across a comprehensive program ranging from vocational offerings to 26 college credit-bearing endeavors. From there, we expand noticeably from the traditional model, supporting a robust Virtual High School program through which our students are afforded numerous online classes. Our internship program supports both special education and general education students who earn credit through experiential learning within our community, typically aligned with their current career interest. A healthy college partnership program allows students to earn college credit by enrolling in Middlesex Community College classes. Our team is enthusiastically pursuing the blended learning initiative. Lastly, we have developed a vetting and credit policy to support the most highly individualized pursuits when opportunities arise for our students. For example, we are currently supporting a sophomore spending a semester at sea, where she is continuing her classwork from HKHS while gaining experiential learning which cannot be duplicated in any school building.

We are equally committed to the personalization of the socio-emotional support of each student. We regularly develop and honor student voice. For example, we have two student advisory groups, the A-Team and Captain’s Council, both of whom meet with various administrators to discuss issues of student life. Their input led us to address the stress that teens struggle with and our initiative referenced in the previous response. One example of how this focus plays out in our school day includes our “Brain Break” afternoon scheduled for the school-day SAT administration. Students choose from a variety of stress-breaking activities to enjoy after a long morning of testing; activities range from guided meditation to yoga to basketball tournaments to nature walks and healthy snacks. Another example of honoring student voice came to fruition on March 14th when a group of student leaders, having designed and planned a program with support from administration, led our student body in a unifying, non-partisan walk-out to honor the victims in Parkland, Florida and to stand for school safety for all students, especially pledging to make our safe school even safer. Lastly, our school schedule provides a definitive break in the middle of the day during a lunch activity period. ALL members of the school community break for lunch, which can be enjoyed in a classroom with a favorite teacher, in a club meeting with a faculty advisor, with a group of friends in the cafeteria, or in any number of locations in our building. The message of the structured pause in our school day is clear: it is important for all of us to eat, to rest, to breathe, and to take time for conversation and friendship.