

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 Murphy

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

Official School Name South Side High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 140 Shepherd Street

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

Rockville Centre NY 11570-2297
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Nassau County

Telephone (516) 255-8944

Fax (516) 766-7934

Web site/URL http://www.sshs.rvcschools.org

E-mail jmurphy@rvcschools.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. William Johnson

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

District Name Rockville Centre Union Free School District Tel. (516) 255-8920

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. John O'Shea

(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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	112	132	244
10	164	124	288
11	130	129	259
12 or higher	149	156	305
Total Students	555	541	1096

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % 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: 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	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	36
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	1104
(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: 2%
18 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Hindi, Mandarin Chinese, Gujarati, Ukranian, Urdu, Croatian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16%
Total number students who qualify: 177

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
149 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>7</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>51</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>51</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>11</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	6
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	64
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	36
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	57
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	11

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 17:1

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%	95%	94%
High school graduation rate	99%	97%	96%	97%	98%

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	253
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	83%
Enrolled in a community college	13%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 1998

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Educate our students to become independent problem solvers. It is our goal to empower each student to meet the challenges of tomorrow's emerging world. The District will provide a safe, nurturing environment in which individual and civic responsibility is fostered, diversity is respected and all students are enabled to realize their full potential.

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

South Side High is a diverse suburban high school located in a community of 28,000 in Nassau County, on Long Island, New York. 1097 students are currently enrolled in the high school. The school derives its name from the fact that it was the first public high school on the south shore of Long Island, founded in 1896. Approximately 16 percent of all high school students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Graduation rates and performance results on state assessments are only part of our success story. The overarching philosophy that informs all decisions, and is suffused throughout this application, rests on the following premises: diversity is an opportunity every student deserves; class rosters should reflect the diversity of the student body wherever possible; the success of one student should and does not come at the expense of another. This is the story of a school that constantly evolves, one that celebrates diversity, ensures that every student belongs and is a part of, and provides opportunities for all students to find their own unique talents, make healthy safe decisions, and become a meaningful part of the school's history.

It is not a coincidence that the recent successes of the high school date back to an initiative that began immediately following the 1997-98 school year, when South Side was last recognized as a Blue Ribbon school. The process celebrated the successes already experienced, and the course work that best prepared students for college success. Yet an analysis of student performance data at the time revealed an achievement gap between our minority population, economically disadvantaged students, and white students whose families earn upper-middle class incomes. Beginning with the middle school, classes were de-tracked and curriculum was revised to ensure every student had access to those courses that best prepared them for college. By 1999, ninth and tenth grade English and social studies classes were de-tracked, followed by science in 2000 and mathematics in 2001. Today, all ninth and tenth grade classes are de-tracked, all students take IB (International Baccalaureate) English and History in grade 11, and students are grouped heterogeneously in English 12, where every student has the opportunity to take the IB Language and Literature exams in May of their senior year. Along the way, curriculum was rewritten to ensure all students received the same enriched, advanced assessments and learning opportunities that best prepared them for our IB and AP course work. Every student is being prepared for college. Last year, 89% of all South Side graduates exceeded the New York State graduation requirements and completed one or more IB or AP course, including 67% of all graduates who qualified for free or reduced lunch and 50% percent of students with special learning needs. 51% of the graduating class completed the requirements for a full IB Diploma, which includes 6 IB courses, a 4000 word Extended Essay, a CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) portfolio and a Theory of Knowledge course. This year, 65% of the graduating class will complete the full requirements for the IB Diploma, and 88% are on track to earn a New York State regents with advanced designation. The latter is 55% greater than the state average.

Emphasis has been placed on 'leveling up' curriculum, yet merely revising existing curriculum and opening enrollment was not enough. With the exception of 25 students in our life skills CORE Program (Challenging Opportunities for Real Life Experiences-this will be discussed in great detail in section V and VI), all special education students are fully integrated into general education courses, with special education teachers collaborating with general education teachers to meet their needs. CORE students are integrated into elective courses. Based on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) created for each student by the Committee on Special Education (CSE), students are placed in the least restrictive environment to maximize their access to and achievement in our most challenging course work. Enrollment in general education classes are balanced for heterogeneity; wherever possible, the roster of each class should reflect the overall demographics of the high school. Other programs and initiatives that support our mission are discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow. Academic success should not come at the expense of a balanced life; on the contrary, our 'programmatic' approach to learning also focuses on the health and wellness of our students and faculty. This has become increasingly important in recent years, which is why we are currently training all staff in mindfulness and meditation techniques, and our health and wellness curriculum was recently revised, with an increased focus on stress management, creating and maintaining healthy relationships, and drug and alcohol abstinence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

