

U.S. Department of Education
2019 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 Dr. Ben Collins

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

Official School Name Maine South High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1111 South Dee Road

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

Park Ridge IL 60068-4379
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook County

Telephone (847) 825-7711

Fax (847) 825-0677

Web site/URL https://south.maine207.org/

E-mail bcollins@maine207.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. Ken Wallace

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail kwallace@maine207.org

District Name Maine Township High School District 207 Tel. (847) 696-3600

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 Ms. Paula Besler

(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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 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	309	294	603
10	272	286	558
11	307	295	602
12 or higher	320	315	635
Total Students	1208	1190	2398

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 2%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	29
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	44
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	2432
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

Romanian, Spanish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Polish, Gujarati, Urdu, Bulgarian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 6%
 Total number students who qualify: 155

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
272 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>30</u> Autism | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>126</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>129</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>45</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>5</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>16</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
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	17
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	134
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	23
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	25
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	17

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 18:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	91%	93%	94%	94%	95%
High school graduation rate	96%	96%	96%	95%	94%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	564
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	73%
Enrolled in a community college	19%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	3%

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. 1989

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

Our mission is to improve learning and develop the academic, social, and emotional skills of our students so they reach 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

Maine South High School has served the communities of Park Ridge, Niles, Harwood Heights, and Norridge for over 55 years. Located near Chicago and O'Hare International Airport, our school attracts families with diverse backgrounds and rich cultural heritages, especially those of Irish, Eastern European, and Hispanic descent. Many current students are “second-generation Hawks” whose parents have returned to the area to provide their children with the same high-quality education and enriching experience they had. This presents an opportunity for our school in that parent engagement and support are extremely high in school events, activities, and feedback sessions. At the same time, it presents a challenge in that many families believe that a top-tier university is the sole aim of their student’s high school experience, and we aim to augment that idea with community college, trade schools, and work experiences that allow them to make significant improvements to society while taking on less debt. We are proud of our rich history of Maine South graduates making major contributions to the world, including advancing discoveries in genetics and cancer treatments, writing plays performed on Broadway, winning the Pulitzer Prize in investigative journalism, and advancing human rights in government and politics in the United States Senate and Presidential Cabinet.

Students who attend Maine South have exposure to one of the most challenging curricula in the United States. Because of this, the average student graduates with close to one year in college credit earned through Advanced Placement (AP) and dual-credit courses at Oakton Community College and Eastern Illinois University. Our goal is to place students in an internship experience before they leave high school; through over 600 business partnerships district-wide, students are able to explore careers options in law, finance, hospitality management, and other non-profit and corporate enterprises. Maine South offers nearly every course available through the AP Program and supplements these opportunities with extension offerings ranging from Multivariable Calculus to independent study interests such as machine learning. While completing coursework, students have a tiered return-on-investment (ROI) career and college advisement model that begins freshman year and continues in scheduled advisories with counselors through their senior year.

Maine South believes in providing students with a well-rounded, comprehensive education. Students have opportunities to participate in nearly 90 clubs representing a wide variety of interests, as well as a full slate of interscholastic and intramural athletics, fine arts programming, and community service experiences. Our students’ commitment to success has consistently earned them the highest level of recognition in a wide variety of competitive pursuits. They have earned top honors in national language contests, musical performances, science fairs, scholastic bowl competitions, and chess team matches. Our Constitution team has won an incredible 27 consecutive state titles and are annually given the honor to compete in the National Championships in Washington DC. Maine South students also excel in interscholastic athletics, as exemplified by our football team that has amassed 5 State Championships and 3 State Runner-Up titles over the past 25 years. Although the students have a myriad of interests that showcase their skills in many different ways, they are unified by a culture that encourages involvement and excellence both in the classroom and beyond.

Students at Maine South quickly understand they are Hawks for life and that our community rallies around their successes. We begin their experience by welcoming incoming freshmen to events such as our Soar Like a Hawk evening, Freshman Orientation, Activities Fair, and individual counselor meetings. In addition, over 200 students are selected for home visits prior to the start of the year. Once on campus, freshmen participate in our Hawk Pride peer mentoring program every week where they are enculturated into the school and its traditions, many of which are strongly tied to community outreach. All students have multiple opportunities to participate in the Schoolwide Fundraiser (SWF), a student-run campaign with various events throughout the year to raise funds for a charity selected by the student body. Over five years, the SWF has raised over \$180,000. Students also sponsor an annual canned food drive, participate in “Make Kindness Contagious Week” where we spotlight the ramifications of kindness, and organize Respect Week for our differently abled life skills student population.

