

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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	84	71	155
10	56	69	125
11	49	59	108
12 or higher	59	66	125
Total Students	248	265	513

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 84 % 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: 7%

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	27
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	35
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	492
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
18 Total number ELL

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

Portuguese, Arabic, Egyptian, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 29 %
Total number students who qualify: 149

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
51 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>8</u> Autism | <u>29</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>27</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>10</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	34
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 15:1

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	94%	94%	94%	93%	91%
High school graduation rate	94%	97%	89%	90%	88%

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	97
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	72%
Enrolled in a community college	22%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

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 provide a learning environment that recognizes individual differences and abilities and promotes the intellectual, artistic, physical, cultural and emotional development of all students.

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

All town resident students are accepted. Five additional grade nine, non-resident slots have been offered on a first come basis for the previous five years. Due to increased resident enrollment we are no longer able to offer open slots for non-residents.

PART III – SUMMARY

The Town of Abington is located halfway between Boston and Plymouth in Massachusetts's Plymouth County. It is a middle class community where many families remain each generation to raise their families. Abington's school district serves close to 2030 students. The race and ethnicity of the student population mirrors the community. The district's student population is 85% white, 8% Hispanic, and 7% African American, Asian or Non-Hispanic/Multi-Race. English Language Learners make up just under 5% of the district while almost 24% of students are economically disadvantaged. Being a small town has not saved Abington from being significantly impacted by a state wide opioid epidemic, homelessness, financial hardships and domestic distress that plagues the rest of the state and country. Despite the myriad of social-emotional impacts on students, about 93% of Abington High School's graduates attend college, 70% of whom attend four-year college programs. In the last several years Abington High School has had high success with deterring drop outs and the rates have been improving steadily over the years. In fact, enrollment has climbed from 448 students in 2016-2017 to 513 students during the 2017-2018 school year. There are 39 teachers teaching 192 classes in Core Academic areas. One hundred percent of the teachers are licensed in their teaching assignment. The high school serves grade 9 through 12.

Abington High School once referred to as "the best bang for the buck," situated as the small town between two cities. It is a relatively stable socio-economic community of 16,000 people with 30% of adults holding bachelors' degrees and a median household income of \$77,000. The school district spends about \$1500 less than the state average in per pupil expenditure. The student population historically shrinks by about 20% - 25% between grade 8 and grade 9 as students choose between AHS, multiple private and parochial schools, and vocational technical options. Until very recently, all of the school buildings were more than 50 years old. In 2017 the community erected a state of the art co-located pre-K, middle-high school. In the last two years we have seen a smaller percent leave the district. Eighty-six percent of the class of 2017 took the SATs and 96% had plans to enter college. The community has a small group of generous alumnus families who sustain some programming such as junior varsity athletics, music programming, and contribute about \$65,000 – \$75,000 in annual scholarships for its typical 100-125 graduates. Alumni also volunteer to serve on decision making committees and fundraising groups, coach and teach in the schools, and often come back to speak at special events. With few exceptions AHS students have always met or exceeded state achievement targets. Green Wave Pride is a strong cultural component for the student body and is visibly integrated into all athletics and co-curricular activities. The integration of regular education students with special education students (in elective classes, in the Green Wave Café, in Unified Sports) has been a strong indicator of the culture of inclusion. AHS maintains a few "enrichment clubs" to be named later so that if students have an idea of something not previously budgeted, we can add it into our programming. A few recent examples have been chess club, dance team, and ultimate Frisbee. This also demonstrates the strong embedded values of student choice and voice. The staff (teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals) are a healthy mix of veteran and non-veteran with very low turnover. Most staff take on additional supporting roles such as club adviser or coach and also attend student activities, dances, games, concerts, plays, etc.

AHS has recently reduced the number of academic levels and increased the number of unlevleed courses, encouraging and challenging students to perform at higher levels. Advanced Placement courses are offered in at least six disciplines and are offered as open enrollment with few exceptions. Students are also encouraged to enroll in college courses for dual credit. Students are also able to enroll in online courses if the course of interest is not offered at AHS.