In all cases, a backward design model was used to create curriculum that ensures college and career readiness begins in grade 9, and is developed gradually. NYS learning standards were cross referenced with IB aims and objectives, as the latter is the curriculum and assessment model for virtually all advanced course work in grades 11 and 12. The New York State Regents examinations are both graduation requirements and benchmarks used to monitor prepare students for advanced course work. Students gradually become more self-reliant and autonomous; tiered assignments, formative assessments and varied methods of feedback are carefully designed so that by 12th grade, students can complete complex problem solving and extended writing tasks with less assistance. Each of the following core curricula do not exist in a vacuum. An emphasis is placed on vertical and horizontal alignment so that key learning outcomes, such as the development of logically coherent arguments, multi-step problem solving strategies, and communication skills are taught consistently across disciplines.

All students take English 9 and 10 Advanced, IB English 11, and IB English 12. Primary texts are chosen with a specific learning standard and assessment in mind, so that skills such as listening and speaking, the effect of language, culture and context on literary analysis and response, writing for specific purposes and audiences, and research skills are introduced discretely but used interdependently. Due to the heterogeneity of all our classes, differentiated instruction is a key element in the choice of texts and assessments, to ensure that all students have equal access to learning, while more sophisticated learners are challenged appropriately. A blend of American and world literature is included for each grade, so students have the opportunity to place their own literary heritage in a global context each year. Students take the Common Core English Regents in June of their junior year. Students complete all IB assessments in grades 11 and 12, and have the opportunity take the IB Language and Literature exam in May of grade 12; over 90% do so. Those who do not take a local final exam, and the course appears as ‘English 12’ on their transcript. We also offer electives in Creative Writing, Film Studies, and SAT/ACT preparation. ELA support classes meet every other day, are offered in all grades, and are part of the AIS (Academic Intervention Services) for special education students, but are open to all students.

Due to the increased demand for sophisticated skills in the use of mathematical data and problem solving, the sequence of our math curriculum was developed to ensure all students graduate with the mathematical literacy required by post secondary education and the workplace. Over 95% of all 9th graders enter the high school having already passed the NYS Common Core Algebra Regents, which is the requirement for a NYS Regents diploma. Students then take Common Core Geometry, followed by Common Core Algebra II. Ninety percent of all students complete the aforementioned, which are requirements for a NYS Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. Over 80% then take either IB Math SL or IB Math Studies. The former places a greater emphasis on calculus, the latter on trigonometry and statistics. Students also complete a mathematical investigation that asks them to apply learned content and skills to a real-world scenario. As seniors, student can take AP Calculus AB or BC, or AP Statistics; on average 75% of the graduating class take at least one AP math course. Support classes are available to all students in Geometry and Algebra II.

Students develop an understanding that science is both a constantly evolving body of knowledge and a detailed and meticulous process for explaining and navigating the physical world. Over 95% of incoming 9th graders have taken and passed the NYS Earth Science regents exam. The students then take Living Environment, Chemistry and Physics, all of which culminate in a NYS regents exam. While a NYS regents with advanced designation requires three credits in science and two regents exams, 88% of our graduates exceed this and complete Chemistry, and 77-80% take physics before graduating. Advanced course work includes IB Physics SL And HL, IB Biology HL, IB Chemistry HL, and IB Environmental Systems SL. 65% of our graduates complete an IB science course. Our science research electives give students the opportunity to design and implement their own experiments, and enter myriad competitions. We are excited to be partnering with Hofstra University over the next three years through a National Science Foundation grant on computational problem solving in Living Environment. Students will have the opportunity to learn

basic coding principles through practical work and app development that is embedded in the existing curriculum. Recent grants received from the Rockville Centre Education Foundation have bolstered experiential learning and lab practical work, such as that for our Z-Space Lab. We also offer electives in forensics, coding, marine biology, Long Island resources, anatomy and physiology and astronomy. Our commitment to authentic problem solving and lab work is also in evidence during our annual science fair, and the new science wing that first opened during the 2015-16 school year. This year, 600 students submitted projects for the competition.

