

**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 [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Peter Badalament

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

Official School Name Falmouth High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 74 Woodville Road

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

Falmouth ME 04105-1106  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cumberland County

Telephone (207) 781-7429

Fax

Web site/URL

<http://www.falmouthschools.org/?Hi>

ghSchool

E-mail [peter.badalament@falmouthschools.org](mailto:peter.badalament@falmouthschools.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\*Mr. Geoff Bruno

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail [gbruno@falmouthschools.org](mailto:gbruno@falmouthschools.org)

District Name Falmouth School Department Tel. (207) 781-3200

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. Danielle Tracy

(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 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
<b>PreK</b>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	0	0	0
<b>1</b>	0	0	0
<b>2</b>	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	81	91	172
<b>10</b>	88	87	175
<b>11</b>	93	79	172
<b>12 or higher</b>	88	86	174
<b>Total Students</b>	350	343	693

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 5 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 93 % White
  - 0 % 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: 2%

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	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	706
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

Chinese, Farsee, French, Japanese, Croatian, Persian, Spanish, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4%  
Total number students who qualify: 30

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %  
63 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>6</u> Autism                  | <u>12</u> Multiple Disabilities                |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>19</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</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: 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:

	<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.	56
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 12:1

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%	94%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	98%	98%	99%	97%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	165
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	89%
Enrolled in a community college	1%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	4%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	6%

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.

Navigating Creative Pathways to Courageous, Compassionate, and Fulfilling Lives

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**

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The town of Falmouth, Maine is situated on the coast of Maine, just north of Portland, Maine's largest city. The town covers 32 square miles, stretching from the coastline to rural areas further inland to the west. Falmouth serves as a bedroom community to Portland, as many residents work in or around the greater Portland area. Our town boasts a local harbor, indoor and outdoor ice skating facilities, golf courses, a medical center, extensive hiking and biking trails, and a host of small shops and restaurants.

Falmouth was settled in the 1600s, originally covering an area that is now Portland, Cape Elizabeth, South Portland, and Westbrook. The total population of the town has grown from about 1,500 in 1900 to 6,000 in 1970, to approximately 12,000 at present. Approximately 25% of the town's population is over 55 years of age, and 19% of our town's population consists of school-age children. Approximately 60% of the town's residents hold a college degree, with about 21% of the town's total population holding a graduate degree or professional certification. Falmouth's median household income is about \$67,000. We are a primarily a white collar, suburban town. Our school district enrollment has grown from 1,600 in 1970 to approximately 2,200 at present.

Falmouth public schools are consistently ranked among the top schools in Maine. We are governed by a single municipality. Our school board is made up of seven members and three student representatives from Falmouth High School. The school district has three school buildings, all situated on one campus in the heart of the town's geographic boundary: Falmouth Elementary School, a K-5 National Blue Ribbon elementary school with a student population of 930; Falmouth Middle School, a 6-8 National Blue Ribbon school with a population of 510; and Falmouth High School, a 9-12 school with a student population of 700. Our district's graduation rate is consistently above 90%. Our proficiency rates on state assessments are consistently above 85%. Our district's mascot is the Falmouth Yachtsmen in reference to our proximity to the sea, and nautically themed names are prevalent throughout the district which lends strength to our school district's sense of community.

Falmouth High School is currently home to 695 students in grades nine through twelve. The school building was built in 2001 and it currently serves students in grades 9 -12. We consistently offer opportunities for students to challenge themselves intellectually. In addition to 16 AP classes we have and an extensive program of studies with over twenty electives. We offer a walk-in tutoring center, staffed by certified teachers, to provide academic support in real time. Students may also enroll in courses at the Portland Arts and Technology High School as well as at Southern Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine. The school is committed to knowing each student well through the advisory program and average class sizes of 14-18 students.

Falmouth High School has a broad array of extended learning opportunities and co-curricular programs. We recently introduced our SAIL program of student lead two-day experiential learning classes. Students who wish to may join the Tech Team that offers tech support to students and staff in the district. Through the tech team, students are able to become Apple Certified technicians. Students have also become certified as Windows server support and worked maintaining and upgrading the school department's network. Falmouth High school has robust theater and filmmaking programs that culminate in multiple productions and a student film festival each year.