Three years ago the subgroup populations of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and economically disadvantaged grew in number without comparable supports/programming or modifications to instructional delivery. The standardized achievement scores and growth scores for the first time, failed to meet the target. This sparked a full court press to step up our game and truly analyze student work, form data teams, and develop common formative assessments. We consistently used evaluation terminology that would resonate "how have you used formative assessments to inform and adjust instruction?" At the same time, we experienced a significant increase in the number of students reporting stress, anxiety, depression and trauma related illness. In response, we completely upended the special education delivery model and added social-emotional goals to every School Improvement Plan since. These factors have driven school-

wide professional development both outsourced and from within in formative assessments, rigor vs. rigid, teaching vs. learning, and trauma sensitive schools/classrooms.

A colossal pedagogical shift from “teaching” to “learning” took place. A deep dive review of the social-emotional factors that hinder learning resulted in a broad whole school/whole child ideology, grounded in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory of self-actualization. School wide programs developed as a result such as Language Buddies for the ELL students, Unified Sports for the students with disabilities, global learning field trips, and all staff acquiring Sheltered English Immersion endorsements. Practices and policies evolved that elevate student voice and choice, such as breakfast and snack opportunities, senior privileges, outside dining, and restorative justice in lieu of punitive consequences for minor offenses. The foundational reasoning requires the school develop ways to disrupt the behavioral and structural obstacles that impede student learning. The most effective element in the application and implementation of all new strategies has been the consistent integration of common planning time within the school day. We are in our third year of bimonthly department specific planning time directed by department heads/directors to analyze student work, share effective teaching strategies and collaborate on lesson planning.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At Abington High School, students of all abilities are expected to acquire foundational skills in core curriculum. Content, scope, and sequence for each core subject takes on an individualized and targeted approach to meet the needs of the learners and appropriately support student achievement. Using data analysis from a variety of assessments, collaborative feedback from department meetings, and feedback from stakeholders, all core curriculum is targeted to meet the school's learning standards.

As indicated by the Massachusetts Frameworks, students are expected to pass an English Language Arts course at each grade level. All students address one essential question in their courses: what do texts reveal about the human condition? Students read literature as a means of exploring the power of the human ability to effect change. Using written narration and argument, collaborative learning, and presentation, students advocate for themselves and others using the content of their reading as a foundation for original thought. To address student learning, teachers engage students with texts emphasizing a growth mindset. By role playing, drawing, using mobile apps, jigsaws, gallery walks, and mock trials, etc. students connect texts to life. Texts spiral in sophistication and students write in increasingly challenging ways, both academic and personal. Through targeted analysis of the craft and structure of texts, students acquire foundational knowledge of the power of the written word which they then apply to their own writing. A cross-curricular summer reading program that promotes student choice demonstrates learning is life-long.

As part of the Social Sciences curriculum students are required to pass three years of history courses to graduate from Abington High School. These required classes, as dictated by the Massachusetts History Frameworks, are World History (grade 9), U.S. History 1 (grade 10), and U.S. History 2 (grade 11). All required standards from the Massachusetts Frameworks are included in our curricula. In addition, teachers utilize common rubrics to assess historical thinking skills: primary source analysis, change over time and forming, and defending an argument. All students, regardless of level distinction, are held to these rubrics' standards. These historical thinking skills were selected by the history department to help advance the academic achievement of the student body and prepare students for success in college and career choices. In addition to the program of studies including a course called Politics and Government, an upper-class elective, all required history courses address civic learning and engagement through topics like government structures, elections, civic engagement over time, and suffrage over time.

In Mathematics, Abington High School has a four-year graduation requirement, with the lowest math we offer being Algebra I. This means that every student will graduate with at least Algebra II. For our students who struggle in achieving this goal, we have various supports in place. First, we have split our lower levels of Algebra I into a two semester class for struggling learners. This ensures that if a student does not pass, they can start again without having to fail an entire year. As a sophomore, they can complete the second half of Algebra while completing Geometry as well. Students who struggle in accessing the foundational skills are usually placed into a course where there is a co-teacher in the room, as well as having access to an Academic Support class and MCAS tutoring during the school day.

The high school Science, Technology and Engineering (STE) program provides a hands on, inquiry-based learning experience in the four general areas of science (i.e., physical, life, earth and space science, and technology/engineering) as designated by the 2016 Massachusetts STE Curriculum Frameworks. The grade 9 and 10 science courses are core science requirements, not only as a culmination of the PreK-10 science program and MCAS preparation, but also as preparation for all grade 11 and 12 science offerings. Upper-class science courses continue to build upon the foundation to develop scientifically and technologically literate citizens by engaging them to be able to read and understand scientific texts, collect and analyze data through labs and activities, collaborate with peers in problem solving, and apply their findings to real world applications needed for civic participation, college preparation, and career readiness.