It is just as important for students to understand what historians and social scientists do as it is for them to have a working knowledge of local, national and global history. By regularly engaging with the materials, skills and tools used to write and analyze history, South Side students develop a detailed knowledge of historical information and an understanding of historiography. 'Intensive units' are created in each grade, the focus of which include research skills, an investigation of the origin, purpose, value, context and limitations of historical documents, and the completion of an 'historical investigation, where students choose and analyze a topic for which there are different and sometimes divergent points of view and perspective. Global Studies 9 and 10 Advanced prepare students for the NYS Global Studies Regents exam in Grade 10. IB History 11 prepares students for the US History Regents. As all students are registered for the aforementioned, classes are balanced to ensure heterogeneity and support classes are offered for students requiring individualized attention. In grade 12, students take either IB History 12 or two one-semester courses in economics and contemporary issues. On average, 90% of all graduates complete IB History 12. Students engage in letter writing to legislators, candidate/issue analysis, debates and simulated elections, and eligible seniors register to vote through the League of Women Voters. Lastly, students can also take electives in Introduction to Psychology, IB Psychology, and IB Theory of Knowledge, a transdisciplinary philosophy course.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As previously noted, a holistic or 'programmatic' approach to learning has been an integral part of South Side's success. Just as creativity and visual or rhythmic intelligence are practiced in our core curriculum, problem solving and higher order thinking skills, communication skills, and research are suffused throughout the arts, foreign languages, technology, business, and the health and wellness curricula. Art exhibits and performances permeate the building and community, and take the form of impromptu jazz performances in the lobby led by Tri-M honor society members, Shakespeare in the Quad with our IB Theatre Students, as well as the additional events listed below. A new art wing, part of the most recent high school renovations, provides students with a state-of-the-art work environment to discover and perfect their creative talents.

Visual Arts and Technology: Course offerings include Studio in Art, Painting and Drawing I and II, Sculpture I and II, Computer Graphics I and II, Photography I and II, Wood Design, TV Production, Morning News, Introduction to Coding, Independent Projects in Art, and IB Art I and II. These classes meet every day for either a semester or the full year. Courses are sequenced so that students learn the components and attributes of a successful art portfolio, as well as 'curatorship,' or the selection and presentation of art work for the public. Regularly scheduled art exhibits culminate in a two-week long IB art installation and exhibit throughout the building in April, which coincides with our National Art Honor Society Induction and the spring musical. This is not only a celebration of the talents of our students and staff, it offers the community and opportunity to simultaneously experience the musical, theatrical and visual creations made throughout the year. This year, eighteen students were recognized as all-county artists by the Nassau County Art Supervisors Association. Out-of-school exhibitions include the Congressional Art Competition at Adelphi University, the annual All-County Exhibition, and an annual visit to the Sandel Senior Center. Volunteer and Community Arts outreach through the National Art Honor Society include face and sidewalk painting to support the PTA, The Memory Project (creating portraits for orphan children in countries around the globe), and other individual art service projects.

Music: Course offerings include Concert Band, Concert Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble, Choraleers, Chamber Singers, IB Music I and II, Music Theory, Music Technology, and Stage Band (for the spring musical). Performances events extend beyond traditional winter and spring

concerts to include board meetings, honor society inductions, the intergenerational sharing conference and our graduation ceremony; students also entertain local senior citizens at the Sandel Center and all residents at the annual village tree lighting. In 2017, Rockville Centre was designated as one of the Best Communities for Music Education by the NAMM foundation (National Association of Music Merchants). This year, South Side was represented in the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Division Honors Choir by five student singers. Another eight students were recognized as all-state musicians by the New York State School Music Association. We are equally proud of the 103 students who were recognized as all-county musicians by the Nassau Music Educators Association, and the ten South Side musicians who were invited to participate in the Long Island String Festival.

Theatre and Film Studies. Our Theatre program is a reflection of the school's commitment to inclusion and excellence. Student may elect to take one of four theatre or film classes, and/or participate in any of the five main theatrical performances each year. The fall drama and spring musical are formal, traditional productions. The student directed plays takes place in January, with over 800 community members attending over two days. Centre Stage Productions is a partnership between our Theatre Department and the CORE program, for students with severe physical and cognitive developmental disabilities, and our Best Buddies Club, which fosters a vibrant relationship between our CORE students and the rest of the student body. Course offerings include: Play Production, Theater I and II, IB Theatre I and II, IB Film Studies I and II.

