

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Richard Trogisch

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

Official School Name School Without Walls High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2130 G Street NW

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

Washington DC 20037-2703  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County District of Columbia (DC)

Telephone (202) 645-9690

Fax (202) 724-8536

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

E-mail Richard.Trogisch@dc.gov

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*Dr. Amanda Alexander

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail amanda.alexander@dc.gov

District Name District of Columbia Public Schools Tel. (202) 442-5885

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Karen Williams

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 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

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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):
- 78 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 18 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 19 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 115 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	0	0	0
<b>1</b>	0	0	0
<b>2</b>	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	66	87	153
<b>10</b>	62	79	141
<b>11</b>	61	87	148
<b>12 or higher</b>	57	99	156
<b>Total Students</b>	246	352	598

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 6 % Asian
  - 34 % Black or African American
  - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 42 % White
  - 5 % 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: <01%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	598
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<01

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 18 %  
Total number students who qualify: 108

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 12
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	38
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	2
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 16:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	91%	93%	94%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	98%	100%	99%	98%	99%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2017.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	150
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	94%
Enrolled in a community college	3%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	3%

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. 2010

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Provide every student with a rigorous, college preparatory, humanities program that incorporates global and local resources in an experiential and interdisciplinary methodology to teaching and learning.

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

School Without Walls is a magnet high school. Students take an entrance exam as well as participate in interviews to gain admission.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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School Without Walls High School (SWW) offers a rigorous, interdisciplinary, experiential, college oriented program to a student body that mirrors all demographics living in Washington DC. Students from all eight wards of the District of Columbia, a very diverse array of elementary and middle schools choose to come to SWW to work and to learn in a close-knit community of students and adults. Classes take advantage of our culturally, historically and intellectually rich city by engaging in frequent field trips ('Using the City as a Classroom') and hosting guest lecturers. Our students travel internationally every year and the school also hosts an average of 15 international exchange students annually.

Our school is located on the campus of The George Washington University (GW). The school and university have a collaborative programmatic relationship. The collaboration includes a 2 year 'Early College Program', for selected students to enroll and obtain an Associate's Degree from GW as well as a high school diploma. In addition, GW's 'Exposure Program' is offered to eligible 11th and 12th grade students to take college courses in addition to their high school courses. Furthermore, the SWW faculty is permitted to take free graduate courses in their discipline and content area based on availability. Besides educational opportunities, GW generously provides facilities at its Foggy Bottom campus for school's use. Students use the campus theater, auditorium, classrooms and gym/wellness center to help elevate the student experience at SWW. SWW maintains partnerships with many institutions, including the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian Institution, the Georgetown University Street Law program, and the American University Constitutional Law program. In addition, the school works with a local law firm Fried Frank, U.S. Department of State, Deloitte, and LearnServe International. For example, the Kennedy Center provides arts enrichment, the Smithsonian Institution provides internship opportunities, the law firm provides resources to the school, and the State Department provides exposure to international speakers, and Deloitte provides career readiness.

School Without Walls Senior High School was established in 1971 to offer an alternative to conventional instructional programs, where students could develop "methods of learning outside the traditional classroom." SWW was created to provide a small school environment for students who had difficulty adjusting to the large traditional public high school. The school started with just fifty students, six teachers, and one administrator. In 1988, the school decided to take a more integrated approach to its curriculum and developed the Humanities Program. Rather than take traditional English and Language Arts courses, Humanities courses reinforce students' learning in art, music, and history courses. Today the staff includes three administrators, 54 faculty and staff positions. The student body consists of approximately 600 students.

School Without Walls High School has received both national and local recognition.

US News ranks the school #1 in DC, #11 Nationally for magnet high schools and #51 Nationally overall. The school has increased the number of AP classes offered from 17 seven years ago to 22 today. In order to grow but still maintain connectivity, there has been a deepened emphasis on relationships and individualized tutorial support and 'Advisory' class weekly meetings. The school attracts and retains a highly academic and student-centered faculty, including National Board Certified teachers. Almost one hundred percent of our students apply to and are accepted at four year colleges and universities. We are proud our students receive \$13-16 million in total scholarships and awards annually. In order to self-examine and review our efficacy, we are accredited by the Middle States Association for Colleges and School Commissions on Elementary and Secondary Schools.

