

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. John Arlotta III

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

Official School Name Glen Rock High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 400 Hamilton Avenue

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

Glen Rock NJ 07452-2328
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Bergen County

Telephone (201) 445-7700

Fax (201) 389-5015

Web site/URL http://highschool.glenrocknj.org

E-mail arlottaj@glenrocknj.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. Bruce Watson

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

District Name Glen Rock Borough Tel. (201) 445-7700

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Bryan Torsiello

(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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	97	114	211
10	90	76	166
11	93	89	182
12 or higher	105	91	196
Total Students	385	370	755

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 10 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 83 % White
 - 3 % 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: 3%

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	10
(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)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	716
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1%
Total number students who qualify: 4

8. Students receiving special education services: 20 %
150 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>3</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>58</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>72</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>10</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
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.	67
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
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 10:1

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	96%	95%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	99%	100%	98%	98%	99%

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	166
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	90%
Enrolled in a community college	6%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
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.

Glen Rock High School is dedicated to developing the full potential of each individual by providing for educational needs as determined by the family, the community and the school all working together.

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

Glen Rock, New Jersey, is a small, suburban town in Bergen County with slightly over 10,000 residents. It is considered one of the most desirable towns in which to live in the state, due to its low crime rate, proximity to New York City, and excellent school system. The community is supportive of its schools with active Home and School Associations and support groups for athletics, special education, and extracurricular activities. The Glen Rock community is rich in history and values long-lasting traditions, carrying on awards, events, and celebrations for decades.

Glen Rock High School recently celebrated its 60th anniversary and displays a tasteful combination of yesterday and today. A recent renovation provided state-of-the-art science labs, an updated auditorium, and a magnificent fine and performing arts wing. Additionally, two artificial turf fields, newly renovated tennis courts, and a new baseball field showcase a leading-edge facility inside and out.

With 98% of Glen Rock High School graduates attending college, many of the school's initiatives center on college and career readiness. Glen Rock High School teachers continue to receive professional development enhancing their instructional strategies while best meeting the needs of all students. Four years ago, the master schedule was changed to a rotating block schedule. This schedule change provides for longer periods, which allows deeper content exploration.

Technology is critical to our practice. We have an open WiFi network, generous bandwidth, and access points in all classrooms to ensure connectivity throughout all educational spaces. All students are also issued laptops, so they can access district-purchased software. Finally, our student management system, allows for educational experiences beyond the classroom where teachers deliver varied content, run threaded discussions, and offer audio and video feedback.

Despite our highly academic program, a vast majority of our students (85%) are involved in some aspect of the arts. This is an anomaly for most similar schools, as the state average for participation in the arts is below 50%. We offer a wide variety of classes in both the fine and performing arts. One hundred thirty-five students perform in the high school Concert Choir. Students also perform in the Marching, Concert, and Jazz Bands. There are two major concerts each year, an annual competition, and an active presence of the school's choirs and bands in the county Teen Arts Festival. Students also perform musically at a variety of student-run concerts throughout the year such as Glenstock, Cupid's Cafe, and two coffeehouses sponsored by the literary magazine. Theater is also an active part of the school curricular and extracurricular life. There are fall and spring theater productions as well as a winter musical.

We provide 23 Advanced Placement (A.P.) and 14 dual enrollment courses in which our students are able to challenge themselves and earn college credits while in high school. With an increasingly inclusive approach, we have significantly expanded participation and the number of A.P. exams taken by our students by over 60% in the past several years. Our dual enrollment participation has increased similarly during this time period.

Enrichment and related service-learning continue to be a large part of the daily life of our students and staff. For example, our students have observed live surgeries, taken part in television newscasts, received backstage tours, and worked collaboratively with professional actors, directors, and authors. We empower students to run blood drives and food drives and to find other ways in which they can link their passions to helping others. Glen Rock High School recently adopted a school in Florida deeply affected by the hurricanes this past summer. We are very proud of our program "Pathways for Exceptional Children," in which our high school students are trained to provide social opportunities for local elementary special needs children. Similarly, our "Alliance" club promotes inclusion for all and has been a safe haven for our students of all gender identities. Glen Rock High School has been at the forefront in gender-equity education and related programs.