Physical Education and Health: Except for those with medical exemptions, all students take physical education each semester. Students take a semester long health course in grades 10 and 12. Points of emphasis include healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, drugs, alcohol and vaping, and social media. This year, guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists and administration collaborated to create a series of lessons that were taught through a series of push-in classes to 9th graders. Topics included creating and maintaining healthy relationships, meditation and mindfulness, stress, and drug and alcohol among adolescents. A series of public service announcements were broadcast on the school TV channel during morning announcements, reinforcing these concepts. The new fitness center, complete with treadmills, elliptical machines and the most current fitness equipment, is available to all students for two hours after school, five days a week. Over 38% of the student body participate in junior varsity or varsity athletics.

The 9-12 course sequence in foreign language is designed to foster an ability to think and communicate clearly and critically in a non-native language, and to understand cultural similarities and differences. Points of emphasis include understanding, analyzing and responding to a range of written and spoken texts, writing and speaking in a variety of contexts, and developing an understanding the relationship between language, culture, and self-identity. Even though the vast majority of our students complete the NYS graduation requirement of one credit in foreign language before entering 9th grade, 98% of our students are enrolled in either French or Spanish 3 as freshmen. The FLACS (Foreign Language Association of Chairpersons and Supervisors) exam is administered in January of the year students take French or Spanish 4, and is a requirement for the NYS Regents with Advanced Designation; over 90% of our students take and pass the exam. 70% of our students complete four years of high school foreign language, taking Spanish or French 5 and 6 in 11th and 12th grades. For the 2017-18 school year, we were approved by the New York State Education Department to offer the Seal of Biliteracy to qualified students, including ELL students, who have attained a high level of proficiency in English and a second language.

Technology/library media: Our new library and media center is the hub of information literacy and research. On average, over 250 students visit the library each day. The media center works closely with the school's TV studio to communicate with the school and the community. Over the past five years, our digital library has tripled in size. The school newspaper, the Sportsman, is also available electronically and in print. For the past four years, every student is issued an iPad, and this has become an integral instructional tool. The use of the eBackpack app has made the distribution and collection of instruction materials and student work more efficient, and improved transparency of class work between teachers, students and parents.

Business: Over the past two years, our business courses have been reinvigorated by the growth and maturation of our DECA Club (a marketing, management and entrepreneurial club) and the introduction of IB Business year 1 and year 2. The skills and standards required for DECA competitions and IB assessments

are introduced through all our business courses. Special emphasis is placed on: the application of course content and skills to authentic business scenarios; critical thinking and ethical decision making; the exploration of business issues and practices from diverse cultural perspectives. Other offerings include Introduction to Occupations, Marketing, Business Law, Entrepreneurship, and Accounting. Thanks to our partnership with Long Island University, students have the opportunity to earn college credit upon completion of Accounting (6 credits), Marketing (3 credits) and/or Business law (3 credits).

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Our cohesive and constantly evolving approach to teaching and learning is predicated on the use of varied assessments, timely feedback, backward mapping, and disaggregating results data to look at competencies rather than scores. Varied assessments such as oral presentations, lab work, investigations, creative writing, analytic short and extended written responses, etc. not only allow us to assess a range of skills and content but also create multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know, rather than focus on what they do not know. As IB courses represent our most rigorous coursework, we carefully analyze the assessments given in each subject and backward map to ensure that learning is scaffolded over four years. Emphasis is placed on the identification of discrete learning outcomes, using clear assessment criteria as benchmarks and providing feedback based those criteria. Assessments such as the 9th grade Middle Ages Research Project or the Written Task 2 in IB English allow for student choice, have established objectives, and follow a process model where students receive feedback at each step.

