

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Robert Murphy

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

Official School Name Swampscott High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 200 Essex Street

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

Swampscott MA 01907-2293
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Essex County

Telephone (781) 596-8830

Fax (781) 599-2034

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

E-mail kohut@swampscott.k12.ma.us

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*Ms. Pamela Angelakis

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

E-mail
angelakis@swampscott.k12.ma.us

District Name Swampscott School District Tel. (781) 596-8800

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Amy O'Connor

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2018 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2012 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	88	94	182
10	74	83	157
11	88	90	178
12 or higher	80	78	158
Total Students	330	345	675

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 5 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80 % White
 - 2 % 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: 4%

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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	684
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Cape Verdean, Creole (Haitian), French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Indian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tigrinya, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 20 %
Total number students who qualify: 137

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
89 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>9</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>33</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>25</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>18</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</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: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	42
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	22
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	93%	93%	88%	92%	94%
High school graduation rate	95%	94%	94%	98%	94%

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

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

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	155
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	81%
Enrolled in a community college	14%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
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.

Swampscott High School is a community of adult and student learners who work together to succeed in a diverse and evolving global society by promoting academic and personal excellence within an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

The town of Swampscott is a coastal community located north of Boston with an approximate total population of 14,000. This suburb is home to professionals and families who, as a community, are vitally invested in academic excellence, social consciousness, and a globally focused public school education. While most Swampscott High School (SHS) students are residents of the town, 88 students are from the neighboring town of Nahant. Swampscott is also a participating METCO community. METCO is a voluntary program intended to expand educational opportunities, increase diversity, and reduce racial isolation, by permitting students in certain cities (in this case Boston) to attend public schools in other communities that have agreed to participate. This year, Swampscott celebrates its 53rd year with METCO with 53 students in the district, and 27 at the high school.

In the last five years, 97% of SHS graduates chose to continue their education beyond high school, almost 84% enrolling directly in a four-year college or university. It is important to note that this 97% represents the vast majority of SHS graduates. The latter number is an increase of approximately ten percent over the last twenty years. The college bound population is remarkably stable. Swampscott students hail from many different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Among these graduates are African-American and Latino students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.

Key strategies to success include a diverse curriculum, dedicated school counseling programs, and a commitment to health and wellness. The school district has made mental health a top priority, and this priority is reflected in several student focused programs and professional development opportunities for staff. Swampscott High School has taken a whole child approach to closing the achievement gap by implementing several programs such as STEM, Harbor/SWIFT, counseling services, and mindfulness. However, none of these initiatives would have changed anything if it were not for the devoted and talented Swampscott High School faculty and staff.

Swampscott High School is among the best public high schools in Massachusetts. Assessment data such as test scores demonstrate this elite performance. For example, SHS has been recognized by the College Board AP District Honor Roll for several years. This distinction is awarded to schools that have increased access to Advanced Placement coursework while also earning high scores. SHS has also performed well on the MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) exam. Swampscott High School's MCAS Composite Performance Index--a measurement that represents how well students demonstrate proficiency in a subject-- is among the best in the state. Last year, SHS earned a 99.9 CPI in English Language Arts; a 97.9 CPI in Mathematics, and a 98.8 CPI in Science. SHS has also been recognized as a Level One school for its work in narrowing proficiency gap goals.

The current high school was built and opened its doors in 2007. Soon after its opening, the town implemented a STEM initiative, which continues today and leverages multiple resources including a Robotics lab, a community garden, and STEM courses with a focus on an interdisciplinary approach and community engagement. In 2017, 22 students earned the STEM certificate distinction reflecting additional coursework, community responsibilities, and independent research and presentation.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The English Language Arts curriculum reflects Swampscott High School's goals by leading students to a deeper understanding of themselves and their communities.. This curriculum, aligned with the national Common Core, stresses the importance of four key skill-areas: close reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening. Through reading and discussing appropriate literature and refining their communication skills, students learn to examine their own ideas and to comprehend and value the ideas of others. The department's objective is to develop the critical thinking, speaking, and writing skills necessary for effective personal and community enrichment as well as to foster a love of reading.