While the school's mission has evolved over time, it has maintained its core vision to remain an exemplary model of academic excellence in the District of Columbia Public School System. The history of utilizing community and international resources to enrich and excel beyond textbook learning has remained a tradition at SWW. In addition, all faculty members are supported to take Advanced Placement (AP) training in their discipline. The rigor of instructional program encourages and emphasizes teaching approaches in which learning activities are carried on throughout the community and internationally. This expanded approach to education develops students' academic horizons as well as magnifies students' cultural and social lens in which they view the world. In order for students to feel personally supported in their efforts,

SWW employs a weekly multi-aged Advisory class led by the same teacher over the course of students' 4 years at the school. This mixed grade level advisory class helps acclimate students to our school culture and promotes inter-grade connectedness, allows time for student to student mentorship, participates in discussions on the stresses of adolescence and is supported by teacher guided discussions. Every student applies to at least three colleges, takes at least two AP courses and attends the city's annual college fair beginning in 9th grade. As reflected in our high achievement in various standardized tests (PARCC, ANET, SAT, MAP), demonstrates student readiness for the rigor of post-secondary education.

The U. S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Award has helped SWW garner further attention to celebrate our students' successes. The award has furthered our ability to highlight the rigor and high standards we hold for academic excellence. In turn, more students from across the city have applied to SWW. As of 2017, 1300 students applied for 140 openings in the 2018-19 freshman class. The school leadership and staff are resolute in supporting our school's unique mission. All of these efforts make School Without Walls High School proud of its almost 100% graduation rate and college acceptance rate.

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

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

Distinctive aspects of the curriculum at SWW are its interdisciplinary approach; including its use of college-level coursework through GW. All students are expected to take required AP and Senior Project courses. All Humanities, Social Studies, and Math non-AP courses are weighted as Honors classes. Each year, students take a Humanities course that mirrors content in other grade level courses.

The Humanities curriculum embraces the intersection of history, literature, art and music on both a global and national level. The lens of these courses reflects the mission of the school to develop students to become global citizens. In addition, the Social Studies curriculum fosters both breadth and depth of knowledge of many topics. Whether it be AP US or AP World History, geography, AP Psychology, AP Government or DC History, students are elevating their critical thinking and analysis skills.

The mathematics department at SWW offers honors courses which meet, not only the graduation requirements of DCPS, but also the diverse needs of our student body. The school offers Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, pre-calculus, calculus, AP calculus, statistics and AP statistics. Students who take Calculus in 10th grade or 11th grade may be eligible to enroll in higher level mathematics classes at The George Washington University.

The Science Department offers Environmental Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and AP Courses (in Biology, Environmental, Chemistry, and Physics). By the end of four years, students are well prepared for college math, the sciences, and social sciences.

The highly academic curriculum supports college readiness by integrating AP/college level learning as early as the 9th grade. By scaffolding the learning and increasing the rigor each year, all students find themselves prepared to take the mandated 10th grade AP World History and 11th grade AP Language and Composition.

The required Senior Project course creates a thesis class where students conduct written research and oral defense of a research topic of their choosing with the mentorship of both SWW teachers and outside experts. The research, writing, and presentations in the Senior Project course is evaluated by members of DCPS central administration, experts in the field, GW faculty and school partners in order to demonstrate competency. In addition, the GW Early College and Exposure options allow students to expand opportunities in the beginning of 11th grade. Based on the feedback graduates provide, students report that they are more than prepared for the challenges they encounter in college.

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

We offer Chinese, Spanish and French at levels I through AP. We also offer Latin in levels I through IV and have a newly added German course. Students at SWW have an opportunity for group travel and foreign language practice as they travel to China, Cuba, France, Spain, Italy, Zambia, South Africa, Senegal, Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, Jamaica, Peru, India, Japan and Ghana.

The Art program at SWW includes AP Art History, AP Art Studio, Computer Graphic Design, and Video Production among others. As well as integrating music and art into the Humanities course and program at SWW, the school offers band, chorus, AP Music Theory, orchestra, Jazz Ensemble, History of Music, “Bach to Rap,” and show choir. SWW is developing a dedicated STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) room. The intent is to integrate the arts into core math and science academic classes. Physical education classes use the various wellness facilities at GW University including dance studio space to support its curriculum.

The students’ ability to self-select their research and internship focus emphasizes the school’s origin in the 1970s that is still embodied in our senior project graduation requirement and the expectation that all students will participate in an internship with an external organization or non-profit at some point in addition to the

100 hours of community service.

The Senior Project serves as a culmination of the students' learning at SWW. Teachers across all departments serve as Senior Project advisors, giving the entire faculty a stake in teaching the skills and then recognizing accomplishments of students in their final year. This project is a clear example of serious student scholarship. If a student fails his/her Senior project he/she is not eligible for the School Without Walls High School diploma.

