

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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	232	235	467
10	256	213	469
11	269	229	498
12 or higher	286	250	536
Total Students	1043	927	1970

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 8 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80 % White
 - 9 % 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: 1%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	1970
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	1

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Swahili, Spanish, Tagalog, Indonesian, Hindi, Sotho, Chacochoh/Teochiu, Korean, Chinese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6%
Total number students who qualify: 114

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
202 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>25</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>4</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>49</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>45</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>48</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>6</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>6</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	16
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	85
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	51
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	22

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 23:1

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%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	99%	96%	94%	96%	96%

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	470
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	84%
Enrolled in a community college	13%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	1%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
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.

Develop graduates who are DARING--Dreamers and Doers; Aware; Resilient and Healthy; Inquisitive; Nimble; Global. Students explore and discover personal journeys to meaningful post-secondary pursuits.

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

public school

PART III – SUMMARY

The Libertyville community is rooted in history and long-standing ties. Many of the original founders remained in Libertyville to raise future generations. As the high school celebrated its centennial in 2017, several four-generation families were recognized. Families from diverse regions continue to be drawn to LHS attendance areas of Libertyville, Green Oaks, Mettawa, and Rondout for the excellent schools, safe communities, and exceptional cultural and natural resources. Originally a farming community and the county seat, the Libertyville area has grown to be known as a destination to settle and raise a family. Comprised of corporate professionals, entrepreneurs, educators, civil servants and service workers, long-time residents and new, young families, LHS community members exhibit varied voices, backgrounds, and experiences that unite in high expectations for their schools.

LHS is the center of this vibrant community. Its facilities are widely used for fine art, athletic, and civic events. Young residents aspire to be Wildcats through their early participation in sports, performance arts, and service opportunities. “Home of a Wildcat” and “Future Wildcat” signs are posted abundantly in front yards throughout the community. Senior citizens are invited to dinner served by National Honor Society students and a concert performed by LHS choirs. Friday night football games attract a huge student cheering section, alumni, future wildcats, and their parents and grandparents. Fans follow student athletes to local and state competitions. Student artists perform in the LHS auditorium and on international stages. Students serve as local election judges, food pantry workers, performers at senior centers, activists and voices of democracy. Truly, LHS unites varied members and generations of the entire community.

The DARING mission of Libertyville High School (LHS) ensures that all students are successfully prepared to pursue their unique interests and passions in post-secondary endeavors. Our DARING students are Dreamers and doers, Aware, Resilient and healthy, Inquisitive, Nimble, and Global. They develop related DARING attributes through engagement in innovative curriculum and instruction, varied extracurricular activities, and whole child support systems.

Curricular offerings are designed to ensure that every student has access to a wide variety of core academic, fine arts, world languages, physical education, and CTE courses. Advanced Placement and dual credit courses provide students with the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school. Learning Support Teams include school counselors, social workers, and deans who collaborate to ensure the academic, social and emotional well-being of LHS students through early identification of struggling students and determination of the specific tiered-support program(s) that will meet individual student needs. A prevention and wellness coordinator promotes proactive approaches to healthy, balanced lifestyles. Special Services educators empower students with disabilities with the tools, skills, and accommodations needed to succeed in the least restrictive environment. The athletic director, student activities director, fine arts chair, and all coaches and sponsors share the common goal of ensuring that every LHS student is involved, explores interests, and develops talents and skills. Designed intentionally to nurture, support, and challenge, LHS academic and extracurricular programs promote the fulfillment of our mission. Students learn to discover their passions, apply their learning to unique situations and settings, thrive in a collaborative environment, and practice civic engagement. They are encouraged by excellent educators who seek continuous improvement in student outcomes.

Professional learning at LHS is collaborative, ongoing, and embedded in the daily work of the organization. Through its unique drop-in learning laboratory staffed by teacher leaders, as well as collaborations with district colleagues in PLCs and on the Innovation Team, attendance at regional, national and international conferences and self-designed learning opportunities, LHS educators embrace opportunities to continually improve their craft. Societal and technological changes impel them to seek new solutions to reach and teach all students.