Underclassmen are placed into Advanced College Preparatory (ACP) English or Honors English. The 9th grade courses focus on a variety of different texts, with a focus on archetypes and studying how and why classical texts are still relevant. Close reading skills are modeled and practiced, with careful attention on interpretation. Students often set individual writing goals, and with teacher support, further develop those skills. In addition to analytical writing, students write poetry and formal and informal journaling. Grammar and usage are studied formally and in-context at all grade levels. Speaking and listening skills are developed through formal and informal discussion, with a focus on confidence and creating a space where students feel safe to share their ideas. When student needs require it, we also offer a Foundations of English course for struggling readers and writers. This double-block class explicitly focuses on writing and reading. Foundations of English incorporates high-interest reading into the curriculum, and with the extra instruction time, teachers have more opportunities to work one-on-one with students. Upperclassmen choose between ACP American Literature, American Studies (ACP or honors), or Advanced Placement Language and Composition. American Studies is a popular double-block American literature and history class co-taught by an English teacher and a history teacher. Twelfth grade students choose between ACP and AP Literature and Composition. Additionally, students may choose electives such as Journalism, Speech and Debate, Media Literacy, and Creative Writing. These courses also address Common Core skills and promote looking at the world through a more critical lens. Co-taught courses taught by an ELA teacher and a Special Education teacher are available for each grade level.

The Math Department seeks to prepare students to become independent critical thinkers and problem solvers who can apply their knowledge to new situations across subjects. The Department offers a four-year sequence of courses for all students, starting with Algebra I through Calculus and Statistics. All courses are revised yearly and the curriculum is based upon the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards, the College Board, as well as the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics. All courses seek to develop the eight Standards of Mathematical Practice outlined by the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics.

The Swampscott Science Department focuses provides an inquiry-based science curriculum to ensure student success. SHS has a three-year laboratory science requirement for graduation and a variety of other courses to meet the individual interests of students. Our three-year sequence of biology, chemistry and physics is taught at various levels to meet student needs. The curriculum for each course meets or exceeds the Massachusetts Science Curriculum Frameworks. Our electives continually change as we offer new, exciting, and relevant courses for students, such as Intro to Java Programming. The science department is integral in implementing an interdisciplinary STEM initiative.

The History and Social Studies program seeks to encourage informed democratic citizenship through the study of World and American History and the social sciences.

Students are required to take a two-year World History sequence in grades nine and ten, and a year of American History in grade eleven following both the Massachusetts Frameworks Curriculum and the Common Core Standards. Seniors may choose from a variety of offerings in history or the social sciences including: economics, civics, psychology, international relations, and art history. Because students' goals and abilities differ widely, the social studies department places students in classes that meet their individual

needs.

All courses in the department focus on building and refining the following skills: critical thinking, argument development and argument analysis, using and evaluating evidence, written and oral communication, and college and career readiness

In the last five years, 97% of SHS graduates chose to continue their education beyond high school with almost 84% enrolling directly in a four-year college or university nearly a ten percent increase over the last twenty years. Senior Project gives selected seniors in good academic standing the opportunity to investigate a career, explore an academic interest, and/or participate in a community service project. Accepted students leave Swampscott High School to work on this project during 4th quarter and collaborate with professionals in their chosen field. Students have worked in such varied fields as healthcare, education, and business. Arts courses are open to students in grades 9-12.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Swampscott High School Fine Arts Department provides an intensive program in visual arts, music, and media. The program's goal is to help students develop a lifelong involvement in the arts and an appreciation of the creative process.

The Wellness Department offers courses, in line with both National and Massachusetts State Standards.

Physical education courses, required in all grades 9-12, get students exercising in order to enhance brain function, increase health-related fitness and build a foundation for lifelong fitness. These programs expose students to contemporary methods and equipment, giving them the knowledge and confidence needed to become their own personal trainers. Furthermore, the physical education curriculum stresses positive social skill development and encourages risk taking in a supportive environment.

The World Language department offers students differentiated courses and a full sequence of French and Spanish through the AP level. Approximately 81% of students are enrolled in World Language classes each year, and a large number are recognized regionally and nationally for their achievements on the French and Spanish National Exams. Our curriculum focuses on language proficiency while fostering cultural understanding. In addition to daily exposure to language and culture in class, students routinely go to the language lab to refine their listening and speaking skills. The World Language department hosts a variety of cultural and language-based events including Latin dance classes, field trips, guest speakers and foreign film nights. Students act globally; for example they have partnered with an NGO to improve clean water and sanitation access in Burkina Faso and taken service trips to Nicaragua. Other bi-annual trips include travel to Canada and France, as well as a Spanish school exchange program.