To ensure a high standard of learning, teachers create common quarterly, midterm and final exams. Results are then disaggregated and analyzed to ensure consistent, effective instruction. A September meeting is held each year to share the previous year's IB and state assessment results, component grades and feedback, followed by after-school workshops to more closely analyze this data and to adjust and improve instruction. For the past six years, teachers have participated in a lesson study based on the Japanese model, focusing on a specific, measurable area. For the 2016-17 school year, lesson studies focused on transfer of learning, emphasizing problem solving and critical thinking. This year, transdisciplinary teams discussed, created and analyzed lessons that improve communication skills, emphasizing written and verbal communication in formative assessments. For instance, a recent analysis of written arguments in the humanities revealed that students struggled to place information in the proper context—historical, literary, and within a logical sequence—to create a coherent train of thought. Teachers worked across disciplines to create a consistent working definition of 'context,' and shared lessons where students were taught methods to introduce and explain evidence as it relates to a central idea. Ongoing improvements focus on the aforementioned and make sure successful instructional techniques are used consistently and successfully in all classes. Given our de-tracking initiative and the heterogeneity of our classes, establishing various supports has been a crucial factor in our students' success. For example, all teachers are assigned to a classroom during 'zero period' from 7:25- 8:55 am to offer extra help sessions. Special education teachers collaborate closely with general education teachers to meet students' needs. A homework helpers program occurs in the library every day after school until 3:30 pm. Every five weeks, students who are failing two or more classes are notified and are required to meet with their guidance counselor to create a strategy involving mandatory extra help, tutoring from National Honor Society students, and/or parent meetings. Additionally, parents and students have access to grades and progress electronically via Power Schools software.

Professional development has also focused on technology-based supports. In August 2015, all students were issued a district-owned iPad and teachers participate in ongoing workshops on acceptable use and enhancements to existing instructional practices. Teachers completed a series of two-hour workshops on flipped learning led by a team of seven teachers, two administrators and a technology consultant. Teachers were instructed on the ways in which flipping can be used to increase active constructivist learning in the classroom, and can be used by students to gain information and rehearse and repeat procedures/skills that will later be used in the classroom. The district hired an expert on flipped learning to complete a four-day residency at South Side and work with teachers on implementation. A half-day professional development workshop in November 2016 was dedicated to teacher collaboration across disciplines, and culminated in a lesson study where teachers included a flipped component to each lesson. Teachers were also trained on the use of eBackback to monitor student progress, improve collaboration between special and general education teachers, and make instructional materials available to students and parents anywhere. eBackpack is also

used to give students more opportunities to participate in discussions and comment on the work of their peers via the message board/forums options. All instructional spaces have wireless access.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Nothing motivates students and faculty more than success, active learning, and a sense of worth and belonging. We take great pride in our assurance to all students that success is a bountiful harvest, and opportunities are made available equally to all students; in 2016, South Side was recognized nationally as a School of Opportunity Gold Award winner by the National Education Policy Center, in cooperation with the University of Colorado at Boulder. No one club, organization or event will address the needs of every student and staff member, which is why ours is a multi-faceted approach. An extensive list of initiatives and events created and maintain a positive school culture. Student accomplishments are celebrated with the community throughout the year. The honor roll is published in the local paper at the end of each quarter. On average, 130 students are inducted each year into the National Honor Society, which also involves a community celebration. Over 65 active clubs make sure every student finds their niche; the most recent additions include a Robotics Team that reached the New York State Vex championships in their second year, and a St. Baldrick's Day Club that raises funds and awareness for Childhood Cancer. This June, South Side will host a Relay for Life event for the first time. The annual Red and Blue competition was initially created in 1917 to provide female students the opportunity to participate in competitive sporting events. It has grown to include over 400 students and become a community event that celebrates inclusivity, healthy competition, and school spirit.

We are proud members of The Liberty Partnership Program, sponsored and funded by Hofstra University. LPP provides mentorship for at-risk students based on socio-economic status and prior academic achievement. 30 South Side mentors work closely with 65 students to provide a broad range of services designed to increase motivation and ability to complete secondary school and seek entry into post-secondary education. The Best Buddies Program is organized by our Special Education department. Students in our CORE Program- those with severe and significant disabilities- are partnered with students from the general education student population, and participate in monthly social events. Center Stage Productions is in its tenth year, and is being replicated in other communities. This is a musical production involving students with and without special needs; over 1500 community members attend two sold-out shows each year. Seniors who complete three or more IB or AP courses have the opportunity to create an independent learning activity (known as an ASSESS project), focusing on service learning and internships, during the final three weeks of school.

