

**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 Dr. Bessie V. Karvelas Ed.D

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

Official School Name Proviso Math And Science Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8601 W. Roosevelt Road

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

Forest Park IL 60130-2532  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook County

Telephone (708) 338-4170

Fax (708) 338-4199

Web site/URL http://pmsa.pths209.org

E-mail bkarvelas@pths209.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\*Dr. Jesse J. Rodriguez Ph.D.

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jrodriguez@pths209.org

District Name Proviso Township High Schools District 209 Tel. (708) 338-5913

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 Mr. Nathan Wagner

(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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	117	138	255
10	85	83	168
11	86	122	208
12 or higher	65	97	162
<b>Total Students</b>	353	440	793

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 26 % Black or African American
  - 64 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 5 % 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: <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	0
(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)]	4
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	743
(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):

Spanish, Korean, Philipino(Tagalog), Hindi, Urdu, Haitian-Creole, Telugu, Amharic, Philipino(Ilocano)

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %  
Total number students who qualify: 317

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %  
9 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>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>1</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: 5
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	47
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 24:1

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	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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	178
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	69%
Enrolled in a community college	27%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	2%
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.

To develop independent, lifelong, global learners who apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills which enable them to share international perspectives, intercultural competence, and interpersonal communication.

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

Admission to the Proviso Mathematics and Science Academy (PMSA) is chosen from the 8th grade students that reside within the boundaries of the Proviso Township High Schools District 209 only. The PMSA selection process is based on the following weighted criteria: PSAT 8/9 Exam (35%); Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (26%); 7th grade school transcript grades (22%); argumentative essay (10%); middle school math teacher recommendation (3.5%); and science teacher recommendation worth (3.5%).

The cutoff score for Proviso Math And Science Academy (PMSA)'s selection process is derived from the applicant pool and is not generated before the selection process. The number of students invited for enrollment to the Academy depends on an effort to maintain a consistent overall student enrollment at PMSA. Applicants who present the strongest combination of credentials and have the highest application scores are invited to attend. Those who accept the invitation are required to uphold the PMSA Honor Code and Pledge. The latter speaks to integrity, respect, responsibility, and ethical decision-making. Students are required to sign this document as a token of their commitment to the Academy. Members are encouraged to laud the efforts and achievements of their peers, as well as recognize strengths and areas of growth as part of the human condition.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Proviso Math and Science Academy (PMSA) is a national and state ranked public high school presently serving 791 students. We are perceived as an urban school in a suburban setting. Just as every organization, community or family has its own unique traditions and stories, so too does the emergence of PMSA. In the nineties, prior to the founding of PMSA, community members in the school district were uncomfortable with the quality of the Proviso Township Schools. The archived articles from the Chicago Tribune told the painful story: September 21, 1994, “Westchester Just the Latest Suburb That Wants Its Own High School”; October 26, 1996, “Westchester Secession Would Crush District, Critics Say”; January 3, 1997, “Westchester Parents’ Fight Over School at Standstill: Most Refuse To Send Their Kids to Proviso.” Student enrollment suffered, and teachers were released due to fledgling class sections. There was also a constant turnover in leadership; administration entered and exited through a revolving door. Years of chaos circled the two existing high schools. The result: whoever could leave the community would leave.

Talks of de-annexation quivered through the walls of District 209. Although this did not occur, it was a wakeup call for the district. In October 1998, a new superintendent was directed to formulate a plan to open a magnet school for honors students of District 209. On a survey that went out to the communities, 69.7% responded positively to a new magnet school. The communities of Maywood, Bellwood, and Broadview embraced the magnet school concept, and a referendum was passed. In October 2001, the Board authorized the purchase of property for the magnet school, and in August 2005, PMSA opened its doors.