Co-curricular activities also play an important role in the life of our students. Currently, Glen Rock students choose from over 50 academically or socially oriented clubs as well as 16 interscholastic sports, many of

which have achieved state and county championships. Last year, our Ice Hockey team captured the Public B state championship. Our school newspaper, The Glen Echo (www.theglenecho.com) is an award-winning, online outlet for student voice and writing. Additionally, our “Under The Rock” (goo.gl/Hrgr9X) video program allows our students an opportunity to learn all aspects of video production, while communicating with our community the many exciting things occurring at our school. Additionally, students have the opportunity to express themselves through The Glenconian, the yearbook; MOBIUS, the art and literary magazine; and a playwriting workshop where students’ original plays are performed for the community.

Glen Rock High School has been recognized as one of the top high schools in New Jersey (#4, New Jersey Monthly), as well as in the nation (#67, Newsweek). Recently, the New Jersey Department of Education rated Glen Rock High School as the top public school (goo.gl/ghUdP5).

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Glen Rock High School (GRHS) has created a customized curriculum which moves student learning well beyond the expectations outlined in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and strives to create a post-secondary learning experience for its students. The curriculum, through its five-year review process, dynamically addresses the needs and interests of students. The written curriculum is maintained and viewable on a web-based platform allowing teachers opportunities for horizontal and vertical articulation. Every summer, teams of teachers convene, with administrators as facilitators, to review the curriculum and modify to achieve best practices. They update units of study with regard to content and methodology to maintain a current and relevant curriculum. The high school offers a challenging curriculum on the college preparation, honors and advanced placement levels. Additionally, the high school has established relationships with several colleges, which allows Glen Rock students to obtain college credit concurrently. Students are encouraged to take rigorous courses and to plan time for participating in academic, athletic, and extracurricular activities. Civic learning is embedded throughout the curriculum as evidenced by the selection of specific literature and the inclusion of community-based learning projects. Authentic, problem-based projects, along with learning in a one-to-one laptop environment, which includes a learning management system, allows students to engage in hybrid and blended learning experiences. The Assistant Principal, a former Supervisor of Instructional Technology, and the Technology Coach provide continual support and professional development to teachers on effective use of technology. The infusion of instructional technology applications, such as online texts, formative and summative assessments, flipped classroom lessons, and document sharing and presentations, has created a highly authentic and engaging college-like learning experience for all students.

The language arts curriculum offers a literature-based learning experience through the deep analysis of classic and contemporary works of American and world literature and literary non-fiction. Concepts of literary analysis such as characterization, structure, tone, theme, historical context, and figurative language are emphasized in all courses. Additionally, each course also emphasizes the development of analytical writing skills. Collaborative and cross-curricular research projects are included. AP English Language and AP English Literature are also offered. In addition to the core curriculum offerings, the English Department offers a variety of electives including: The Graphic Novel, Journalism, Creative Writing, Writers' Workshop, Public Speaking, and The Literature of Social Justice.

Mathematics and computer science classes are physically situated in a new STEM wing to promote the natural articulation and integration of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Glen Rock students engage in the study of algebra in the eighth grade. The mathematics curriculum includes authentic and challenging applications which integrate science, engineering, business, coding, technology, and literacy skills. Students are expected to reason orally and in writing. Courses are offered on the college preparation, accelerated, honors and advanced placement levels. Courses range from algebra through AP Calculus BC. Additionally, coding is taught in two levels of computer science.

Science and engineering classes are also situated in the STEM wing. The science curriculum includes authentic and challenging applications which integrate mathematics, engineering, business, coding, technology and literacy skills. Students are continuously engaged in hands-on and virtual lab experiences; students view demonstrations of upcoming labs posted on the course page of the district learning management system. Students are expected to hone their technical writing skills through the writing of laboratory reports and research reports and presentations. The classrooms include state-of-the-art laboratories specifically designed for chemistry, physics, and life sciences, including a greenhouse and hydroponics laboratory. Instructional technologies such as digital microscopes and probeware are instrumental in science labs, creating an opportunity for students to use science sensors and data collection and analysis software. In addition, the high school offers a sustainable farm to table experience through hatching, raising, and harvesting eggs from chickens and produce grown from an outdoor garden and hydroponic lab. Student-generated grants have provided for composting and healthy eating alternatives, in conjunction with the high school's cafeteria. Varying levels of biology, chemistry, environmental science

and physics are offered, including advanced placement courses in each area.