The Global Competency Certificate develops and encourages students' interest and activism as global citizens. This certificate program requires students to complete a minimum of four years of the same world language, take additional globally focused electives, and complete an international experience or globally focused, local experience. In 2017, 17 students earned the GCC distinction.

The SHS STEM Certificate Program allows students to explore career and college avenues in the STEM fields, enhance their 21st century skills, and focus on real world challenges. Students who complete this program earn a STEM designation on their transcript.

Through a faculty advised application process, senior students have the opportunity to participate in an off-campus internship in a career area of their choosing during the final quarter of senior year. Upon completion of their internship, students are required to write a capstone paper and present their experiences to faculty and the community.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

SHS faculty utilize best practices for instructional methods, implement a tiered intervention system for struggling students, analyze data to inform curriculum and instruction, and utilize technology. Since its inception in 2014, the co-teaching program has grown and consists of a group of content -specific and special education teachers who collaborate to teach subject-area classes together within the general education classrooms. By combining the learning strategies of special education with mainstream classroom rigor, teachers not only accommodate Special Education students, but also offer universal design for general education students who benefit from alternative approaches to teaching and learning.

Inclusionary practices also continue after high school. For example, one of our post-secondary students is Swampscott's first to participate in a cohort in the Massachusetts Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Initiative (MAICEI) program at Salem State University. This program allows Special Education students to take college-level courses, increase independence, and provide real-world academic, vocational, and social skills.

Swampscott High School uses many interventions to ensure that all students learn. Our District Curriculum Accommodation Plan outlines best practice interventions for all students. Should these interventions fail, teachers then refer the student to our Student Support Team. After referral, administrators, counselors, teachers, and school psychologists meet to discuss the student. The team reviews the student's data, develops an action plan, and monitors student progress. Depending on the student's needs, he or she might be referred to the SWIFT program (a short-term program designed to support students in crisis) and/or to the Academic Strategies and Skills course, a class that focuses on organization, time management, study skill strategies, and note-taking. A struggling student might also be referred for a special education evaluation.

Technology integration has become a top priority at SHS. For example, all faculty are Google Classroom trained. Most SHS educators use Google Classroom to provide feedback, post assignment information, and hold class discussions. In 2017 all faculty were supplied with Google Chromebooks. Teachers may also lend Chromebooks to students. Many classrooms are also supplemented with SMART boards.

In the past three years, the number of students scoring in the Advanced and Proficient (A/P) on the MCAS categories have increased. In 2014, 89% of students were in the A/P categories, followed by 89% in 2015, 89% in 2016, and 94% in 2017. Our students score consistently above the state average. In 2016, 75% of Economically disadvantaged students scored A/P and in 2017, 89%. For students with disabilities, in 2016 59% scored A/P, while in 2017 65% of this subgroup scored A/P.

The department annually examines MCAS data and identifies students who score in the Needs Improvement/Failing categories. Those students are given an Educational Proficiency Plan which requires them to successfully complete 4 year-long math courses and/or pass the state-mandated Educational Proficiency Plan exam.

After conferring with the student's math teachers, the school counselor and parents/guardians, the decision is made to place the student in an Integrated Algebra and Geometry course, which provides reinforcement of Algebra 1 and Geometry or continue to co-taught Algebra 2. Additionally, every year the department reviews each test item and identifies growth areas. The department then determines if those growth areas were due to curriculum or instruction. To help students prepare for the MCAS, sample MCAS are given to students routinely to familiarize students with content but also exam format. Finally, especially in the co-taught Geometry classes, teachers routinely include topics from Algebra I for additional reinforcement.

English Language Arts

MCAS English Language Arts scores have consistently improved over the past three years. In 2014, 55% of students earned Advanced; in 2015, 63% earned Advanced; and in 2017 66% of our students earned Advanced. The percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students scoring proficient or higher went up from 90% in 2016 to 96% in 2017. Also, the percentage of High Needs students scoring proficient or higher increased from 84% in 2016 to 93% in 2017. Students with Disabilities improved from 67% scoring Proficient or Higher in 2016 to 87% scoring Proficient or Higher in 2017. During the 2017 testing, students scored above the state average for every ELA exam strand and also scored above the state average for nearly all questions. ELA teachers analyze data and determine appropriate interventions or plan curriculum to