In its first 10 years, the school had eight principals. The last of the eight principals arrived at the commencement of the 2013-14 school year and has been leading the school for five consecutive years. This transformation period yielded a stability in leadership, revamped curricula among the disciplines, and more professional development opportunities for faculty, all of which contributed to an increase in student achievement. The steady rise in test scores was further celebrated by the fact that the majority of PMSA's students came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Another contributing factor to the exceptional student performance was the revitalization of the school's mission statement. The original mission statement was to develop the independent learner and provide an environment where meaning could be constructed collaboratively by students, faculty and staff. The new leadership team ramped up the mission by implementing data driven, inquiry, and project-based educational models where teachers became facilitators of experiential learning activities. Moreover, PMSA began to and continues to emphasize a cross-curricular approach that allows students to connect learning across disciplines. It aims to ensure that students are given opportunities to extend their education into the community at large on local, national, and global levels. As such, PMSA's Mentorship program is a high level program in which a student can earn 27.5 credits and graduate with Distinction. Although the district requires 22 credits for graduation, PMSA boasts 25 required credits for graduation. Students receive the additional 2.5 credits for Mentorship by working with professional mentors after school from partnerships with Loyola University Medical Center, Triton College, local school districts, or law enforcement agencies. They complete two years of research on a topic of their choice and work with a professional mentor outside of school hours. For example, if a student is interested in cancer research, the student will work with an oncologist on his/her research project, get field experience with a doctor or researcher in the field of study, and complete a seminar where the student presents his/her research findings. The student's research work and culminating presentation is similar to a dissertation.

Student achievement is further bolstered by the opportunities students have to take Advanced Placement and Dual Credit courses. In both options, students have the ability to earn college credit upon successful completion of the coursework and passing scores on College Board assessments. Prior to 2013-14, neither Advanced Placement nor Dual credit coursework was offered. Yet in 2017, 287 students at PMSA took 738 Advanced Placement exams. Today, the school offers eighteen AP classes, five Dual Enrollment classes and the globally recognized International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma.

PMSA has become a destination - a climate of rigor and relevance where students can achieve their highest level of potential and make their dreams a reality.



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

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

Many have referred to our curriculum and instruction as “teaching and learning on steroids.” The curricular framework model of PMSA is an intensified, vertically aligned collegiate curriculum of English, world languages, and social sciences as targeted areas of learning, with an emphasis on math, science, and technology. The disciplines above are also uniquely grouped to support skill transfer. Examples include science, technology and math; social sciences and language arts; wellness and personal development; visual and performing arts; and research. Moreover, the curriculum targets scientific, visual, technological, multicultural, and global awareness literacies that are advanced by our Professional Learning Communities.

As an instructional team, we chose the International Baccalaureate program and the Advanced Placement program because both programs are rigorous; they develop the metacognitive and affective skills that are vital to success in college and beyond. Teaching teams redeveloped curriculum maps as based on these programs. These maps identify specific discipline-related content and are aligned to learning targets. In PMSA classrooms, students learn “how to learn.” Carefully constructed units of study help students develop skills in the areas of communication, critical thinking, social interaction, self-management, and research. The teachers focus on instruction of the whole child in their units by introducing lessons with inquiry, providing the framework for conceptual understanding of local and global contexts, fostering peer-to-peer collaboration, and incorporating differentiation for all learners. During instruction teachers facilitate the transfer and use of acquired skills from one course to another. For example, a PMSA English curriculum map might pose the question, “What does It Mean to be a Global Citizen?” as an introduction to a literary unit. This inquiry-based approach asks students to consider aspects and skills that pull from curricula such as language acquisition, history and/or science.

The most important component of the success of the school is measured by its success on Standards-Based instruction. The College Readiness standards have been embedded into the curriculum and are the most important components of the success of the school. These standards are considered “non-negotiables.” In other words, there is no negotiation regarding the teaching of any curriculum without teaching the standards listed on College Board charts known as “Transitions for Math”; “Transitions for Reading”; “Transitions for English”; and so on. Student mastery of said standards is continually measured by formative and summative assessments. If students do not achieve mastery of the skills connected to these standards, then instructors re-think, re-teach and re-assess until mastery occurs. Students cannot advance if they have not mastered the concepts of a given standard.

PMSA students must complete five years of math to graduate. Using a blended learning model, students are taught Common Core Math Standards with an Integrated Math approach. Two days a week, students work individually on a computer-based program which reinforces skills and concepts taught in the classroom. The integrated math approach has been successful because it provides students with opportunities to make mathematical connections to real world problems. In the Integrated Math sequence, geometry, trigonometry, algebra, and statistics are all introduced in 9th grade and matriculate through 11th grade. Students begin working on more complex mathematical equations as they enter a higher level. In their junior year, students take two math classes: Math Studies and Integrated Math 3. By senior year, they are prepared to undertake calculus or computer science, based on their interests.

Students at PMSA complete four years of science to graduate. As a Physics First school, all 9th grade students take physics. This approach provides opportunities for freshmen students to transfer concepts learned in math, as they are applied to physics. The science program sequence is followed by chemistry in 10th grade and biology or AP biology in 11th grade. In senior year, students can elect to take Human Anatomy & Physiology, Forensic Science, or an AP course in Biology, Chemistry, or Physics.