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

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

All students take required courses in the core curricular areas in order to meet the standards laid out in Maine’s Learning Results and Guiding Principles and earn a diploma. Each discipline has Reporting Domains that capture the important learning goals in their content standards. Using Domains enables us to monitor and track the progress, strengths, and challenge areas of students in each discipline. Additionally, teachers of common courses plan units of instruction collaboratively. They begin by identifying the core learning outcomes specified in the curriculum standards and indicators, and then design rubrics to support student understanding of the learning outcomes and to guide formative and summative assessment expectations. Units are designed to ensure students are exposed in multiple modalities to new materials, have the opportunity to practice and make meaning of their new learning, and to receive targeted feedback prior to a summative assessment.

English courses focus on developing strong reading, writing, listening and speaking skills while exposing students to a range of genres and underscoring the importance of critical evaluation of all kinds of media. Two of the four required English credits must be earned by successfully completing year-long courses (English I and English II). The final two credits may be earned by completing a combination of Advanced Placement and/or semester-long electives. FHS offers AP Language and Composition, as well as AP Literature and Composition. English also offers 18 elective courses that range from Shakespeare to Public Speaking to Food and Literature. Students may take Creative Writing and Journalism multiple times, as the content varies. Forensics, Logic, Mystery, and Writing is a two-credit interdisciplinary course that fulfills requirements for both English and Science. Courses are aligned to Common Core standards ensuring students are working toward college and career readiness.

All students are encouraged to complete the core courses of Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II (each of which is available at the College Prep or Honors Level). Students who struggle in math may take part in a math lab that meets once per week to provide structured support to students. Beyond these, the department offers Pre-Calculus, Quantitative Reasoning, and Statistics, as well as AP Calculus and AP Statistics.

Most students take College Prep or Honors Earth and Space Science in Grade 9, followed by Biology in Grade 10, to begin fulfilling requirements in Science & Engineering. Following these core courses, students may select traditional honors and AP courses in Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Engineering, as well as specialized electives such as Anatomy and Physiology; Energy, Climate Change & Humans, Genetics, Computer Science, and Forensics.

One strategy used to advance academic achievement is the STEM Endorsement, which recognizes students who devote a significant amount of effort and time in pursuing an extensive course of STEM-oriented work at FHS. STEM students meet general diploma requirements but complete additional credits in each of math and science, and an additional three credits of electives between science, computer science, engineering, and math. These students also complete a STEM Senior project, a STEM job shadow, and enter the Maine State Science Fair.

The Social Studies curriculum includes instruction and assessment in civics and government, economics, geography, and history. Social Studies teachers focus on helping students develop evidence-based arguments and apply their knowledge and understanding in authentic contexts. Ninth graders take one year of World History, and 10th-grade students take one semester of 20th Century World History, and either one semester of U.S. Civics and Government, or the year-long AP U.S. Government and Politics course. Juniors are required to take one year of American History or AP U.S. History. Juniors and seniors earn additional Social Studies credits by choosing from the electives that are offered, such as Sociology, Holocaust Studies, Economics, and an additional 4 AP elective courses.

The extensive choices given students, in addition to rigorous academic expectations for all students, aspire to heighten engagement and learning in all subject areas while preparing students for college and career.

These choices include more than 20 AP courses. While there are some prerequisites for AP coursework, students who wish to challenge themselves with these courses are encouraged to do so. In the situation where students have advanced academic interests beyond our course offerings, we offer early study at the University of Southern Maine and online opportunities through UMaine's Academ-e Early College Distance Learning Program. Students may also enroll in the Portland Arts and Technology High School to support career prep. Finally, a number of students are supported in devising Independent Studies to advance their own learning and interests.

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

In addition to core curricular requirements, students must also earn 1 Fine Art credit, 1 Physical Education credit, and .5 Health credit. While not required for graduation, a minimum of 2-4 years of Language study is advised for all students, to ensure college and career readiness. In order to receive a diploma, students must also complete the 4 year Discovery and Service Learning requirements.

The World Language Department offers sequential programs in French, Spanish, and Latin. Most students complete a study sequence of Spanish or French during the elementary and/or middle school years and are placed in high school level 2 or above in grade 9. Honors courses are accelerated courses and are offered starting with Latin I Honors, French II Honors and Spanish II Honors. Standards for French and Spanish courses focus on Culture and the three modes of communication: Interpretive (reading and listening), Interpersonal (conversational), and Presentational (written or oral). Latin courses focus on the Interpretive, Presentational and Culture standards.

All 9th graders are required to take Physical Education I, and 10th grade students take Health. Beyond these, students may select from a number of PE electives. These range from racquet sports to yoga and personal fitness. Twelfth grade students may opt to do a PE Internship. The goals of both our Health and PE programs are around general wellness and establishing good lifelong habits, and include a focus on mindfulness and stress release, personal fitness and healthy eating, and knowledge of physical and mental health topics.