Through ELA, Social Studies, Mathematics, and STE students develop skills in communication, applied research, inquiry based learning, and problem solving. As detailed above, the core curriculum overall

encourages civic participation and responsibility through varied opportunities for real life application. The targeted instruction and deliberate interventions built into the curriculum in each concentration also support student's advancement to college and career readiness. Each of these core disciplines have developed a secondary supporting curriculum for students with disabilities, demonstrating high expectations that all students will acquire college and career ready skills.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Beyond the core curriculum, Abington High School's other curriculum areas support students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge in each of their respective disciplines. These areas include: visual and performing arts, physical education/health/nutrition, foreign language, and technology/library/media.

The selection of visual art course offerings provides distinctive experiences and knowledge for all students regardless of artistic ability and career interests. The vague notion of talent is not a prerequisite for electing a course, but interest and enthusiasm are essential. Students can elect art courses for personal development, cultural and creative exploration and enrichment, and portfolio development for college admission. Each course incorporates art making, art appreciation, and art evaluation, using a fine art creative problem-solving approach in which art projects have no single solution. Gaining knowledge in art is a process, which includes: visual literacy, contextual relevancy, and critical response. Perception, communication, production, evaluation, aesthetic knowledge, and making connections are the goals of the program. Teachers accommodate students with special needs by modifying instruction to meet the needs and ability levels of all students including gifted, ELL, and other exceptional students. The Art Curriculum aligns with the Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Frameworks (1999) and National Visual Arts Standards (2014).

The study of music fosters artistic development, critical thinking, and the pursuit of lifelong learning. Classes meet every day and students perform several times each year. Students build on previously learned technical skills, interpretation, listening skills, knowledge of musical terms and symbols, scales, melodies, chords and harmony. Students have the opportunity to audition for District and SEMSBA Festivals or be recommended for participation in college honor groups or Lions all-state band. The Music Department also offers non-performance electives: Beginner Guitar, Electronic Music I and II, Media Production, Movies that Rock, and Rock Band.

The study of a foreign language is a component of the curriculum in grades 7 through 12. All grades meet every day for the entire school year. Students must successfully study two years of the same language in high school to fulfill the graduation requirement. The study of a foreign language supports all disciplines of the core curriculum. When studying a foreign language, students learn and reinforce the same skills as in English Language Arts such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. When studying vocabulary and grammar students acquire a better understanding of English vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. The students also learn about the culture, history, literature, and art of the countries that speak the language they are studying. This supports the acquisition of knowledge in the disciplines of history, science, art and music. In the area of mathematics, students learn how to convert to the metric system, Fahrenheit to Celsius, and to currencies of other countries. One of the greatest contributions that the learning of a foreign language imparts to students is an understanding and appreciation of other cultures. It instills an understanding of global awareness and cultural differences.

Health Education courses are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills that lead to positive attitudes and behaviors that support lifelong health. The courses focus on emerging health concepts and issues, as well as current research on effective health practices and motivational strategies to change unhealthy behaviors. All students are required to take a half year of Health in grade 10 and physical education every year. Students in grades 11 and 12 have the option of taking up to four different electives. The goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity.

The Library Media Center (LMC) is the heart of the learning community. Flexible scheduling encourages staff, students, and the community at large to take advantage of the library's resources. Although there is a print collection for both the middle and high school, the LMC embraces a learning commons model infused

with technology and versatile workspaces that encourage inquiry, creativity, and collaboration. It was designed to be a multifaceted learning community, where students can come to work individually or in groups. Classes can also sign up to make use of the library's resources. The architecture and modular furnishings are designed to be rearranged to meet the user's needs. Flexible scheduling of the library staff allows the library media teacher to provide instruction and assistance to staff and students on a need to know basis throughout the day and even after school. Two days a week, the LMC stays open until 4:00 and there is a late bus for students that might not otherwise be able to participate in afterschool activities because they had no ride home. In addition to that, a blended learning digital literacy course has just been added to the program of studies.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Abington High School teachers employ a variety of instructional methods to promote student-centered learning. Teachers use Essential Questions from their content area to drive each lesson. Expectations are clearly articulated and posted in classrooms. The co-teacher model supports a tiered instructional process by providing individual support to students based on their varied needs. The universal design of instruction and the technology in our classrooms provides the opportunity for all students to access the curriculum and participate in daily activities. Teachers receive professional development training in order to provide a high level of technology-based support. Faculty members periodically participate in Instructional Rounds to observe how colleagues differentiate instruction by using multiple modalities of teaching to accommodate students with diverse learning needs. Through this process, our teachers develop a shared practice of observing, discussing, and analyzing teaching and learning. Some of the instructional strategies noted during a recent round of observations include: discussing essential questions at start of class; grouping students to create a collaborative learning environment; asking probing questions to informally assess comprehension; providing opportunities to apply/extend knowledge; redirecting students who are distracted; and, using a ticket to leave to assess individual student learning and adjust practice accordingly.