The Principal's Advisory Group consists of student representatives from each grade. The agenda of each meeting is set by the students. Student government officers do not confine their roles to Spirit Week and annual elections; they are instrumental in promoting school pride and spirit. With the recent emphasis on school safety, student and teacher leadership were invited to a collaborative meeting between administration, the superintendent and staff to review procedures and discuss national movements on gun violence and days to remember those affected. Protocols are being implemented to give students and staff a voice. Safe and peaceful demonstrations were organized that recognize and acknowledge participants and non-participants alike, and are reflective of the school culture, where teachers and students feel valued, and are part of the decision-making process.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The South Side High School staff and central administration prides itself on the opportunities the community work as partners and improve the transparency and effectiveness of the educational environment. PTA meetings occur every month, and are well attended by parents, and staff. Students are not only invited, they occasionally make presentations, such as the recent IB Diploma graduate forum. PTA contributions are too numerous to mention, but include a Post Prom committee that raises funds to provide a safe and fun venue for students after the prom; over \$10,000 in raffles are awarded during the event, to increase student participation. Each year, over \$10,000 in scholarships are also awarded to graduating seniors. The PTA curriculum committee is a district wide collaboration between teachers, parents and administration. SEP – Special Education Partners – is a collaborative effort between parents and staff to

inform and promote the rights and opportunities of special needs students, and meet each month. The Compact or Site Based team consists of parents, teachers, students and administrators. We meet monthly to set an agenda and area of focus for the year. This team played an integral role in advocating for and planning the most recent building renovations. Other recent accomplishments include revisions to the code of conduct as it relates to academic integrity, developing a student led recycling program, and improving and celebrating school spirit. Staff work closely with the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, and participate in an annual Community Day that forges a strong positive relationship between the school and the community. We also partner with a local group, Erase Racism (Education, Research, Advocacy, Support to Eliminate Racism) to promote racial equity in education; a South Side student was featured in a recent documentary and promotional film, A Tale of Two Schools, Race and Education on Long Island (www.eraseracismny.org/resource-center). The Hispanic Brotherhood also communicates regularly with the South Side staff, offers employment opportunities to students, and issues scholarships to deserving students each year. South Side faculty and students are active members of the Rockville Centre Youth Council. Founded in 2009 through a grass roots effort, this 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is dedicated to preventing substance use by hosting awareness campaigns, monthly community meetings, substance-free social events, community service opportunities and social action activities. Adults make up the Board of Directors, but nine of the organization's officers are South Side High School students. We host a series of events and monthly meetings. Most recently, former NBA player Chris Herron spoke before a sold-out audience on the dangers of substance abuse, and his story of recovery.

Student progress and grades are made available to parents online through the Powerschools parent portal, as well as through more traditional means. The rvcschools app is synced to the school and district web page, providing timely information to the community, and is updated daily. The South Side Booster Club has forged a strong relationship between our athletics program and the community, and awards over 50 scholarships at the annual Varsity S dinner in June.

3. Professional Development:

Teachers have the opportunity to create a professional development portfolio that is a blend of personal interests, needs, and district requirements. Before the school year begins, all new teachers participate in a multi-day New Teacher Institute that familiarizes them with the district's vision and instructional expectations. A mentorship program is organized by the teachers' association in cooperation with building leadership, where new teachers are partnered with veteran master teachers. Further teacher development occurs via two-hour professional development workshops (12 hours for untenured teachers and 8 for tenured), shared planning periods, Tuesday zero period meetings, and monthly faculty and department meetings. Most recently, all teachers have been trained in mindfulness techniques, and will, in turn, incorporate the practices in instruction. Teachers are encouraged to share their skills by facilitating workshops and participating in collegial circles that focus on areas of need. Each year, after conferring with administration and teachers, the principal creates a series of workshops and opportunities on one central theme.

For the past three years, the focus has arrived from a detailed analysis of "Approaches to Teaching and Learning in the IB Diploma Program". At the same time, greater emphasis has been placed on collaboration through vertical and horizontal alignment. For example, this year's lesson study between foreign language, history, and English teachers focused on argumentation, using 'the use and misuse of power' as a theme for source material. Last year, French teachers noted that the IB oral exam scores had been moderated down, while the Spanish orals had been on target. The lead Spanish teacher facilitated a two-hour collegial circle on understanding and accurately applying the orals rubric. Most recently, teachers have created and implemented a series of two-hour workshops on the most recent innovative approaches to information technologies and app development. Teachers participated in multiple workshops in recent years on differentiating instruction, focusing on the relationship between instruction in general education and support classes. The most recent graduation and NYS Regents exam results suggest that our strategic approach is having positive benefits, especially among our historically disadvantaged students. Through professional development such as this, all students will benefit from teachers' deeper understanding of the concepts, skills, and processes that underlie and link so much of the curricula.