FHS offers extensive opportunities in the Fine Arts. Our music program includes multiple band, choral and string ensemble group options. Students may also take courses in music theory, songwriting, steel drums, and guitar. Performance is integral to this study and students perform not only in school concerts, but also informally at events and functions on and off campus. Students can learn all aspects of theater in courses ranging from acting to production to technical design, as well as by taking classes in playwriting or acting for cinema. The Visual Art Department engages students with drawing and painting, photography, and digital design at introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels. Exhibitions are both on campus as well as in regional galleries. Students benefit from connections with the Portland Museum of Art and Maine College of Art, through regular visits, competition opportunities, and visiting artists.

A Fine Arts endorsement recognizes the commitment, additional coursework, and extracurricular activities of students during their time at Falmouth High School. This Endorsement is earned by meeting academic criteria, and by participating in Earned Learning Opportunities (ELOs). Students specialize in one area - music, theater, or visual art - and are expected to develop a depth of knowledge. Students may enter this program as early as their sophomore year and apply credit from freshman year to the endorsement.

Our library/media/technology center is a central hub of the school. Staff includes a full-time library media specialist and library assistant, our District Director of Technology, and technology support staff, as well as our service learning staff. A student technology team staffs the tech help desk and provides support for students, teachers and parents throughout the day. There is a film and production space, and collaborative work spaces used regularly by students. Students use the space for study, reading, seeking support, and working on inquiry projects for a range of classes. The librarian extends media services by collaborating with staff and co-delivering instruction in the classroom.

The Discovery requirement involves students reflecting on their interests, skills and talents and focusing on learning to take them beyond high school. Students build portfolios, write resumes, explore careers, do job

shadows, and create senior projects. All students must complete 30 hours of Community Service. Beyond meeting the hours required, students are encouraged to engage in service in areas of their interest and find ways to meaningfully impact as well as learn from their community. There is a special recognition for graduating seniors who have developed and carried out major service initiatives.

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

FHS Staff are guided by the Falmouth Beliefs and Practices, which outlines the approaches to learning the district most values. In support of our belief that “students learn in a variety of ways and at different rates,” teachers engage students with authentic learning activities such as having them prepare and teach lessons to elementary school students, explore cultivation practices in our gardens and greenhouse, and share their research and perspectives with legislators and media outlets. Our 1:1 laptop program facilitates the high-impact integration of technology for learning: students collect and present data and information in myriad forms, use online games and supports, collaborate, and research using a range of databases and platforms. Teachers are encouraged to innovate and have developed interdisciplinary courses, community learning opportunities, and expanded opportunities for student choice and voice. One of the ways we maintain high levels of achievement is by fostering high levels of engagement. We are constantly seeking to better understand how our students learn best and how we can heighten engagement. The Challenge Success Survey and the Reinventing High School PLT Group help us continue to identify areas for meaningful change.

Teachers strive to make learning objectives clear to students and provide opportunities for practice and feedback on their learning, as well as opportunities to revise work or retake tests. A variety of formative assessments are used, from exit slips to surveys, to quizzes, to visible learning techniques, that allow both students and teachers to check in on learning before moving to the next stage. Students are regularly involved in self-reflection and goal setting to support self-direction and enhance learning. Teachers annually examine (individually and as teams) AP scores and SAT data to inform curricular decisions and revisions. And teams of teachers examine student work on common assessments (mid-term exams, summative and formative) to inform instruction, and to identify students in need of support.

A robust system of interventions (RTI Tier 1) occur during the regular school day. During AFT (Academic Focus Time), every Wednesday and Friday morning, all teachers and students are available to work together. No classes are held during this time and students may access any of their teachers or be assigned to a specific teacher to receive additional practice, make up late or missing work, be reassessed on a recent summative, or complete any other work required towards a specific learning objective. Students also have the opportunity to collaborate on group projects and/or form study groups. The school’s Tutoring Center is open and fully staffed during AFT. The Tutoring Center is also open every period of the day and after school to all students. It is staffed with a literacy specialist, a highly qualified math teacher, and an educational technician, as well as select faculty who are assigned to the center during their duty periods, and vetted student tutors. The Student Concerns Team identifies some students for placement in a Guided Study Hall, which offer executive functioning support, targeted work/study time, and closely monitor academic progress for all students. Every student is expected to self-monitor work completion with support from the staff member running the guided study. The assigned staff person monitoring guided study hall remains in close contact with each student’s teachers, helping the learner to set goals and priorities, complete and hand in work, meet deadlines, and schedule and attend help sessions with their teacher or in the tutoring center during AFT and other available times. FHS runs one lab period per week during a study hall for freshmen-juniors in co-taught core math classes. Approximately 8 to 12 students are placed in each lab as identified from the sending year’s math teacher for additional instruction, pre-teaching or review.