Two other important courses that have helped make PMSA students successful are the Research Core-Science and Research Core-Social Sciences. During their junior year, students must take one of these two courses for graduation. Students are taught how to research, how to cite information, and how to create their

topics using APA style with a formal bibliography. These two classes have helped pave the way to higher level reading and writing skills at the post-secondary level. The Research Core course engages the students in independent research on a topic of interest. This course leads to the senior year Mentorship program, which is a collaboration between students and community mentors in a variety of professions. Students' research culminates in public defense of their work at the annual "Research Symposium" presented in May.

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

PMSA has a skills-based approach to teaching and learning. Bloom's Taxonomy and evidenced-based reading and writing activities are part of the daily instructional process. Not only are these skills and activities apparent in core subjects, but also in the elective classes, two of which must come from within the realm of Visual/Performing Arts or Technology, as well as physical education (P.E.) and world language.

PMSA offers students a variety of performing and visual arts electives to experience, create, and ultimately develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of the arts. In collaboration with other disciplines, the theatre and forensic classes participated in a cross-curricular activity that involved forensics students viewing, taking notes, and creating a crime scene investigation report based on the performances of the theatre classes. The visual arts students implemented math skills to create hand painted art pieces based on the book, *Rejected Princess* by Jason Porath. Students analyzed drawings from the book to ensure that the proportions, coloring, texture and styling were accurately displayed in each piece.

On the second floor of PMSA, one will see a display case entitled "How Much Weight Can Bloom Lift?" This display is attributed to the creative minds of the P.E. teachers. These teachers illustrated a muscular man lifting weights. Each weight is labeled with a literacy skill such as inferencing, comparing and contrasting, analyzing, and evidence-based details. Lessons in P.E., Health, and Drivers Education are thus centered around skill-based reading and writing. Students are required to verbally qualify the how's, why's, and what-if's of a given text. Then, they are asked to respond in writing through evidence-based argumentation. This process supports our school-wide literacy initiative.

Similarly, the world language department uses a communicative approach to engage students in the acquisition and improvement of either French or Spanish. Students learn to read, write, speak, and listen in their second, and, for some, their third language. PMSA language teachers help students acquire foundational vocabulary and grammatical skills in the first and second years of language study. This approach allows students to begin to express themselves clearly and succinctly with their peers. By the third and fourth year of language study, students can discuss, debate, interpret a variety of authentic source material, and creatively and eloquently write in French or Spanish. Students who are native speakers of Spanish also benefit from PMSA's Heritage Spanish courses, which provide an opportunity to develop language skills even further, and to explore other areas of the Hispanophone world. Continually, all students in PMSA language classes use French or Spanish as the vehicle to learn more about the products, practices, and perspectives of cultures around the world.

Outside of the classroom, PMSA students also have the opportunity to put their language learning and skills to use in a global context. French and Spanish language teachers have organized several trips to France and Spain, providing students with real-life application of what they have learned in class. Students gained first-hand experience with authentic French and Spanish culture as they toured monuments and museums, engaged in conversation with locals, and sampled traditional cuisine. Upon return to the USA, students brought their knowledge and experiences back to the classroom, further enhancing instruction.

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is a course offered to IB Diploma Programme students that develops student understanding of their own learning. It is a metacognitive approach to teaching critical thinking. Students work through "Areas of Knowing" as they learn about how knowledge is organized. As such, TOK students, and the whole of PMSA's student body, heavily utilize the Learning Resource Center (LRC) for the print materials and electronic databases that it houses. The resources provided in the LRC are a mere stepping stone to the myriad of academic resources that PMSA has access to thanks to partnerships with neighboring community colleges and universities. Students are able to conduct collegiate-level research both at these institutions and via their online databases.

One of the most exciting events that PMSA students participate in is the international annual robotics competition. Students use their skills from their physics classes, computer science, and engineering classes to build various robots that engage in rope climbing, frisbee throwing, and/or acrobatics. They spend hours after school building their robots so that they can compete in the International competitions in the spring. Under the leadership of the physics and engineering teachers, the students are engaged in team work while they conduct research and shape their self-management skills. Another notable curricular venture is Project Lead the Way, an engineering program where students complete a four year curriculum that leads them to the post-secondary School of Engineering.