Libertyville High School has long been recognized as a great high school. Rather than resting on impressive laurels, district and school leaders consistently recognize the need to engage in research and development, to innovate, to move from great to excellent. LHS was an honored recipient of the National Blue Ribbon School award in 1990. This distinction leads the list of the many designations that school has earned for

academic excellence. In addition to being a point of pride for the school and the community, the National Blue Ribbon School award set the stage for the many advancements that followed: sustained growth in AP offerings and access as well as continual improvement in ACT composite averages and successful transition to the SAT as the state accountability measure point to external validation of the continual improvement methods in place at LHS. LHS leaders challenge all stakeholders to consider the qualities of the school that are not easily measured. By focusing on measuring what is valued in the DARING mission, LHS will continue to grow and change in its quest to maintain excellence and to ensure the success of every LHS student.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The mission of Libertyville High School (LHS) is to provide opportunities for our students to be DARING. Our DARING students are Dreamers and doers, Aware of their passions, Resilient and healthy, Inquisitive, Nimble in their thoughts, and Global in their perspective. Teaching our students to become DARING starts the moment they enter our doors and is inculcated in our curriculum, activities, and athletic opportunities. Our greatest joy is to witness the four year information, experiential, and physical growth of our students to lead DARING lives.

The core of our DARING mission is housed in our academic curriculum. Our overall curricular philosophy is built upon two bedrock principles. The first is that students need foundational skills and knowledge in all of our content areas; especially in their early high school years. These skills and knowledge gives our students context and background information that fosters critical thinking and inquisitive thoughts. Then, as our students physically, emotionally, and academically mature they are given greater curricular autonomy in which courses they chose to hone and refine their synthesis and analysis skills. The best example of this principle in practice can be seen in our ELA curriculum. In a student's first three years they all experience writing intensive courses with broad backgrounds. Then, in their senior year, our students can branch out into a variety of thirteen elective choices such as college prep writing, philosophy and film, science fiction, and more. Students completing this sequence of study will have the core knowledge necessary to function in our world and the critical thinking skills to excel.

The second building block in our core curriculum is that our students need to be given authentic opportunities to demonstrate their learning. This demonstration starts by making learning situations relevant to our students' lives through real-world problems to ponder and solve. Student engagement within our classrooms is strong because our teachers design lessons that explicitly challenge our students to utilize the new skills and knowledge they are being taught. At LHS, these authentic demonstrations of learning include formative and summative assessments, class work, and debates. However, our authentic learning opportunities do not stop with these practices. Our teachers ask our students to produce original creative projects to demonstrate their learning. These creative opportunities let our students express themselves in different modalities suitable for the task and their personalities. We can see examples of this principle in action throughout our social studies curriculum. AP Macroeconomics students participate in passion projects that seek to analyze and solve issues identified through the United Nations Global Goal Initiative. In US History students do ethnographic research on recent US historical events using their own family. Then in our government classes students learn and carry out a civic action campaign for change at the local, state, or federal level. Each of these learning tasks challenges our students to think critically, to evaluate arguments, and to consider diverse perspectives. In addition to our students' critical and creative thinking, we know it's essential for them to learn to be effective communicators and collaborators. It is common to observe students working in groups, developing solutions to problems, and communicating their ideas to their classmates.

Libertyville High School teachers utilize instructional strategies to put our philosophical principles into practice. Teachers are trusted to select pedagogical strategies that best meet the unique learning needs of their students. Rather than be forced to teach a canned curriculum, teachers are encouraged to constantly innovate their instructional practices and approaches to help every student engage and succeed. We can see examples of these innovations throughout our building. In our math department, teachers are experimenting with standards based grading and problem-based approaches to math instruction. This, combined with the department's team teaching efforts, gives our math students effective feedback, engaging lessons, and classroom-based interventions. The science department is using the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) to break down the silos of the different scientific disciplines so students can see connections between subject areas. These standards are also being used by physics and chemistry teachers to challenge traditional assessment practices by creating multiple opportunities and pathways for students to demonstrate mastery.