The Pathways Program provides alternative educational opportunities for students needing academic flexibility or individualized pathways to graduation and supports college and career readiness. Classes offered through the Pathways Program are considered mainstream courses, taught by general education teachers, at the college preparatory level. They offer small class size, team teaching, integrated studies, and student-centered curriculum design. Courses included Blended-online math, humanities (sophomore, junior, and senior social studies and English, combined), freshman English, personal finance, art, and freshmen world history.



## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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

At Falmouth High School students are personally invested in learning. Students participate in authentic learning opportunities and public events that showcase achievement. In addition to a range of musical concerts, theater events, and art shows, we also have robotics demonstrations, film festival, science olympiad, poetry slams, and math team competitions.

There are plenty of alternative authentic learning opportunities at FHS as well. We have a student technology team which functions like a small business's tech department. Recently, we built a greenhouse and garden and hired a garden teacher. Our school accommodates students who want more vocational training by partnering with a local vocational school. Further, many students do independent studies, work studies, and internships. Finally, with the close proximity of our lower schools students are given multiple opportunities to mentor, coach, and teach younger students.

Not only is FHS an academically minded school it's also a very tight-knit community. We prioritize strong teacher/student relationships which are supported by our advisory program which averages just eleven kids per teacher. We have a full-time volunteer coordinator which offers many student opportunities including week-long service trips to Guatemala and hurricane-ravaged Houston and New Orleans. At the end of each academic year, our students bond during SAIL, a two-day experiential learning culminating event where students choose topics of their choosing to both lead and participate in.

The professional teaching staff has opportunities and systems to chase their passions. All teachers can, based on student interest, propose new classes and clubs. Further, our professional development plan includes time for teachers to join a personal learning team. These PLTS are designed and organized by teachers with common areas of growth or concern. When staff has a need for equipment beyond what is budgeted they can apply for a grant from our education foundation which hands out 20k dollars in grants to teachers twice a year. Teachers are reimbursed for all continuing education, professional conferences, and supplies. The school also provides classroom coverage when teachers want to observe other teachers, write reports, collaborate with each other, and attend their important personal family meetings. Additionally, the school provides teachers with paid summer opportunities to do summer work which includes curriculum development, common assessment creation, refinement to best practices, and even passion projects.

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

Falmouth High School reaches out to parents in a number of different ways. Weekly principal notes, the high school website, as needed emails, and the Powerschool Portal form the basis of our electronic communication with parents. We also have monthly principal coffees, as needed parent forums, twice a year parent conferences, and one of our school social workers runs a parent support group. There is also a very high level of parent engagement at art, music, theater and sporting events and through co-curricular booster organizations.

Additionally, we work with both the University of Southern Maine, University of New England, Southern Maine Community College, and Bowdoin College for professional development, community engagement, and student academic acceleration.

We also have ongoing relationships with a number of non-profits that provide an opportunity for student service as well community input into the schools. The organizations we are partnered with include Furniture Friends, Konbit Sante, St. Elizabeth's Essentials Pantry, Maine Boys to Men, Hardy Girls, Partners for World Health, Tall Ships Portland, Camp Kieve, Ripple Effect, Ocean View at Falmouth, and LANCO Assembly Systems.

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

Professional learning at FHS is focused on student achievement or improving student social, emotional, or mental health. FHS strives to balance differentiated learning to support individual teacher needs, and school-based learning to build capacity and ensure the school grows in a common direction. Each year, school administration, in conjunction with leadership and faculty, review, revise and/or revision strategic goals for the school that align with the district goals (Falmouth Compass).

Our professional growth model involves teams of teachers writing SMART goals, one related to student growth (using baseline data), and one related to the improvement of professional practice. These goals are the basis for Professional Learning Team (PLT) work throughout the year. All teachers take part in one or more PLT, with teachers from the same grade or content level, or with teachers from different areas. Approved PLT groups meet 1-2 times per month. Current PLT topics include Stress Reduction Techniques for Use in the Classroom, Implementing Google Classroom, Reinventing High School, Literacy Tools for Reading, Intercultural Development, and Enhancing the Advisory.

New teachers take part in a district and school orientation training and have a mentor for at least one year. All teachers are members of a content area team (English, mathematics, science, social studies, world language, special education, health/PE, or Fine Arts). Content teams meet once per month and focus on improving student learning through clarifying scope and sequences, identifying standards to be taught, assessed and reported, developing common assessments, and learning from student work. Teachers also meet approximately once a week with colleagues who teach common courses, during common planning time.