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

Prior to registering at the school, each new student is asked to shadow current SWW students to ensure that the school is a good 'fit'. Upon acceptance, the guidance counselors and teachers guide students through the highly recommended Summer Bridge program. During this week long session, SWW students learn what the school expects in terms of academic work, time management and study skills. During the school year, the Academic Leadership Team, made of elected department chairs meet to discuss relevant topics and proactively problem solve as they discuss data and academic trends in each content area. Our day-to-day instructional practice focused around a student-centered classroom; a classroom where students are allowed and expected to discover their learning style while being guided artfully by teachers. Many teachers, no matter the content area they teach, use inquiry-based learning to develop students' critical thinking and collaborative skills. Various learning styles are targeted in lessons that give students many different ways to demonstrate their understandings/competency. Outside of formal high stakes testing, teachers implement the DCPS Secondary Grading Policy, which serves as a basis of mixed measures of learning assessments in the classroom. In addition to MAP, ANET, PARCC test data, teachers use the course assessment data (Participation, Practice & Application, Assessments, & Cumulative Assessments) to identify student learning challenges.

To reinforce our instructional practices and maintain our high level of achievement, SWW supports all students in their learning by instilling grit and asking them to demand their education. SWW requires students to complete all the work assigned and if students need support they are expected to use peer tutoring, GW tutors, and to take advantage of available teacher office hours. We believe in teaching our students resilience and learning from their mistakes in order to master the curriculum. We expect students to develop positive relationships and thereby be determined to succeed in every class. Since classes do not meet every day (modified, rotating, block schedule) we encourage students to manage their workload and keep track of assignments. While the standards for student academic responsibility are high, the school has developed a safety net of social-emotional as well as academic support which is built into the fabric of the school. Each grade has a guidance counselor assigned to them for 4 years, thereby providing the social-emotional support to help students to navigate the rigorous academic climate. We also provide additional adult and peer support in the form of weekly Advisory meetings so that students have peer level support during challenging times. Teachers are available for advice and assistance to students, in and after class, in their advisory, during lunch, and before and after school. We make it clear that no student is alone in their efforts and that the school supports their learning and personal development.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

The most important manner in which SWW engages students is through dynamic learning in classrooms and by establishing a community of learners. We encourage students to motivate each other and celebrate their successes with one another in weekly Advisory classes. We maintain a bulletin board of college acceptances each year for 12th grade students to create a visual of the outcome of such academic success. We host student awards assemblies; where students are recognized by each academic department as well as parent sponsored sports assemblies to celebrate their athletic achievements.

SWW is a school where students feel at home. This is due in part, to the collegial climate established in the building. Teachers create and foster classroom dynamics where students quickly find their role within that small learning community. Students are provided with both small and large group instruction where they are given peer and teacher praise for their intellectual contributions. This engaged learning approach allows for all classroom stakeholders to feel valued for their contributions.

Teachers are supported through various levels both academically and personally through positive working relationships with colleagues. Just as students are encouraged to support one another, so are teachers. No teacher participates in professional development by themselves so that they can develop academic support and personal relationships with colleagues. The staff hospitality committee supports the various individual celebrations and achievements throughout the year. The Home and School Association (HSA) goes out of their way to celebrate teachers' return to school each fall, provides holiday treats and hosts teacher appreciation luncheons. In addition, when professional development opportunities arise for teachers the HSA financially supports their participation.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Each SWW parent is considered a partner in their child's education. From the beginning, when parents express an interest in their student applying to the school, all efforts are made by the school to establish transparency in its approach to fostering academic success. Parents are interviewed in the admission process. This is done so that they understand that SWW is looking for engaged parents and students in our learning community. Parents feel welcome to get involved in the Home and School Association, which targets specific needs in the school. Parents are very generous with their time, money and skills to assist the school and thus the students in success. Our communications with parents is varied; from robo-calls to monthly newsletters, listservs and access to student grade portal, we help parents maintain 'real time' updates on their student's successes and challenges. In addition, we use an email relay system that permits the school to send out reminders and information on a weekly basis. This communication is also aided by a dedicated counselor for each grade level, who follows their grade-level cohort for all 4 years. All of these approaches encourage proactive communication that helps to support students.

Outside of our fantastic parent population, the very premise of School Without Walls, is community involvement. Our most dynamic community partner is The George Washington University. From permitting the use of their campus facilities and providing guest lecturers to offering tuition-free courses to qualified students and awarding students in the Early College program a George Washington University Associate Degree – GW helps SWW elevate student learning and prepares students for the college experience.