Abington High School uses a tiered intervention model to ensure a high level of achievement for all students. Tier one begins with maintaining a positive school culture focused on inclusive practices such as Unified Sports, Language Buddies, anti-bullying and anti-drug initiatives, as well as a breakfast program. Tier two offers a high level of student support through IEPs, 504s, academic support, co-teaching, and ESL classes. We also have a Student Support Team that meets weekly to respond to the social and emotional needs of students. Our Academic Center for Enrichment offers after school tutoring twice a week and includes a late bus option for students who need transportation. Tier three focuses primarily on crisis intervention, in addition to expanded tutoring options, such as at home, etc. The district and school accommodation plans are reviewed annually to ensure best practices are embedded within curriculum planning and lesson delivery.

Teachers use a variety of assessments, both formative and summative, to gauge student learning. Formative assessment strategies are embedded in daily teaching practices. Targeted professional development is periodically conducted to allow teachers to share their most effective formative assessments and practice new ones with colleagues. As part of the evaluation process, teachers have been encouraged to specifically focus on using formative assessment to adjust their daily practice and reflect on the ways it promotes higher levels of student learning. Summative assessments are curriculum driven and standards-based and are typically administered department-wide to ensure equity for all students. Additionally, students take state-wide assessments, SATs, Advanced Placement exams, etc. Data teams meet to review assessment data to analyze and improve student and school performance. Departments meet bi-monthly to analyze assessment data and discuss student performance, areas of weakness, and intervention strategies for particular identified gaps. Department heads and directors then meet with administrators to determine budgetary, staffing, professional development needs to respond to curriculum priorities to support and improve student and school performance.

Currently there are no significant achievement gaps. Targeted interventions to respond to previously identified gaps between the test scores of all students and test scores of subgroups have been successful. On our most recent state-wide assessment, the subgroups actually out-performed the aggregate.

As a high performing school, maintaining high levels of achievement is a high priority. A positive school culture that fosters inclusiveness is essential as it allows us to nurture and support the social and emotional needs of our students while providing them with a meaningful educational experience. The instructional approaches and reflective practices employed by teachers continue to focus on student-centered learning. Frequent and varied evaluations of student learning via formative and summative assessments yields meaningful data for teachers to analyze and inform daily practice and curriculum planning. Tiered interventions are in place to provide support that is responsive to students at an academic and social emotional level.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Abington High School mission is to provide a learning environment that promotes the intellectual, artistic, physical, cultural, and emotional development of our students. We seek to create an educational experience based upon a curriculum reflecting the standards set forth in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Recognizing and serving individual differences, interests, and abilities, our educational community aims to prepare students to become informed, skilled, and responsible citizens.

Abington High School offers a variety of activities to provide students with options to stay engaged and motivated. Students can express their interests through academically based clubs, peer support groups, artistic and literary avenues, and through our athletics program. In total Abington High School has over 20 clubs and over 20 junior varsity and varsity athletic programs for students to participate in. If there is student interest, but there are not enough numbers to house a team, the athletic department collaborates with surrounding district's athletic programs to create these opportunities for students. For example, our Wrestling and Tennis teams are cooperative based programs where our students and other local high school students compete together on one varsity team. Most recently Abington High School developed programs to engage our most vulnerable populations: English Language Learners and our students who have moderate to severe disabilities. These clubs include the Language Buddies Program where English Language Learners and Native English speakers come together and attend field trips with the goal of building connections and developing language. The Unified Sports Program is a co-ed, inclusive sports program for all high school students. The program focuses on promoting sportsmanship and teamwork within the Abington High School community. Unified Sports provides opportunities for all students regardless of their abilities to compete together on one team.