LHS asks all of our students to be DARING. We believe that in learning to live this mission our students will be prepared to pursue meaningful post-secondary pursuits. The evidence for this belief comes in multiple modes. On the college front, LHS has a large Advanced Placement program where this year over 800 LHS students will take roughly 2,100 different AP exams. These courses represent a culmination of our curriculum and allow our students to demonstrate collegiate level skills and experiences. While 96% of our students continue their education at the collegiate level, we also want our students exploring career opportunities. We do this with our career fair, tech campus association, and mock interview practice sessions for seniors. Beyond these direct applications, our authentic classroom experiences encourage our students to assume the roles of authors, engineers, statisticians, and business leaders.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Since the mission of Libertyville High School (LHS) to create students who are DARING (See Question #1), our students have to participate in more than just a standard core curriculum. This begins with active participation and appreciation of the arts. LHS has curricular opportunities for all of our students in music (choir, band, and orchestra), theater, and art (photography, drawing, paints, and sculpting). Over 25% of our students are enrolled in one of these classes. Our arts offerings give our students different outlets of expression and an appreciation of a different way of looking at the world. We value our artists and celebrate their efforts by attending their art exhibitions, stage plays, musicals, and concerts.

DARING students need to be resilient and healthy which is why physical education and wellness are an important element of our curriculum. All of our students participate in yearly physical education classes where they learn individual physical skills, teamwork, and personal fitness planning. As our students progress through physical education, they can choose to take specialized courses in weight training, outdoor education, sports medicine, or lifeguarding depending on their individual interests. These classes focus on physical wellness, but LHS believes that mental well being is an increasingly important area of education for our students and we have devoted several new resources to help our students in this area. We start freshman year by having all of our students participate in a basic health class and a transition program called Link Crew. These two offerings give our students information on mental wellness, school / life balance, and how to successfully deal with stress using mindfulness techniques. Then, as our students go through the rest of their high school career, they can be a part of our Life of a Wildcat or Green Dot programs. Each of these programs promotes a healthy lifestyle by giving our students tools to deal with the challenges that they will face.

DARING students have a global perspective. We believe that one of the best ways to gain this perspective is to study a different language. LHS offers instructional language courses in Spanish, French, German, and Latin. Approximately 70% of our students participate in at least one of these language programs. As our students study their language of choice, they learn to listen and express themselves verbally and in writing. They also spend a great deal of time learning about the different cultures of those who speak these languages. The goal of our language programs is to have our students gain functional usage of their studied language so that they can use their language skills outside of the classrooms through travel or other personal interactions.

DARING students need to be aware of their passions. Our comprehensive career and technical education (CTE) program provides opportunities for students to explore career interests. Students can take courses in Project Lead the Way engineering, iOS App development, autos, woodworking, business, accounting, and family and consumer education. Students in these courses get to work on authentic projects designed to prepare them for future careers. This often culminates in expositions displaying student prototypes and research.

The DARING student of today needs to be nimble in their use of technology. That is why the students at LHS all take part in our Digital Learning Strategy (DLS). This strategy starts with the integration of technology throughout our curriculum. However, this is not just using technology for technology sake. It is the planned integration of specific technology tools to aid learning by our teachers. Our students work in a Google Apps for Education environment and learn to use these tools to successfully track and complete their assignments. Our students have the ability to do this because they all have access to technology through our

one to one chromebook initiative. While at school and at home, all of our students are able to use their chromebooks to access information and communicate collaboratively with our teachers and other students.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Are our students learning? How do we know if they are? If they are not, why not? If they are learning, then how can their experiences be enhanced? These four questions are asked constantly at Libertyville High School because we believe that everything that we do needs to be centered around student learning. One can see signs of this throughout our building. We are redesigning our classrooms to enhance our student's learning experiences using different furniture, room layouts, and lighting. We are adding global social / emotional programs such as Life of a Wildcat, Green Dot, and Link Crew to support our students mental wellness needs and thus aid in their learning experiences. And, of course, we are working through district, building, and departmental professional learning teams to build our curriculum and enhance our instruction.

Our LHS teachers take great pride in the instruction that we are able to provide our students. Our teachers have a great deal of instructional freedom to bring a variety of different learning techniques and tools into their classrooms. Across the school our students will be exposed to direct instruction, Socratic seminars, debates, research projects, and team activities. During each of these experiences, appropriate technology tools are incorporated to add to the instructional experience. When our students need added time and or interventions, we use co and team teaching models to deliver instruction. These teacher pairings focus on student supports and differentiation of activities to give our students instruction using different modalities.