address the data. For example, in student writing assessments, the department communicated its open response expectations with other subject areas and also standardized open response scoring among all ELA teachers. Test data also revealed that students struggled with analyzing a poem. Consequently, ELA teachers incorporated more poetry into the ninth and tenth grade curriculum.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Teachers and staff feel valued at Swampscott High School. SHS teachers are clearly committed to their students and to the community. Of the 111 current faculty and staff, 67 have worked at SHS for five or more years (60%); and 47 faculty or staff have been here for ten or more years (42%). In addition to their commitment to the academic growth of our students, the faculty and staff are also active members in athletic coaching positions. Of all the coaching and assistant coaching positions available, 26% of those positions are held by someone who is also a faculty, staff, or administrator. Furthermore, of those same coaching positions, over 40% of those positions are filled with community members who are SHS graduates.

Teachers employ an assortment of techniques to motivate and engage students in their particular content area and classroom structure. Many teachers use mindfulness strategies in their classrooms as a warm-up in order to bring students' minds to the "present." The principal and Director of Guidance utilize Twitter to celebrate students' academic and extra-curricular successes. For students struggling socially or emotionally, the school offers two support programs—SWIFT and HARBOR. SWIFT is a short-term transitional program for students re-entering school following multiple documented absences (e.g. concussion, hospitalization) that helps support students academically, socially, and emotionally. HARBOR is a program for students who have a documented emotional disability. In both programs, students have access to direct service counseling, academic work tracking, and access to a dedicated classroom and staff for support completing independent work.

SHS students participate in a variety of clubs and activities, many of which tie in with or further their work in core classes. For example, the International Relations Club allows interested students to engage in a hands-on event during which they can expand their understanding of the United Nations as well as their knowledge of other countries. Finally, many teachers use social media such as Twitter, Instagram, and/or YouTube to display and celebrate student work.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Each year, parents are invited to participate in a number of school-sponsored events focusing on a variety of areas. In terms of curriculum, parents engage in Curriculum Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Prospective Student Open House, Program of Studies Evening, National Honors Society, and Underclassmen Awards. Parents are also invited to School Counseling and Guidance events at least four times each year, where they learn about college and career planning, financial aid, midyear exam preparation, and the importance of student involvement in extracurricular activities. In the past few years, the school has offered other community-focused events hosting speakers and workshops on mental health issues and opioid substance abuse, for example. The School Counselors are engaged in regular communication with parents. Counselors connect with students who earn a D or an F at any marking period, including progress report time, for a minimum of eight times each year; counselors connect with parents about these same students to collaborate on ways to support each child. Counselors also alert parents to positive contributions or behavior that have been noticed in or out of the classroom. For example, school counselors send emails to students and parents when students make the honor roll at various marking periods. The School Counseling department maintains relationships with over seventy individuals and organizations who generously offer annual scholarships for SHS graduating seniors. The faculty and administration are committed to the health and improvement of its community and offer events like Wellness Week, which offers students opportunities to participate in various workshops in mindfulness, for example, or host alumni speakers. The SHS student body maintains a relationship with the senior center, which is attached to the physical building; some students earn credit for teaching computer literacy skills to seniors each quarter. Each year, seniors have an opportunity to participate in senior project, an internship program that places students in organizations throughout the local community. Through our STEM initiative, students participate on a number of committees to strengthen the community, such as the

Conservation Committee.

In addition to the SHS main website, regular email communication from the principal and School Counseling office, the Principal and Director of Guidance maintain a blog which serves as an information hub, but also provides consistent updates on student achievements in academics, athletics, the arts, and STEM. The School Counseling blog covers college and career planning information and advice, alumni news and achievements, and offers recommendations and advice to parents in a variety of areas including mental health and substance use. The School Counseling department also communicates with students and parents through email using the Naviance Family Connection, Aspen, SHS School Counseling website, YouTube, and Twitter @SHSGuidanceDpt. All three school administrators, along with the Athletic department and many teachers, communicate using Twitter. Many of the faculty educators also leverage the existing website platform to host their own individual teaching and course websites that hosts curriculum information, calendars, homework, and resources. Our updated student information system, Aspen, does an excellent job of keeping students and parents informed of student grade progress. Many students and parents will enroll in the text notification system, which will automatically send an alert if a student earns below a certain grade on an assignment. This regular and real time communication has proven helpful in keeping students and families engaged in the educational process.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is planned by a committee that includes representative teachers, the Director of Student Services, and the district Curriculum Director. This “team” approach allows all parties to express what they believe to be the most important needs of our students and teachers. Given the rise in anxiety diagnoses and anxiety-related absences, this year SHS had an expert come discuss strategies for teaching students with anxiety, focusing on awareness of anxiety and how it impacts learning, as well as strategies for supporting students. Additionally, to support our student chapter of the Anti-Defamation League, teachers were trained by Anti-Defamation League representatives this winter. Teachers also have opportunities to complete more specialized professional development, at teacher request. For example, last summer, three teachers attended a week-long AP training in Maine. Before launching the co-teaching initiative, a cohort of SHS teachers took a graduate-level course in co-teaching methods. As both problems and opportunities arise, teachers are supported when they want to attend conferences or workshops to respond to the ever-changing needs of our students. Administrators have attended workshops for ALICE school safety training and the ASCD conference in 2018.