In regards to staff climate and culture, Abington High School offers a variety of practices to help teachers feel valued and supported. Some of these practices include planned team-building activities, a Mentoring Program for new staff members, common planning time built into the schedule every other week, and Instructional Rounds which provide teachers the opportunity to observe their peers and reflect on their own practices. The evaluation system also provides opportunity for staff to have an open dialogue with administration with the purpose of discussing personal and team goals and providing constructive feedback on ways to improve. Staff are able to express their ideas and/or concerns often through online surveys and face to face conversations as the Administration has an open-door policy model. This model is not a top-down approach, as staff share responsibility for student success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Open, clear, and timely communication has been Abington High School's most successful strategy in engaging families and the community. In order for all educational stakeholders to stay connected and informed, it is encouraged to register for Constant Contact which is a communication tool to efficiently inform the greater population. This tool helps to keep parents and community members involved and up to date on the everyday happenings of Abington High School and of special events or announcements. Daily Announcements and the Principal's Monday Message which recognizes student, staff and school accomplishments in addition to outlining future school related events are emailed directly to anyone who has an Abington High School Constant Contact account.

Modes of communication have evolved over the past couple of years with the use of social media. In addition to the above mentioned forms of communicating, administrators are now using social networking sites such as Twitter and Instagram to reach more people in the educational community. Furthermore, teachers are using other online modes such as our online portal, classroom blogging and teacher webpages to help students and families stay informed of what is going on in a particular classroom. Examples of these sites are located and available to the public on Abington High School's web page.

With communication, comes access to information. Student academic progress in the form of report cards

are mailed home on a quarterly basis. Through the online portal system, however, parents have unlimited access to their students grades and therefore are able to stay up to date on their student's progress. Abington High School has also improved the access for Parent Teacher Conferences, implementing an online system for parents and/or guardians to sign up to speak with their student's teachers. The Guidance Department is also available to meet with families once a month during scheduled evening hours to accommodate working parent's schedules.

Abington High School hosts multiple evening events to educate parents and the community on student interest topics such as College Planning, Financial Aid and current Social Issues impacting our population, including but not limited to school safety, alcohol and drug abuse, and the implications of misuse of social media. It is also common practice to share information about presentations hosted by other local schools that are opened to the public.

Through communication, Abington High School has developed a strong alumni and community member involvement. Alumni has been integral in supporting the athletic program in addition to being guest speakers in classrooms and award ceremonies and contributing to local scholarships for our graduating seniors. Alumni and Community Connections have also helped develop a "Credit for Life" program where senior students participate in mock, money related life scenarios with volunteers from local community businesses such as the bank, housing authority and car dealerships.

3. Professional Development:

The Abington Public School District approaches professional development with a shared vision for growth through an academically focused Vision and Strategic Plan. The plan is the culmination of analysis and work by a strategic planning committee consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, students, school committee members, and community leaders. Abington High School's Improvement Plan incorporates several elements of the district's vision to target the specific needs of the population within the high school. This school based plan drives professional development and includes academic achievement goals each year in addition to programming goals and social emotional goals.

At the district level, a Curriculum Planning Council meets monthly with district administrators, department heads, and directors to establish and monitor short term goals and planning needs aimed to meet student achievement to align individual school professional development with ongoing district level goals and initiatives. Through this council, curriculum updates and analysis of student achievement data align professional development closely with major subject area standards. In addition, the district's Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Director uses insight from the Planning Council to develop vertical teaming with lower grades to target achievement gaps.

Individually within the high school, department heads and directors filter the district and school determined needs to teachers in bi-weekly common planning meetings by department. Obtaining the title "Wave Week Wednesday" from the school's mascot, this common planning builds positive culture, inspires departmental goals, encourages targeted data analysis based on academic standards, and aligns each department's individual work with the greater school improvement plan. Twice or more per year, this time is dedicated to interdisciplinary collaboration.

4. School Leadership:

Abington High School embodies a shared leadership philosophy. The administration and staff work together to make decisions that are in the best interests of students. They support all students in achieving success, fostering the physical, intellectual, technological, social, emotional and artistic development of all students. The leadership team includes the Principal, Assistant Principal, a Crisis/Student Support Team with three guidance counselors, the school nurse, the school psychologist, the Special Education Team Chair, the school resource officers, and the Athletic Director. The student leaders and School Council also share in decision making as representatives of the students and community.