The social studies program offers many opportunities for students to earn college credit through the numerous advanced placement and dual enrollment course options. GRHS is one of the few schools in the nation to successfully offer AP World History to ninth graders. The development of writing and research skills on historical events and issues is emphasized, including use of citations, primary documents, and Modern Language Association (MLA) format, in collaboration with the English Department. Many assignments require students to work collaboratively to research, analyze, discuss, debate, and present points of view on issues and problems. Students explore, research, analyze, and discuss topics such as challenges to authority, the influence of religion, politics, royalty, rights, immigration, adaptation, cultural differences, race and gender issues, power and wealth, and war. Current events and civics are embedded throughout the curriculum. Most courses require students to apply new skills and information to community service as they gain valuable personal experience. Advanced placement courses are also offered in U.S. History, European History, Government, and Psychology. Additionally, electives in Constitutional Law, Documentary Film, and Psychology are offered.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Eighty-five percent of the high school student population has enrolled in visual and performing arts courses. The department offers four courses with dual/concurrent enrollment, and many students have benefitted from this college credit earning opportunity. Students have been recognized and received prestigious awards on the county and state levels for their outstanding levels of performance. Students maintain digital, audio, and video portfolios of their work throughout their high school career and submit these portfolios as part of their college applications and auditions for future study. Examples of fine/visual arts course offerings include varying levels in Basic Art & Design, Drawing and Painting, Sculpture, Interior Design, Art History, Art Major, Media Arts, Web Design, Photography, Video Production, Graphic Design, Digital Imaging, and Broadcast Media. Examples of performing arts course offerings include Marching Concert Band, Concert Choir, Music Theory, Music Production, and various levels of Theatre Arts.

All students in grades nine through twelve participate in physical and health education beyond the required 150 minutes per week. The high school curriculum for physical education stresses the importance of skill development, fitness improvement, and the development of self/social appreciation and respect. Endurance, flexibility, balance, strength, agility, speed, and coordination are the basic skills practiced throughout the physical education program. Students participate in individual/dual/team physical activities, fitness, outdoor activities, mindfulness, and dance. Student surveys and journals encourage students to analyze and reflect on application of acquired skills. In grades nine and ten, students engage in core activities. During grades eleven and twelve, students select from a variety of physical activities. The health program addresses topics such as coping skills, healthy lifestyles, respect, goal setting, stress management, conflict resolution, sexual harassment, first aid/CPR, eating disorders, family life, and the avoidance of alcohol and tobacco. Advanced topics include driver education, suicide prevention, mental illnesses, depression, cancer, obesity, sexually transmitted diseases, diabetes, cardiovascular health, family planning, independent living, dating, violence and domestic abuse, marriage issues, pregnancy, parenting, aging, and death.

Although it is considered a small high school, Glen Rock High School is fortunate to offer four world languages: Spanish, Latin, French, and Mandarin Chinese, the last of which has been growing since its inception three years ago. Spanish, French, and Latin are offered from the first to fifth year of study on the college preparatory, honors and advanced placement levels. The numbers for the upper levels of each language, which extend beyond the required two years of language study, have steadily grown each year. Teachers of each language create a student-centered learning environment to promote analysis and evaluation through the vehicle of language. Students use language in multiple disciplines to engage in deeper interpretative skills. The subjects of the content for each class allow for a cross-curricular focus while continuing the development of language mastery. The department is actively involved in language and cultural immersion both in and out of the classroom, which includes annual trips to French Canada and a partnership with a secondary school in Spain for Skype calls and biannual exchanges, both sending and receiving students.

The business program continues to develop at Glen Rock High School. A full sequence of courses is offered, beginning with an Introduction to Business. Students can explore offerings in Financial Literacy, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Investing, Accounting, and several economics courses including Advanced Placement Micro and Macro Economics. Business courses are housed in a state of the art facility, where furniture can be rearranged to foster collaboration, team- building, and problem-solving. Each of our business teachers has experience in the corporate world, which contributes to real-world applications. Students can enhance their learning outside of the classroom with competitions such as those sponsored by Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), Debate, Model United Nations, and the Federal Reserve Challenge. Our students have received both state and national recognition at these competitions.

Technology instruction is embedded throughout the curriculum, and each department has a designated instructional technology teacher trainer to assist teachers with the one-to-one laptop and learning management system (LMS). The Media Specialist has an established curriculum and co-teaches with classroom teachers on digital citizenship and research. The library/media center has become a hub for instructional technology and learning, and teachers frequently schedule classes in the center. A professional development center with the capability of hosting a group webinar using an interactive Smart Board is available for teachers along with a teacher trainer/coach on instructional technology.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Each and every course curriculum map provides specific strategies and techniques to differentiate instruction for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs), students with individualized education plans (IEPs), and students with Section 504 plans. The learning management system (LMS), which is embedded into the one-to-one laptop learning environment, provides tools and applications which allow teachers to strategically group students, differentiate assignments/readings, incorporate interactive tutorials, and differentiate assessments.