4. School Leadership:

Swampscott High School promotes a leadership philosophy that is collaborative, supports regular communication, and shares decision-making with its stakeholders. The goal is to provide a psychologically safe environment for teaching and learning, apply standards based curriculum and instruction, support professional development for all staff, and use data effectively to monitor student growth.

The high school includes a principal, two assistant principals, one of which works part time at the high school and part-time for the district integrating technology at the K-12 level; three full-time school counselors, one full-time adjustment counselor, a full-time school nurse, two school psychologists, three administrative assistants, sixty-two teaching staff, five special education staff, five paraprofessionals, and a full complement of facility services.

Subject areas are organized into departments. An administrative team of building principals and directors operates at both the district and building level. Departments meet monthly to review data, plan, and discuss ways to improve student achievement. The principal has a building level leadership team made up of the content leaders and curriculum specialists that meets on a regular basis. A school council made up of parents, students, and teachers is another leadership group that advises the principal on the focus of the high school environment and curriculum. Monthly faculty meetings are used to communicate and update staff on the progress of building and district goals. This also provides the teaching staff with an opportunity to communicate concerns and ideas for improvement.

Students also have a voice in the high school. Student organizations such as student council, National Honor Society, the Anti-Defamation League, and many more provide opportunities for student led activities that contribute to the positive atmosphere of the school. An example would be the most recent student led "walk-out" in support of "gun safety" following the events in Parkland, Florida. Students contacted their state representative and senator and invited them to speak, organized a rally, and organized a voter registration drive; an impressive demonstration of democracy in action.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In the United States, one in every five adolescents has a serious mental health disorder and five to nine percent of teens have mental health concerns so severe that they necessitate hospitalization or result in prolonged absences from school. Compared to their peers, these youth disproportionately drop out of school, attempt suicide, abuse alcohol and drugs, and function poorly at home, school, and/or in their social lives. As a response to this crisis, Swampscott High School developed two programs that have had a dramatic impact on student learning. The programs are the Harbor and SWIFT programs.

The Harbor Program provides a supportive learning community with direct case management to facilitate student progress. Students work with staff to develop emotional regulation skills as well as managing academic expectations and pressures. Counseling and regular emotional supports are integral parts of the program, along with close home-school communication. Harbor also serves as a home base for students throughout the school day should they need assistance outside of their scheduled academic block. Staff members monitor progress of students to proactively manage obstacles before they turn into crises. Students in the program must be on an Individualized Education Plan, specifically with an identified Emotional Disability.

SWIFT (Swampscott Integrated for Transition) provides assistance with re-entry and reintegration into school following an extended absence (5 or more consecutive days) due to medical or emotional challenges. SWIFT is a general education support that offers students a small, comfortable environment in which they can access individualized academic and emotional supports. Intensive communication with parents, general educators, and outside clinicians are a vital component of this program.

SWIFT provided support to 30 unique students over the course of the 2016-2017 school year, while Harbor serviced 9 students. Broad improvements in mental health were noticed across the school--student hospitalizations for psychiatric reasons were more than halved, from 21 during SY 2015-2016 school year to 11 in SY 2016-2017. Additionally, initial IEP referrals at SHS were similarly reduced from 22 cases to 11. The program's success was noted as a model by the Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition network of transitional bridge programs, hosting a symposium that was attended by 15 school districts interested in starting their own programs. SHS faculty hosted an additional four school districts for more detailed visits to share information about the program.