Our teachers measure our student's progress in their learning using a variety of assessments. We have grown in our assessment literacy over the last several years and have placed great emphasis on the incorporation of formative assessments throughout our lessons to provide our students with timely feedback. As our usage of formative assessments has increased, our teachers have been able to make corrections and or differentiations with their lessons to help our students in the areas where they are struggling. Teachers are incorporating technology tools into their assessment toolkits to further help with timely formative assessments. Tools such as Kahoot!, Quizlet, Quia, and Mastery Manager give our teachers useful student assessment data. An added bonus with these technology assessment tools is that our students enjoy using them and so more actively participate in these assessment activities. Lastly, our building has organized a data team to help our teachers and departments find, organize, and analyze student data. This team, using Powerschool and Tableau resources, is then able to provide as needed data snapshots that can cross reference our student's academic progress with their demographics, standardized test scores, and extracurricular involvement. As our building wide assessment literacy continues to grow, we will continue to hone our student feedback and give them the guideposts for improvement.

Successful assessments have become an opportunity for celebration within our classrooms because they validate our students' efforts towards learning. However, these same assessments also act as our early warning system signaling when someone needs learning help. Once this signal is shown, our teachers take immediate action by identifying the specific standards that the student hasn't mastered and providing additional learning and practice opportunities. The student can then take part in some form of assessment retakes because LHS has embraced the concept that learning should not be restricted by time. If a student needs larger scale interventions our building offers several programs such as PAWS, FLEX, and 9th Hour Homework Club to give our students greater access to reteaching, executive function assistance, and additional adult support. Our staff embraces all of our students and will not rest in our quest to help them achieve academic success.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At LHS, we understand that all adolescent learning is built upon a foundation of strong, positive relationships with adults and one another. Through these relationships we come to know our students both as learners and individuals. By knowing the whole person, we can create lessons that engage their passions, offer them opportunities for enrichment inside and outside of the classroom, and celebrate their academic and personal successes. Furthermore, we also understand that if we want our students to achieve at the highest levels of academic excellence, we must take great care to nurture their physical and emotional health and wellness.

Caring for student health, wellness and academic growth is not just lip service at LHS. Our entire system is focused upon helping our students live the “Life of a Wildcat,” which is what we call our systemic efforts to create happier, healthier and higher performing students. This begins with our Learning Support Teams (LST). LST’s are the “hub” of all student wellness. Every student at LHS is assigned to one of three LSTs. Each LST is led by a Dean and includes a social worker and guidance counselors. A student belongs to an LST for all four years of high school and all support for student social-emotional wellness is coordinated through the LST. If a student is struggling socially or academically, the LST organizes a problem-solving meeting and generates plans of support for the student which are monitored closely to ensure success. When conflicts arise, we utilize a restorative justice approach to resolve the conflict and help students learn and grow.

In addition to LSTs, LHS employs a full-time Director of Prevention and Wellness whose sole purpose is to organize and lead systemic efforts to create greater student health and wellness. The Director of Prevention and Wellness leads our school’s Green Dot program. Through Green Dot, every staff member and every student at LHS is formally trained in bullying and interpersonal violence prevention strategies. In addition, this person leads our Life of a Wildcat efforts. Through this program, student participants are formally trained in leadership skills designed to help them positively influence and support their peers in living a healthy lifestyle. We have recognized that a significant portion of our students struggle with stress management and sleep deprivation. In response we are in the process of moving our school start time back from 7:30 am to 8:45 am to better align to teen circadian rhythms. We have also infused stress management techniques throughout our PE and health curriculum, with students having the option to take a Yoga class.

Finally, at LHS we believe a key component of supporting student wellness comes from supporting our teachers. Our Learn, Explore, and Develop (LED) center provides our staff with “just in time” professional development opportunities inside and outside of the classroom. One example is our teacher led EdX conference which offers sessions on instructional enhancement, life balance strategies, and roundtable problem-solving opportunities. Our mentor program, professional learning teams, and “Cats on the Prowl” collegial classroom observations are additional ways in which LHS supports its teachers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

A core belief at LHS is that great public schools are only possible to build and sustain by nurturing strong, positive, collaborative relationships with parents, students and community organizations. The LHS Principal and several other members of the administrative team utilize a variety of strategies to maintain effective communication and partnership with family and community stakeholders.