4. School Leadership:

The district and school leadership structure is designed to ensure that students receive the best resources possible, and a collaborative, 'programmatic' approach to learning ensures that students are receiving one cohesive educational experience. If left to its own devices, a high school can become a series of loosely related 'silos' or self-contained departments and subgroups. At South Side, we place a great deal of emphasis on the need for vertical and horizontal articulation. We have benefitted from consistent, long-term stability in our leadership positions. We have had the same superintendent since 1986, and the five-member Board of Education have three members with more than ten years of experience. This is the principal's third year in his role, and his 21st in the high school. His predecessor was principal for 17 years. All six building administrators have been at the high school for more than twelve years. The principal reports directly to the district superintendent, yet works closely with the three Assistant Superintendents on a daily basis. School leadership and the teaching staff enjoy an excellent relationship, and view themselves as respected partners in the creation of a successful school culture. We do not have department chairs, in the traditional sense; the objective is to have our most experienced and capable teachers in the classroom as much as possible. Eight department facilitators receive a stipend but do not receive release time. The Principal, four Assistant Principals and the Supervisor of Guidance and Student Support Services assume many of the formal responsibilities normally reserved for chairs such as staff recruitment, support, training, evaluation, and scheduling. The six administrators interact daily and meet formally as a group no less than once a week. Department facilitators meet with administrators every Thursday after school. The agenda for each meeting is created collaboratively. For example, in the weeks after the most recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida, the facilitator's meeting was used to collect information on the thoughts and feelings of the staff and students, and to plan and organize information sessions with the entire staff and community on school safety. Topics such as exam schedules, the school budget and school policies are more typical fare. Student voices are also heard and valued on the Principal's Advisory Committee. Representatives from each grade level meet once a month to discuss school tone, successes, accomplishments and needs. These students played a vital role in the most recent student workload study, and assisted in coordinating a series of focus groups between students and administrators.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

South Side's reputation and success are the result of a methodical and deliberate approach to universal acceleration, de-tracking, and the IB assessment model. As a previous principal once noted, when classes become more heterogeneous, teachers become more ingenious, and students thrive. It would be disingenuous to suggest we do not include small group 'academic enrichment' classes for struggling learners, or courses such as IB Physics HL for our most sophisticated and motivated science students. Students can and should have a personalized educational experience. Yet our experience tells us all students benefit from learning in a heterogeneous setting wherever possible, especially if a criterion referenced assessment model is used to create a curriculum that is designed using a backward mapping approach. When done with care, de-tracking has proven to promote excellence and equity. This, in turn, has had an impact on all aspects of school culture. Each of the innovations and initiatives previously mentioned grew from this central focus- a truly inclusive learning environment demands a personalized and detail-oriented approach to all facets of the school environment. A heterogeneous learning environment created a need to balance course rosters by hand, which created a need for expertise in differentiated instruction, which created a professional development model based on lesson study, which created a more cohesive approach to learning across subjects, ... and so on. The IB assessment model dovetailed with the district's philosophy, and has formed the basis of our approach. As a result, instruction has become more consistent across classes and between teachers. Teachers have a vested interest in the success of all students, and have defined success through individual student accomplishments and more holistic measures, such as department benchmarks, the number of IB Diploma earners, and advanced regents diploma data. In an approach such as this, teachers relinquish a level of autonomy and independence they may be afforded elsewhere. It is for this reason that we invest a great deal of energy in involving all staff in every phase of the process. Transparency is key. Performance results are disaggregated and shared with this in mind, so teachers are aware of their collective successes. Guidance counselors, social workers and psychologists receive professional development that explains our assessment model and philosophy. We also look for opportunities to give the staff a chance to articulate and explain this approach, and receive objective feedback. For example, next month, scholars from China, Australia and the United States will visit us as part of the AERA (American Educational Research Association) national convention in New York City. We look forward to their visit, just as we are appreciative of the opportunity you have provided us to share our story. Thank you.