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

The comprehensive curriculum offered at PMSA provides instructional support and interventions for students that have no support at home or have parents that do not speak English or have no level of education. The school offers a variety of extra support and tiered interventions to help meet the academic needs of students. Every other Saturday, students voluntarily come to the LRC from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There are teachers in each core subject that come to help students with their academic work. In addition to this Saturday support program, the LRC is open for an extra 60 minutes after school and 45 minutes before school. We also have peer tutoring; students in the National Honor Society who would like service learning hours help tutor students during their lunch period. Community-based support also exists for our students. Teen Reach is a grant funded program that hires individuals to help tutor students after school. Many of our students take advantage of these interventions and embrace all the help and support the school and community offer them.

Teachers at PMSA use differentiated instruction by providing tiered assignments to help students with different learning needs. Teachers recognize that all students learn at different paces and structure their classroom environments to best meet the learning styles of their students. Instruction focuses on developing and growing skill sets based on the College Readiness standards. PMSA teachers evaluate student growth within these standards by way of formative assessment. Through Student Learning Objectives (SLO) and Common Interim Assessments, as well as teacher-written assessments, teachers use data feedback to assess, monitor, and adjust their classroom instruction. Continually, data analysis helps teachers to identify at-risk students and provide tailored interventions to support the growth of essential skills.

We know this process has proven to be successful because in the last five years, the state of Illinois has changed state required assessments: we have traveled from PSAE, to ACT, to PARCC to SAT. On all state exams, PMSA students have outperformed the state in Reading, Math, and Science. In 2017, according to College Board Benchmark data, PMSA scored at the 90th percentile in Reading/English Language Arts (ELA) and 70th percentile in Math on the SAT. According to Illinois Benchmarks for 2017, PMSA scored in the 83rd percentile in Reading/ELA and 65% percentile in Math, both of which were higher than the state averages. Regardless of which exams the students were given, they outperformed the state because the curriculum and instruction provided at PMSA are skill-based and aligned to College Readiness Standards.

Comparing growth from entry, the Class of 2019, who are presently juniors, scored an 18 on the Practice ACT during their freshman year. This year, the Class of 2019 took a Practice SAT, and they scored the equivalent of a 21 on the ACT, according to the College Board Concordance Table. This shows a three point growth in two years. The expectations are that the juniors will score even higher on the actual SAT, which will be given in the spring. Looking at the last five years of data, PMSA students have shown considerable growth on the actual state assessments when compared to their high school entry data.

The Class of 2018, who are presently seniors, scored high on the 2017 SAT state Reading/ELA assessment. There was no achievement gap in Reading/ELA among the African-American and Hispanic students. However, there did exist an achievement gap in math. African-American students scored 47% meeting/exceeding on the 2017 SAT math state assessment, while Hispanic students scored 73% meeting/exceeding. The instructional teams have addressed the issue of the math achievement gap by focusing on more differentiation and more academic support in math. In particular, teachers are monitoring the skill development of the students who are considered at-risk through the administration of common

interim benchmark assessments. An error and item analysis of these common interim results helps teachers close the achievement gap by implementing interventions to support those students with mathematical challenges. The Class of 2019 shows the math achievement gap closing based on the Practice SAT taken in January. The math achievement gap reduced from 26 percentage points the year before to 11 percentage points this year between our two subgroups. We anticipate that the SAT state exam that will be given in the spring of 2018 will show evidence of this improvement.

The Illinois Science Assessment is another assessment required by the state. This is a new assessment and was first given in 2016; the results were received two months ago. Seventy-two percent of PMSA students scored at a Level 2, which is defined as proficient. Within Level 2, African American students received a score of 70% meeting, and Hispanic students received a score of 72% meeting. Based on these results, there is no achievement gap in science between the two subgroups.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

PMSA engages and motivates students through multiple avenues of recognition, including Illinois State Scholars, Research Scholars, Graduating with Distinction, IB Diploma, AP Scholars, Senior Awards Banquet, and Science Awards Banquet. Students and families are offered FAFSA workshops, college application workshops, Saturday School led by teachers from multiple disciplines, and a Freshmen Transition Program to help acclimate freshmen to PMSA.

Students participate in afterschool SAT test prep programs as well as an in-school Quick Fix SAT assembly for all juniors. Bullying presentations are led by the counseling department as well as Pre-IB Seminars to ensure students are aware of and understand academic honesty. Students needing additional support engage in meetings with their counselor, administration, and parent/guardian(s) to begin to develop a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan to address emotional and/or academic needs.