Tutoring is available to students before, during, and after school hours, including early evening sessions for athletes and working students. Specific courses and in-class support programs are available for ELLs, special education students, and struggling students. Testing preparation courses are available in both English language arts and mathematics for students at risk of not achieving a proficient level of performance on the standardized PARCC assessment.

The Glen Rock High School Guidance Office includes a team of five highly experienced counselors to support all students. Through our college and career readiness platform, counselors incorporate student interest survey results to create differentiated college goals and course offerings for all students. Building-based intervention also supports students experiencing academic and/or social/emotional concerns.

The building principal has established a professional learning community for faculty to analyze PARCC, SAT, ACT and benchmark assessments to develop strategic plans for improving student and school performance. Faculty, department, and instructional council meetings consistently include topics on data analysis and student performance. A college professor from a NJ university meets with the faculty on a regular basis to further provide strategies and techniques for helping teachers to understand the connection between assessment data, student performance, and classroom instructional practices.

As mentioned in a previous section of the application, Glen Rock High School is one of the top performing high schools in New Jersey. However, the administration and teachers continue to analyze data and conduct action research to improve programs and services for all students. Some students with IEPs struggle to meet the state requirements on PARCC and the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. In-class supports provided by a team of special education teachers and teacher assistants, curriculum adaptations and modifications, differentiated instruction, tutoring availability throughout the day, and tiered texts and online resources are examples of the types of strategies used to meet the needs of all students. Additionally, a learning strategies course is available for students with IEPs in grades nine through twelve. Students enrolled in this class receive instruction in executive functioning skills related to organization, planning, time management, and decision-making as well as reinforcement of academic skills in their curriculum content subject areas. Data has shown that our inclusive approach for special education students, taught by

content specialists in conjunction with special education teachers and teacher assistants, has significantly diminished the achievement gap. Most recently, the administration has set as a priority the recruitment and hiring of more teachers with dual certification (in both subject area and special education).

Often, advanced students can be overlooked in schools, as many interventions are aimed at students at risk. Our school makes sure that this population is served equitably too. We attempt to personalize education for all students, so that each student has an individualized learning plan, not just those with special needs. Student interests drive curricular enhancements. For example, students interested in medicine have organized trips to see live surgeries and interact with medical personnel. A visit to the New York Stock Exchange has provided real-world interactions to our Business students. Follow-up visits to our classrooms by professionals in the field make these connections long-lasting and meaningful.

Finally, a great deal of professional development has enabled our teachers to tier lesson, so that the needs of every learner can be best addressed. Lesson plans, our electronic, shared observation/ evaluation system and targeted dialogue with our teachers are all evidence that this is a focus at our school.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Research shows that students are motivated and engaged when they are active learners who see relevance in what they are studying (Kane, Hoff, Cathcart, et. al, 2016). We have made large strides in moving from a predominantly teacher-directed approach towards more student-centered instruction. Professional development has led to teachers incorporating at least three different activities within our 58 minute periods. Best practices are discussed with staff at faculty and department meetings, which include the consistent integration of problem-based learning units and authentic, real-world connections. Technology, when appropriate, has also contributed to student engagement. Students are able to collaborate on projects using student-issued laptops and our learning management system. The small size of our school lends greatly to differentiation possibilities and truly individualized learning experiences.

A recent climate survey shows a large majority of our students feel safe, trust their teachers, and believe school is important. We use student feedback consistently to analyze our practice and ensure we are connecting with our “clients,” the students. Student focus groups have been used to analyze our use of technology and improve upon our schedule. With a special education population over 20%, we make sure that accommodations are appropriate and are consistent with the mission of our school.

As with most high performing high schools, we are very concerned with the amount of stress our students experience. We have instituted “homework-free nights” and “homework-free vacations” to help our students in this area of concern. We have hosted parent programs, with experts in the field, to help us recommend similar approaches outside of school. Our rotating/ drop schedule, with a common lunch period, allows our students time to explore passions through time spent independently, with staff, or in club meetings. We have found that increased independence and student accountability have greatly influenced the climate at our school. We continue to monitor our students’ well-being.