The Principal and Assistant Principal work to encourage staff initiative and innovation by supporting new

proposals and ideas within the school (via blogs and surveys) and implementing professional development that is essential for effective instruction and improved student learning. In 2015, teachers created a Global Studies Program after the principal invited a guest speaker to speak to faculty about the benefits of student travel. Abington students have now visited almost a dozen countries through this program and the school runs two full trips each year. In 2016, a teacher in collaboration with guidance and the athletic department proposed the “Academic Enrichment Center.” A program was created for students after school to access tutors, get homework help, or join extracurricular activities. A late bus is provided too, enabling access to the building, staff, and resources. In 2017, ELL teachers worked with the school leaders to establish the “Language Buddies” program which helps our ELL students assimilate academically and socially. Innovative programs supported by the administration target the success of all students and increase student achievement overall.

The Student Support Team (SST), a model tier 2 strategy, meets weekly regarding students at need. The team works to establish a safe, tolerant, supportive, and equitable learning environment in the building. There is an established referral process that staff use to refer a student to the SST team and the team discusses individual student needs in collaboration with their history and reported teacher/family concerns. SST is vital to the social and emotional well-being of students and the school as a whole. They cultivate an educational partnership among home, school, and in the community.

The Principal and Assistant Principal meet monthly with School Council which consists of teachers, community members, parents, and students. They review updates and proposals to curriculum, programing, and policies. The group members bring forward proposals from the various stakeholders they represent and the Council debates the alignment with the school’s mission and student needs before sending them on to the School Committee for approval.

Overall, maintaining positive working relationships and a sense of shared leadership among administrators, staff, and all other stakeholders is of the utmost important to Abington High School. Those relationships and the honest, open, and timely communication that results from them positively impact student achievement and success.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The philosophy that fosters a growth mindset and tiered/differentiated interventions drive the programming and policies embedded within teacher evaluation, professional development, student handbook development, and school improvement planning. As a school we believe in the inherent value of a tolerant and safe physical, intellectual and emotional environment (tier one) as necessary in order for students to reach their full potential. The social-emotional elements impacting our students are related to anxiety, depression, drug abuse, gender identity, hunger, homelessness, navigating peer relationships, increasing social media complexities, and family and economic precarity. Being cognizant of how school climate impacts student achievement is an important factor in the development and implementation of school and classroom policies and procedures.

This philosophy has driven the one practice that has been the most instrumental to the school's success: the incorporation of weekly Student Support Team meetings. These meetings provide consistent reviews of all students who appear to be experiencing adverse behaviors successful for student achievement. Typically, these tier two students are referred to the team by teachers, support staff, parents or through report card reviews. The team consists of the administration, counselors, school nurse, special education team chair, school resource officers, athletic director, and school psychologist. In addition to supporting interventions to support struggling students, the SST develops and implements secondary strategies that also impact school-wide practice and classroom practice. The attention to student social-emotional development and the obstacles that hinder student progress have been a primary element embedded into school-wide practice for several years.

The Student Support Team has completed the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Survey for trauma informed schools and uses the survey results to inform practice, budget priorities, plan for professional development and develop school improvement goals. Routinely the team formerly recommends home tutoring, hospital placement, special education referrals, safety evaluations, counseling or outside agency referrals (Department of Mental Health, Department of Children and Families, Juvenile Court System and Child Requiring Assistance referrals, Care and Protection Orders, abuse and neglect reporting). These recommendations are provided to parents/guardians and include local lists of appropriate resources relevant to the identified needs.

Broadly, at tier one, the Student Support Team has initiated professional development and programming to support the social-emotional needs of adolescents that are prevalent in our population. These data are either collected by team members or are drawn from the Massachusetts Healthy Youth Risk Survey. Some programming examples include the Signs of Suicide program in Health classes, Hidden in Plain Sight for drug prevention, Sexting, Social Media and the Law with the District Attorney's office, and numerous local presentations annually that address positive behavior, decision making, substance use and bullying.

In addition to tier two individual strategies for individual students, tier two programs have also been created for vulnerable groups, as a result of the SST work, such as the after school tutoring (ACE) and late bus for students who need extra help or just have no place to go after school, a breakfast program, a Language Buddies Club, MCAS tutoring, Academic Support, social skills groups, ESL courses, native language speaking staff, Gay Straight Alliance Club, Unified Athletics, Anti-Bullying Club, and Green Wave Connect for special needs students. An anonymous bullying tip line and local behavioral supports and resources are linked to the district and school websites to provide information to parents and the community as a whole.