Students develop leadership and engagement skills through the participation in after school organizations such as Robotics, Anime Club, Drama, Comedy Improv, Debate and Student Council as well as class clubs. The PMSA Multicultural club provides students the opportunity to work as a team to create and perform cultural celebrations for the entire student body and community. These celebrations include the Latin Cultural Assembly, Black History Assembly, and the Asian Heritage Assembly. Each of these programs is as unique as the students involved and affords multiple opportunities for students to be global learners and leaders.

PMSA takes advantage of our neighbor to the East, the world-class city of Chicago. Field trips to Chicago afford students the opportunity to experience first class museums, Broadway Theatre, Symphony Center, Lyric Opera, Steppenwolf Theatre, and the multiple Chicago neighborhoods that offer many diverse cultural experiences like China Town and Pilsen.

Teachers at PMSA are supported professionally and are encouraged to apply for and participate in professional development workshops and conferences that relate to their specific teaching assignments, including AP workshops and the International Baccalaureate Programme conferences. Teachers also share their skills and resources with their colleagues through in-school workshops and Professional Learning Communities. This school year, a team of teachers began to prepare a Reading and Writing Initiative in all disciplines. This team evolved out of recognition that a school-based leadership team will contribute to a sense of teacher-leader efficacy, which will ultimately affect student-learning outcomes.

Teachers are valued and their contributions to the success of students and the overall programs are highlighted. The district communicates a digital bi-weekly update to all staff and faculty acknowledging and celebrating teacher and classroom achievements. The Board of Education also acknowledges the accomplishments of teachers at its monthly meetings, as well as at an end of the year dinner that recognizes teachers completing advanced degrees.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

To engage our families, PMSA has worked to develop a range of communication strategies. Since many parents are not regular internet users, we use voice Robo-Calls, text messages, and postage mail to communicate with families. We also use in-school announcements, district and school website announcements, and personal phone calls. Teachers are asked to communicate with families of all students throughout the year as well as to document their correspondence on the parent/teacher portal. Using all of these strategies, we can connect families to opportunities that can enhance their student's experience at PMSA.

Many community organizations seek to partner with PMSA for the benefit of students, providing social-emotional support, work-learning, and college readiness opportunities. Our communication strategies are

utilized to connect community organizations like the Proviso Township Mental Health Commission with families in need of mental health support. The Chicago Children's Advocacy Center has shared information about childhood abuse with school counselors and teachers. Triton College has also partnered with the school to support students that go beyond Calculus as well as to support PMSA teachers' Dual Enrollment classes.

Brookfield Zoo, Merit School of Music, Loyola Medical Center, and several community park districts have all partnered with PMSA to give our students unique educational, vocational, and volunteer experiences. For example, Loyola Medical students have partnered with PMSA to provide a weekly experience for select students to learn about life as a medical student and the medical field. In addition, several local organizations engage PMSA students with invitations to college fairs and information sessions.

Furthermore, the school and district have created platforms for families to better support their student. Parent University, Proviso community forums, and the PMSA Admissions Open Houses are a few ways that we connect families with school-based information. In addition, several school and district initiatives provide a chance for families and students to assume leadership roles in the efforts to promote student achievement. The Superintendent's Student Advisory Panel has given several PMSA students the opportunity to present the views of the student body to the district superintendent on a variety of issues, including the quality of school lunches and school uniforms. Parent involvement has been key in developing the School Improvement Plan, revamping the PMSA Admissions Plan, and making the Parent Teacher Organization vibrant. Our parents have engaged with the Proviso community forums and led sessions during Parent University.

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

The administration at PMSA believes in "Teacher Leadership in Exchange for Accountability." A team of teachers worked alongside the administration to develop this project. The purpose of the project aimed at building teacher leadership capacity through three activities: distributive leadership through the development of a PMSA School Leadership Team, introduction of grade level lead teachers, and teacher-led professional development. As a result of the implementation of this project, there would be increased student growth and academic achievement, and there would be a healthier overall school culture with high teacher efficacy. Thus far, this project has accomplished its goals. An indicator of the project's success was PMSA being ranked #1 by "The Best Public Schools in Chicago Suburbs/Chicago Magazine" 2016.