Staff members have voices on a variety of committees within the high school to provide insight and perspective in decision-making. New teachers are offered ongoing and comprehensive mentor support from colleagues. All staff have adequate opportunities for personal and professional growth within district as well as reimbursement for higher education. We model a “teacher-leader” approach in every aspect of our in-house professional development. For example, when implementing a new learning management system, we trained teachers in each department who were then responsible to introduce the system to the entire faculty.

Kane, E., Hoff, N., Cathcart, A., Heifner, A., Palmon, S., & Peterson R.L. (2016, February). School Climate and Culture. Retrieved from <https://k12engagement.unl.edu/strategy-briefs/School%20Climate%20%26%20Culture%202-6-16%20.pdf>

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Noted for their support of education, our parents join together to participate in and promote organizations that foster both curricular and co-curricular activities. The Home and School Association (HSA), Glen Rock Education Foundation and Glen Rock Alumni Association, continue to be partners in the education of our children.

The HSA also has been a great source of funding for school initiatives. They have been instrumental in assisting us in funding assembly programs on substance abuse, cyber bullying and fire safety in college. Additionally, they have helped to fund enrichment experiences, such as author visits, poetry readings, field trips to Broadway shows and other cultural events, and other guest speakers.

As previously noted, there is a constant effort to connect curriculum to real-world applications. For example, Environmental Science students hatched chickens from eggs and continue to care for them in a coop on campus. Students constructed an environmentally sustainable pond for the school’s adopted turtle,

Glen. Additionally, students and staff work collaboratively with the cafeteria staff to compost and promote healthy eating alternatives. Many of the funds for these endeavors were supported by community grants, written by students and parents.

The recently renovated courtyard includes an outdoor classroom and a stage area for small productions as well as the annual student music festival, "Glenstock." This courtyard renovation was funded entirely through community donations in memory of a past teacher.

Glen Rock High School recognizes academic achievements in a variety of ways. For example, we use school announcements, our website, press, school newspaper and video programs, and social media.

In addition to outside funding, Glen Rock students receive support academically and emotionally in a variety of ways. With five excellent guidance counselors on staff, the low student to counselor ratio provides for many meaningful interactions between student and staff. Additionally, there are social workers, a learning consultant, and a school psychologist on staff to support students as needed. The Glen Rock district is also fortunate to contract with a therapeutic school whose therapists are housed here. This allows us to provide a least restrictive environment for students who may be otherwise sent out of district. The student-assistance counselor serves several functions, helping our students not only with any substance abuse issues but also with related social and emotional issues as well. There is constant communication among our counselors, staff, administration, and parents.

3. Professional Development:

Glen Rock High School practices a comprehensive approach to professional development. The high school administration values and promotes teacher leadership as a driving force behind professional development to support student achievement and school improvement. These teachers are directly involved in the creation and revisions of our school's yearly professional development plans. The district's strategic goals, both short and long term, as well as the school's mission statement, live at the heart of the conversation while plans for a variety of professional development opportunities are created and offered. Conferences, educational articles, and site visits to other districts have also widely been utilized to inform future initiatives.

GRHS prides itself on home-grown, customized workshops, as our teacher leaders and collegial staff enjoy sharing techniques and instructional strategies with their peers during lunch, after school, and over the summer break. Examples of the year's "Lunch N' Learn" hours have included: "Increasing Student Engagement [Nearpod]" and "Breaking Down the Walls of the Classroom [Virtual Reality]." The Director of Curriculum works closely with teacher leaders to bring in content area experts, technology training, and innovative curriculum resources to provide turn-key training to other staff members. Ongoing support and opportunities for feedback and reflection are infused throughout the professional development process to inform continuous improvement.

Many of the staff members also choose to participate in a teacher-directed Professional Learning Community (PLC) every year. This year a large cohort of teachers, supported by a consultant from a local college, have chosen a long-term goal of action research within the district. Each participant has chosen his or her own thesis focused around educational technology within the classroom. This overall focus aligns with the district's recent 1:1 laptop initiative that commenced this school year. Previous PLCs have been linked to other initiatives, such as "Teaching in the Block Schedule." We are also proud and excited to provide these teachers a platform to showcase their work to the school community at the conclusion of the school year as a "capstone" experience.