Before any major school decision is made, it is first studied by a committee of administrators, staff, students and parents. These committees are responsible for generating consensus among the various perspectives of stakeholders in our school community. Once the committee finalizes its recommendations, the school administration takes further action. For example, our school community recently expressed concern about student stress and anxiety. A committee of teachers, administrators, parents and students was formed to study this issue. The committee ultimately recommended that the district consider moving the start time of the school day from 7:30 am to 8:45 am to provide students opportunities to sleep

later.

To ensure effective communication between parents, community members and the high school, a myriad of strategies are employed. Our Director of Communications produces monthly newsletters, maintains the District/school websites, and manages all mass communications. The focus of these communications is to provide parents and community members with in-depth understandings of the schools' efforts to support student learning and growth. In addition, LHS has a full-time Director of Prevention and Wellness, a full-time College Counselor, and a fully staffed College Resource Center. Through these individuals and offices, parents and community stakeholders receive frequent communications about student/family resources, school programs, and community programs.

Each month, the Principal holds an evening "Parent Cats" meeting. All LHS parents are invited to attend to hear the Principal report about school programs, initiatives, and goals. Parents are also able to ask questions and provide input on the school's actions.

There are also many partnerships between LHS staff members and our parent/community partners. All of these partnerships are important vehicles for generating feedback and ideas and for shaping the efforts of the school staff. Among these many partnerships are:

- School Resource Officer & Police Partnerships: LHS collaborates with the Libertyville Police Department to place a full-time School Resource Officer in the school. The SRO builds strong, positive relationships with students, families and school staff to help support students or families who are experiencing conflicts and difficulties.

- Fine Arts and Athletic Booster Groups: Our athletic teams and fine arts programs maintain active booster clubs of parents, staff and community members.

- Student School Board Representatives: Three LHS students are formal members of the District 128 School Board. These students attend each meeting and communicate the needs and perspectives of our student body to our community and Board of Education representatives.

- Libertyville Connect: This is a coalition of LHS staff, parents, community nonprofits and government agencies that meet monthly to work to reduce teen drug and alcohol use in our school and community.

- Business Advisory Council & Rotary International: This program maintains strong ties with our local business community. LHS students and staff members attend Rotary meetings and hold meetings with the Business Advisory Council to share information about the high school and to gather support from area businesses.

3. Professional Development:

Libertyville High School strongly believes in a "just-in-time" approach to professional learning, where individual inquiry is met with collaborative problem-solving and personalized support. Through the Learn Explore Develop center (LED), educators across the disciplines are available to provide real-time support for their colleagues on a range of topics including instructional technology, the Marzano model for effective teaching, and the use of classroom data to enhance student learning experiences. Rather than provide educators and school leaders with passive training opportunities that typically result in information overload, LED staff offer brief introductions to progressive instructional practices and invite their colleagues to return for more individualized information and small-group collaboration sessions. Various certified staff members, such as school social workers, English Language educators, and school nurses also partner with the LED to provide staff with strategies for creating a balanced learning experience for all LHS students. The LED's most recent focus has been on enhancing student engagement with sessions on academic games, interactive videos, and EL instructional strategies.

Beyond the LED, LHS operates as a Professional Learning Community where each teacher sits on a collaborative team that shares overlapping responsibilities, curricular assignments, or specific students. With a focus on increasing student achievement, teams use common assessments to identify areas of growth and engage in shared inquiry and collaborative planning to address these areas. Currently, LHS teams are investigating and implementing project-based learning approaches, alternate grading practices, educational equity and literacy strategies to make strides towards meeting their student achievement goals.

While the LED and collaborative teams focus on professional learning that is individualized and relevant, LHS also believes that its educators should be exposed to specific foundational practices aligned to the D128 Mission. Thus two cohorts, one for educators new to LHS, and another for those in their second and third years, meet regularly to foster collaborative relationships, learn more about specific LHS policies and cultural norms, and partake in an educator curriculum focused on the D128 mission. This curriculum includes collaboratively planned workshops by school leaders and educators on instructional strategies, grading and homework practices, social emotional learning, classroom data, the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model, and student voice.