Addressing teacher leadership and teacher efficacy has not only improved student outcomes, but also improved building culture. Teacher-led professional development for teachers, planned and facilitated by teachers, substantially built capacity for teacher leadership. Teachers interested in leading professional development that aligned with school goals were required to submit a written proposal to the principal at least five weeks prior to the date of the proposed professional development. PMSA administration and department chairs were responsible for the general oversight, scheduling, and monitoring of the effectiveness of the teacher led professional development. The outcome of the teacher led professional development was a successful translation to school goals and instructional growth plans. Embedded in those outcomes were connections to research-based best practices and data analysis. The effectiveness of this program was measured by positive professional development evaluations, optimized teacher participation, and strong gains on teacher leadership indicators on the 2017 Illinois 5 Essentials Survey, a required survey in Illinois that is taken by parents, teachers, and students. The results of the survey are released along with the Illinois State Report Card.

Through teacher leadership, professional development focuses on teaching to the standards. Teacher experts present collaborative ways to address content area information through goals and objectives that meet district and schoolwide initiatives. Teachers work together to create activities that differentiate their classroom instruction, ensuring that all students grow.

Student learning begins with staff learning. Teachers' content expertise along with collegial collaboration contribute to improved instruction and student achievement. The only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction. With that said, PMSA has deduced that teacher collaboration is the most powerful

form of professional development. 'Quality of education cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.' The Instructional leadership team (ILT), Professional Learning Communities (PLC), and Common Duty Teams (CDT), all have common elements that promote student growth: the ability to collaborate, to learn, to inform, and to achieve.

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

The school's leadership approach has an emphasis on going into each meeting with a purpose, and ending each meeting with a plan of action. The ILT aims to enhance trust among faculty and ensure a positive climate in the building. The ILT encourages teachers to step up as leaders and share accountability when it comes to student successes. All stakeholders tend to move in the same direction without over stretching their boundaries. The administrators have become facilitators rather than top down leaders. The principal, the assistant principal, the coordinator of the IB program, the lead school counselor, and the three department heads have a vital role in the leadership of the school. This team of leaders provides guidance that improves classroom practices. The mission of the team is to manage instructional programs and promote a positive learning climate. The leaders' emotional intelligences are continually at work. They tune in to employees as people; they support intellectual stimulation, help build collaborative processes, capitalize on the competency of others, empower others to be change agents, and develop and implement school improvement plans.

The school has three department chairs. The Math and Science departments are guided by one department chair, the English and Social Sciences are guided by another department chair, and the third department chair supports the world languages, fine and performing arts, and physical education. The coordinator of the IB program supports all the teachers of IB classes and reinforces that the teaching and learning practices in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program are integrated building-wide. The lead counselor works closely with the principal and department chairs to assure that all student needs are met and that students are on track for graduation. She also works with her team to develop customized intervention plans for students. The lead counselor and her team strive to give students the support needed for success by closely working with classroom teachers, parents, and community partnerships.

Leading with purpose of conviction, and the element of trust have built a positive culture within the building. Leadership is shared; ownership is developed; shared leadership is an activity that makes everyone accountable. Thus, student achievement occurs.

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

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Although there is not one key factor that has led to the school's success, there is one important aspect that has helped develop the whole child. The social and emotional support that students are provided allows students to endure the rigors and challenges of the school and its curricula. As one junior who was describing the school stated, "There is stress and there is PMSA stress." Students recognize the challenges and high expectations that have been set forth at PMSA, but they also recognize that the teachers and administration are caring and respond to all student needs, regardless of what those needs are. This caring quality among teachers and administrators has helped students become successful and graduate with honors. The faculty and administration consider each student as an individual. They are part of the mindset that "one size does not fit all." With that said, teachers have learned to customize their teaching, assignments, and assessments in order to meet the needs of the students.

The school counselors work closely with the administration and the teachers, developing individual plans for each student considered at-risk. Counselors meet bi-weekly and sometimes weekly with students to look at the key performing indicators of each student, such as attendance, "Freshman on Track," weekly failure rate, and tardiness. Interventions are subsequently developed that are customized to each student. Some students are homeless; others are high poverty and do not know where their next meal will come from. Some of our African-American and Hispanic students who do not have proactive adults in their lives need the school to advocate for their needs. Some work many hours after school and on weekends. Therefore, the school is instrumental in working with outside companies and organizations to help support the students' academic endeavors while they working to support their own families. The fact that PMSA is perceived as a family that advocates for its students is a comforting notion for our young adults. Thus, a 100% graduation rate continues to occur. The students that have maintained top quartile status have been encouraged to go "beyond" by taking collegiate level coursework in every subject area. Many students take three to four advanced placement classes and sometimes take accelerate classes through the university and college partnerships with which PMSA has partnered. All of these factors coalesce to develop a socially and emotionally robust student who continues to persevere.