The avenues for professional and personal development include many of the skills and facets Glen Rock encourages its teachers to integrate in their classroom lessons. Direct impact on teachers can be seen in the continually widening scope of differentiation levels in classrooms and in the types of authentic, collaborative work students are being asked to produce.

4. School Leadership:

There is one principal and one assistant principal for approximately 750 students and 75 staff members. Our teacher-leader model does not include department supervisors, but rather department leaders. They are experienced teachers with content and pedagogical expertise but they do not participate in the evaluation of staff.

This structure contributes greatly to the collaborative nature of our school. The principal and assistant principal are intimately involved in all aspects of our operation, from daily management to evaluation of staff to meeting regularly with students. The middle school and the district directors of guidance, curriculum, special education, and athletics are all housed on campus, which lends nicely to articulation.

Administrators meet regularly with department leaders as part of an Instructional Council. At these meetings, school-wide initiatives are discussed, and this leadership team works collaboratively on all aspects of the school's programs. Faculty meetings are a vehicle for active engagement on the part of the staff about the life of the school. Teachers share best practices; they express their viewpoints on critical issues; and the entire administration and faculty acknowledge and celebrate individuals' accomplishments. Information is mostly shared electronically. The newly implemented learning management system and our student information system, provide countless ways to share information with students, staff, and parents. Parents are able to track students' progress, grades, and assignments.

Student progress is measured in a variety of ways. Most decision-making is data driven. For example, our state testing (PARCC) gives us the ability to analyze data longitudinally. Here, we can track a student's progress over time. This also allows us to analyze our curriculum alignment. For example, a recent greater emphasis on reasoning in mathematics and non-fiction reading in language arts are direct results from the test data we have observed. We meet in both small focus groups and in larger groups to analyze test data, so that decision-making is shared. The administration has found that there is increased "buy-in" when staff are part of the decision-making.

Professional development and the creation of the school budget are also shared processes. We link district goals to school goals and make sure our staff is supported with professional growth opportunities and the related budget to ensure success. The administration holds meetings with each department leader to address each discipline's budgetary needs. This is a very collaborative process.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Glen Rock High School ranks highly on many state and national rating systems that look at criteria like graduation rates, test scores, number of AP courses, teacher-student ratio, and other measurable data. Yet this is only one part of a school profile. These numbers do not fully illustrate what makes Glen Rock High School a great school. GRHS is a great school because of its staff--the leadership, the faculty, and the administrative personnel--all of whom are united in a common purpose. There is a feeling that one senses upon entering Glen Rock High School that is immediately palpable, and it permeates all aspects of school life. Research shows that in the best schools, where teachers and students thrive, “the emphasis is on becoming the best version of yourself that you can imagine” (Cunningham and Rainville, 2018). Teachers have high expectations for their students in every class, at every level, and in every discipline, and students know this. All students are expected to achieve at their highest possible level, and they have supportive teachers encouraging their achievement at every stage. Teachers at Glen Rock High School believe in a strength-based approach to teaching in which they help students to identify their strongest qualities and then help them to develop those strengths. Similarly, teachers, most of whom are the best and brightest in their fields and many of whom have advanced degrees in their disciplines, are encouraged themselves to be lifelong learners and to continue to pursue areas of academic interest. Additionally, teachers are encouraged by a fully engaged administration to collaborate with one another, to cross disciplines, and to take academic risks with the curriculum. Research shows that when teachers are supported in pursuing their passions to teach, profound levels of learning take place within the school (Barth, 2013). New ideas, both curricular and extracurricular, are supported rather than discouraged. When a social studies teacher and an English teacher wanted to start a book group for teachers and parents in order to provide a forum in which to discuss issues of concern about adolescents, the principal asked what he could do to help get the group off the ground. Teachers have been encouraged to pursue their passions in creating new elective courses in topics such as forensics, social justice, graphic novel, and documentary film. Teachers say that they feel united by a common purpose in teaching the youth of Glen Rock, and students say that they feel known by their teachers. The very best schools are ones that emphasize the importance of human relationships. Glen Rock High School is a great school because of an administration that treats its faculty and staff with mutual respect and kindness and a faculty that greets its students each day with great expectations, deep caring and commitment, and yes, even love.

Barth, R.S. (2013). The Time is Ripe Again. *Educational Leadership*. 71(2), 10-16.

Cunningham, K.E. and Rainville, K.N. (2018). Joyful Leadership in Practice. *Educational Leadership*, 75(6), 62-67.