In addition, teachers reach out to relevant community members as they relate to course content for additional activities and support; for example, a Federal judge offers their court room for a mock trial, students participate in a city-wide American Civil Liberties Union conference, students participate in the Shakespeare Theatre, to students winning awards for their entries in the local STEM fair. The school internship coordinates and connects students with various internship locations across the city. These approaches not only engage students with their outside community, they also make in-class learning relevant in real world applications.

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

The prevalence of AP training across all departments has created a common language and academic rigor across departments and a network of academic relationships across the country. We use the AP standards as the basis for vertical alignment of the curriculum across all four grades. SWW teachers also take advantage of tuition-free courses at George Washington University, most of which are focused on the academic subjects the individual teachers teach.

All teachers are scheduled to be formally observed 3 times during the school year. The district uses an 'IMPACT' teacher evaluation system which is a multiple measure, research-based approach to improving instruction and student learning outcomes. The system provides feedback and evaluation in areas of Instructional Practice, Student Achievement, Instructional Culture and Collaboration. District-led Professional Development sessions are conducted at the school and district-wide levels to give guidance in lesson preparation, objective driven lessons, and well-designed assessments. DC Public Schools also provides teachers the opportunity to attend AP Summer Institutes and workshops. During the school year district-led sessions, teachers participate in areas of developing clear and measurable objectives, complex text analysis and capstone project implementation. Additionally, Department Chairs serve as Professional Development leaders, by supporting colleagues and providing feedback to teachers to share instructional strategies to improve teaching and learning. As a result of the IMPACT training, every teacher understands that the purpose of the lesson should be obvious to any visitor walking into the class at any time, objectives and lesson plans clearly written, homework is purposeful, students are on task and teachers have learned to notice any and every student who for any reason is not engaged in the lesson.

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

The leadership emphasis and philosophical commitment at SWWHS is a student-centered culture based on the Four R's (Respect for ourselves, Respect for others, Respect of property and Respect other's rights to learn) and expects students to demand their education. Students are expected to take ownership in celebrating their own achievements and equally taking responsibility for their own setbacks. The school leadership supports and advocates for students if they show signs of needing any type of support. Teachers are encouraged to refer any student weaknesses as a grade level team and to report needs to school administration. The approach of the administrative team is to capture the talents of a strong teaching staff and to provide those teachers with the tools and proper climate they need to help students produce at high levels. We trust our students and our teachers, and provide them with additional support when needed.

Since receiving National Blue Ribbon School recognition in 2010 our leadership team has changed. In 2013, the principal was asked to take expand the SWW brand and merge it with a "struggling" educational campus at Francis Stevens Educational Campus. Combined, the administrative team brings over 35 years of administrative experience in other districts, DCPS and abroad. Our current team now consists of a principal shared between 2 campuses (SWW and SWW at Francis Stevens, a PreK-8 school), an associate principal and assistant principal, one of whom won DC administrator of the year award from the National Association of Secondary School Principals. In order to maintain effective communication, the school leadership team and academic department chairs meet bi-weekly and frequently with the counseling staff. Then, in turn each academic department meets every two weeks as does each grade level team. The Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) is made up of elected representatives of the faculty, staff, parents, students, and administrators. This group meets monthly and reviews the academic program, school budget, and any new initiatives. All of these multi-layered leadership efforts are meant to keep all stakeholders informed, provide everyone opportunities to problem-solve and to have a voice in the school's efforts.

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

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While social emotional strategies and assessments are important tools in our school, ultimately it is our academic practices that drive our decisions and our success. SWW believes that fostering and developing academic strength is at the heart of creating the problem solvers of the future. Teaching students to elevate their ability to analyze, process, explain and create complex material prepares them for life in the 21st century. We address students' critical thinking skills, encourage them to face challenges and ask them to develop well thought out solutions.

Academics drive the school's decisions in courses offered, teachers' professional development, and internships that are sought after. Our mission is to create independent learners who can also collaborate and articulate their learning in various ways. Our open campus model encourages self-discipline, time management and responsibility, which better prepares students for college success. While we use assessment data to measure success, a well-developed thinker who is encouraged to constantly feed their inquiry is our ultimate goal. Our teachers model academic passion, our parents support our academic achievements and our administrators help the school navigate the challenges of the educational landscape. We hold high standards for ourselves first and invite students to share in that journey as a community of learners.