Through the LED, collaborative teams, and new educator cohorts, LHS ensures continued professional learning by harnessing the expertise of its faculty. This model allows classroom educators, non-classroom certified staff, and school leaders alike to engage in professional growth opportunities and support networks that are relevant, effective, and actionable.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of LHS is built upon the foundation that all members of our school community, regardless of formal title or role, have the potential and capability to serve as school leaders. Our school strives to be a democratic institution where significant decisions flow through strong coalitions built and led by all stakeholders. The role of the formal school administration is not to direct and dictate action, rather it is to facilitate the processes by which change and actions occur, to identify and support “informal leaders” across our system, and to help eliminate obstacles and barriers that prevent our school from reaching its goals and objectives.

One way we empower our informal leaders is through our approach to professional development. We have a teacher-led Learn, Explore, and Develop center (LED) that teams with school administration to provide “just in time” support and growth opportunities to their colleagues. The LED-administrative relationship is a give and take of ideas and actions resulting in PD that is relevant to teacher needs and tied to the school mission.

This teamed approach is also apparent in our belief that the promotion of student learning and wellbeing is everyone’s responsibility. To further this belief, the formal administrative team operates with a servant-based leadership approach. In this approach, our leaders embrace the needs of the whole school, as well as the areas they directly influence, to actively support student achievement. The administrative team at LHS collaboratively problem-solves through this lens and holds one another accountable for maintaining this disposition.

At LHS we believe leadership is a skill that one must practice, reflect upon, and grow throughout his/her lifetime. In order to build and hone the leadership skills of our administrative team, we have dedicated two meetings a month as “Leadership Learning” meetings. During these meetings, which are facilitated by the Principal and Assistant Principals, a laser-like focus is placed on student achievement and the actions necessary for sustaining and growing that achievement. Student data is reviewed, and discussions are held about staff development, technology resources, or specific leadership practices that are necessary to help boost student learning. For example, this year the leadership team reviewed student achievement data across our school’s curriculum, disaggregating it by race, gender, socioeconomic status, English Learners (EL), and students with Individualized Education Plans. This analysis revealed that we did not have an equitable percentage of EL students enrolled in our AP courses. As a result, the leadership team began identifying actions it could take to increase the enrollment of EL students in these courses. Curriculum pathways were reviewed, staff professional development opportunities were developed, and members of the administrative team presented information to staff on classroom accommodations necessary to support EL students.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In the past fifteen years, Libertyville High School has experienced tremendous academic success. We have seen our average ACT score rise from a 23 to a 26. Our number of AP test takers has more than doubled, and our total number of exams administered now tops 2,000. Even with this tremendous uptick in AP participation, we have maintained an 88% passage rate of students getting a 3, 4, or 5 on their exams. These numbers are impressive and represent statistically significant positive changes. In light of this, we are often asked by other schools, what is LHS doing to be so successful?

We have asked this question ourselves and our best reflections keep coming back to one principle, empowerment. LHS is successful because we strive to create an environment where we seek to empower our students, our teachers, our parents, and our community to achieve excellence. This empowerment gives all of our stakeholder groups ownership in Libertyville's academic success story and motivates everyone to strive to be DARING.

LHS student empowerment manifests itself as individualized journeys to academic success. Students are not restricted to structured curricular pathways, traditional learning platforms, or blind acceptance of the status quo. Instead, they are empowered to take classes that follow their passions and use their voice to positively impact their learning environment. They are given a variety of methods to demonstrate their learning such as debates, research projects, or performance pieces. Their voices are heard through our Principal's Council, and their feedback has been used to redesign our library, enhance our cafeteria, and influence our homework practices.

LHS teacher empowerment is practiced through pedagogical autonomy. This results in lessons that meet their students' unique learning needs and also align to their professional philosophies and instructional preferences. Our teachers also realize the power of teaming, and use their empowerment to drive their professional learning team goals and action plans. As our teachers seek professional growth, they are free to experiment, encouraged to innovate, and given ample opportunities to support each other in doing so.

Our parents and community members are empowered to share their voices, time, and expertise in helping to shape the climate, culture, and academic experiences of LHS. Our Parent Cats, Fine Arts and Athletic Boosters, and Community Coalition are just a few of the platforms for these contributions. Beyond the formality of these groups, parents also interact with the school on a daily basis to discuss everything from academic performance, social-emotional needs, and even lost lunches. We welcome their input and consider them true partners in our shared goal of encouraging DARING students.