Early Release Days and Faculty Meeting time is used for whole school professional development (by in-house staff and consultants) on topics such as school safety, technology implementation, understanding mental illness, and developing alternative learning experiences. The school's current goals include building common agreements around grading and reporting that support student learning, and revising our advisory structure to ensure students are connected to the school community and prepared for the world beyond Falmouth.

Teachers are also provided professional leave days to pursue learning outside the school, ideally with colleagues, in order to foster collaboration and implementation of new learning. Teachers regularly attend or present at conferences at the regional or national level and share their learning with colleagues in Falmouth through PLT, content meetings, grade level meetings, and/or school-wide forums.

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

At Falmouth High School leadership for student growth and safety is a shared responsibility. We believe that no single person has the best answer to a given challenge and that everyone can provide valuable input. We view all stakeholders—school leaders, teachers, parents, students—as critical to improving teaching & learning at our school. We carry out our duties with integrity; respect is modeled in all we do. This attitude is pervasive throughout the school, as an expectation from the district leadership, the principal, and the community. We are all here to serve students.

We have one principal, one assistant principal, three guidance counselors, three social workers, and an instructional strategist and a school psychologist who both work with the middle school and the high school. In addition, faculty members serve as teacher-leaders in many ways. Among these people, the responsibilities for ensuring the safety of students, the integrity of the instructional program, and the relationships with parents and the community are carried out.

The principal's focus is instructional leadership, in addition to ensuring overall safety and a positive school climate. The principal and assistant principal meet daily to discuss student issues, plan classroom observations, and keep each other abreast of any ongoing concerns or initiatives. The assistant principal and the principal are both involved in teacher supervision & evaluation.

The principal believes that distributive leadership is key to fostering a student-centered approach to decision making. The principal holds bimonthly school leadership team meetings to discuss timely issues, plan the budget, and contribute to school-wide initiatives. This maintains fluid communication between the classroom teachers and the school's leaders.

In terms of communication with stakeholders, the principal holds monthly parent coffees, sends weekly updates to the school community, writes weekly staff updates and posts regularly on social media. The principal also meets with student leaders on a regular basis.

The school counselors, special education case managers, the school nurse, the assistant principal, and the principal meet in as needed on a daily basis to share ideas about school-wide assessment, scheduling, school climate, and specific student concerns. The social workers, behavior strategist, and school psychologist, along with all special education and 504 caseworkers are empowered to make decisions about student well-being. Each of these people communicates ideas and solutions clearly and frequently with others who are involved with their students.

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

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FHS employs a rich, collaborative, problem-solving approach to support all students. Our Student Centered Team, (SCT) functions as a “think-tank” for providing solutions to address a myriad of student needs using data and teacher reports to inform decisions. Our SCT team consists of a learning strategist as the facilitator, who spans grades 6-12 in the district to coordinate communication and comprehensive student supports between buildings and grade levels. The SCT team meets weekly and has the following representatives: RtI Specialist, social worker, substance abuse counselor, school nurse, guidance counselors, building administrators, teacher representatives from each grade level, instructional strategist, and other specialists as needed. Teachers are asked to refer students or advisees on a weekly basis who are in academic danger or in need of social/emotional support (to include changes in behavior or affect).

SCT acts as a funnel for student supports in the building and works within the school-wide, multi-tiered, Response to Intervention (RtI) system of supports to address academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of students. In addition, we explore multiple pathways for students to pursue learning experiences that fit their individual needs and passions, which allow them to demonstrate knowledge and skills toward learning targets. Our student supports are aligned with our district’s beliefs and practices statements which value the whole student.

The overall system in place allows for real-time interventions for students at all levels of learning, college preparatory to advanced placement. The team documents and regularly reviews student progress, both qualitative and quantitative, and adapts interventions as needed. Communication and collaboration is ongoing among the members of the SCT team and staff to follow up on supports and student success.

The primary intention of SCT is to cast a net around the student population so that students do not “fall through the cracks.” The outcome is a shift in culture by putting student wellness and learning front and center. Staff now have an opportunity to reach out in a systematic, coordinated, and intentional way to a group of support professionals who provide one-on-one follow-up, coaching, consultation and collaboration to help them with their students. SCT has helped build a community of educators who see all students as all of our responsibility. Our students know that there are safety nets for them and adults at-the-ready to help. Because of SCT, the individual needs and circumstances of our students are regularly and intentionally addressed through coordinated efforts.