Faculty are strongly supported through Maine South’s Adult Learning Program, one of the most recognized in the country. Each year, every teacher creates a personalized instructional coaching plan facilitated by a

colleague who has received training and certification from the Chicago Coaching Center, which is led by District 207 instructional coaches. Additionally, teachers can join collaborative cohorts to study problems of practice, pursue National Board certification, and implement various teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and assessment literacy.

Throughout its history, Maine South has received national recognition including the Blue Ribbon Award in 1989. Newsweek has recognized Maine South as one of America's Best High Schools, U.S. News and World report has included Maine South on its list of best high schools, and the Washington Post has annually included Maine South on its list of Most Challenging High Schools. Maine South is currently recognized as a Democracy School by the Robert R. McCormick Foundation for its work in civic engagement.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Engagement as a citizen, in a career, and as a lifelong learner requires strong literacy skills. English classes at Maine South are aligned with the English Language Arts Common Core Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language development. In 2015, a committee of teachers and department leaders developed a literacy framework as a means for communicating how the Social Science, Science, and English courses address the ELA Common Core Standards in a coherent progression that ensures all students exit Maine South with a rich foundation in literacy.

In all English classes, students have opportunities for authentic writing and learning experiences, with a blend of fiction and non-fiction texts appropriate to grade level, as well as a strong emphasis on argumentative writing and vocabulary development. Special attention is paid to academic vocabulary in addition to content area terms. For argumentative writing, an interdisciplinary argument-writing rubric is used across multiple disciplines. Students are assessed on course-wide rubrics aligned to Common Core and on the Standardized Test for Assessment of Reading (STAR) assessments. A variety of strategies are used to make learning personal and relevant. Students are offered choice in reading and writing: literature circles are led by students, and R.A.F.T. writing assignments give students the opportunity to develop unique pieces based on their choice of role, audience, format, and topic.

After completion of two to three years of core English classes, students at Maine South complete their four-year English experience with the choice of two Advanced Placement courses, a dual-credit offering through our local community college, or a selection from our 11 elective offerings. The elective program gives students the opportunity to explore their passions through courses such as Creative Writing, Literature of Chicago, or Sports in Literature, to name a few. All English courses culminate with capstone experiences where students create original work demonstrating the English Language Arts skills that they have developed over the course of their high school careers. The English department also supports three national award-winning publications—Equinox (literary magazine), Eyrie (yearbook), and Southwords (newspaper).

1b. Mathematics:

The mathematics program at Maine South High School seeks to develop students' mathematical proficiency in five interrelated strands: conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, application, adaptive reasoning, and productive dispositions. Grounded in the Common Core content standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practice, students work in cooperative groups to grapple with complex tasks requiring mathematical reasoning and effective communication. Developing reflective mathematicians is a critical goal of the department, and students are taught metacognitive strategies for planning and evaluating their problem-solving skills and setting goals for their learning. Graphing technology is integrated into the curriculum to deepen students' understandings of the relationships among multiple representations and provide all students access to challenging mathematics. Technology is also integrated through formative assessment tools including PearDeck and Desmos Activity Builders, allowing teachers to provide immediate feedback to students. Following the completion of Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2, students have the option of continuing down a STEM pathway that includes college-preparatory Precalculus, AP Calculus AB/BC, and dual-credit Multivariable Calculus and Differential Equations. In addition, various levels of computer science, including AP, dual-credit, and independent study, are offered through the department. For students wishing to take courses in a quantitative reasoning pathway, courses are offered in statistics and probability, AP Statistics, and dual-credit Discrete Mathematics. To continue its progressive approach to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the department is currently preparing for the transition to an integrated mathematics sequence that begins during the 2019-2020 school year to replace the current traditional sequence. With this transition, mathematics courses will move to a standards-based learning model of instruction and assessment, using common rubrics to provide feedback on student progress toward major mathematical goals and standards. For students interested in co-curricular opportunities in

mathematics, the department supports the mathematics team which competes locally and is a regular qualifier at the state level, as well as the computer club, which runs a Hack-A-Thon each year where over 100 students spend 24 hours coding and produce a fully-functioning product at the end of the event.

1c. Science:

The science curriculum is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards, with a strong emphasis on developing students' understanding of the world around them through hands-on laboratory experiences. The curriculum empowers students to see connections to the real world in order to strengthen their skills and conceptual understandings across disciplines. A broad selection of course options provides students with multiple pathways to their future interests. After completing core courses in biology, chemistry, earth and environmental studies, and physics, students can elect to take dual-credit college courses in geology, anatomy & physiology, and Principles of Engineering, as well as Advanced Placement courses in biology, chemistry, environmental science, and physics. Electives in Crime Science, Space Science, and Biotechnical Engineering allow students to extend their learning in additional fields of interest. The science department is committed to preparing students to be informed and reasoning citizens, as they work to develop scientific literacy skills in every course. Mirroring other disciplines in the building, the science department assists students in examining data to create claims that are substantiated with evidence and reasoning, and a common rubric for assessing claim, evidence, and reasoning is used. Teacher teams evaluate data from assessments that utilize this rubric as well as from common selected-response items, and collaboratively develop instructional-response strategies. Strategic technology use is intentionally, with opportunities to collect data using digital probeware and provide simulations of experiences that would otherwise be inaccessible. Technology applications are also used to formatively assess students and provide instant feedback for immediate adjustments to the learning plan for differentiation. The Science department supports co-curricular experiences for students with a Summer Science Research Program, Science Olympiad, Engineering Club, and Environmental Club.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Maine South High School takes pride in its commitment to high-quality civic learning and is recognized as an Illinois Democracy School. All students complete a rigorous Civic Engagement Capstone Project as part of a graduation requirement where they are immersed in the community and local government through service, developing each student as a knowledgeable, engaged, and responsible citizen. With a robust offering of courses in history, government, economics, and psychology, including six elective courses and eight Advanced Placement options, students conduct critical inquiry, research, and analysis; construct and communicate informed opinions; and make personal connections to the relevance and applications of the social sciences.

Throughout the curriculum, there is a focus on historical-thinking skills including, but not limited to, analyzing primary and secondary sources, constructing evidence-based arguments, recognizing patterns of continuity and change over time, and causation. Each course team has designed a curriculum framework aligned with state and national standards that outlines what students should know and be able to do. In their weekly meetings, teachers review data from common formative and summative assessments to determine which students need additional help and which students need enrichment. All students in U.S. History participate in the history fair, yielding a meaningful and deep exercise in research and presentation. Each year, some students also choose to participate in the Chicago History Fair, with students often advancing to regional and national competitions. The social science department also supports two co-curricular groups, the Constitution Team through the elective class, We the People, and Mock Trial. Students in Mock Trial compete against other schools in court cases and judicial hearings in front of attorneys and judges. Most recently, they traveled to California to compete against other school programs. In Constitution Team, students become experts of the Constitution and use their in-depth understanding in front of a panel of judges. The team is a regular national contender, most recently earning 9th and 10th place in the nation in 2018 and 2017, respectively.

1e. For secondary schools:

Our academic program is organized on the career pathways concept, which supports college and career readiness. Emphasis is placed on incorporating real-world projects that are regularly led or supervised and evaluated by employer partners. In this approach, students explore their aptitudes and interests during freshman year in an advisory program. During sophomore year, students link those career interests to academic planning. Junior and senior year, students explore different career options through internships with our over 600 business partners. These job and curricular experiences converge in counseling conversations that ensure students make the best return-on-investment decisions for their post-secondary aspirations, including entering the workforce, military service, a certification program, or a four-year institution.

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Maine South offers a variety of courses in fine arts, physical education, world languages, and career and technical education, offering students meaningful experiences in which they explore interests and test aptitudes not only to determine a possible career path, but to devote time in their day to pursuits inspired by their individual curiosity.

The Fine Arts department seeks to help students find their strengths and foster creative and artistic instincts. Forty-eight different classes are offered in visual arts, music, speech, drama, and broadcasting, including five Advanced Placement courses. Visual art classes focus on design and aesthetics through 2D, 3D, and photography classes. Through music classes in band, orchestra, choir, piano, guitar, and digital audio production, we teach cultural awareness and arts advocacy. Students study emotional development through multiple levels of drama, and media literacy is a hallmark of our broadcasting program. Each year, the department produces and performs a musical, two plays, and an all-school Variety Show, and holds numerous exhibitions and concerts. Students are regularly recognized at the local, state, and national level. In 2018, the Maine South production of “Noises Off” was one of 11 productions statewide selected for performance at the Illinois High School Theatre Festival. Annually, more than one-third of students are enrolled in at least one Fine Arts course.

Included in our balanced approach to learning is the annual requirement that every student engage in physical and health education, with the understanding that a healthy body supports a healthy mind for engagement in learning. The physical education program at Maine South is a fitness-based program in which every course curriculum includes a minimum of two days of fitness per week with additional activity days focused on skill development and team sports interspersed between. The curriculum is founded on skills with intentional vertical articulation across the four-year high school experience. As juniors and seniors, students can choose from a variety of elective courses including yoga, martial arts, adventure education, as well as the Junior and Senior Leader programs in which close to 160 of our upperclassmen work with teachers to support and lead freshmen and sophomore courses. Our Physical Education department is a multi-year recipient of the state’s highest honor, the Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance’s Blue Ribbon award.

Each year, more than 65% of students enroll in a World Language course in which they acquire the skills to communicate in a second language (French, German, Italian, Mandarin Chinese, or Spanish), as well as increase understanding of their own cultural and global awareness. In the fall, the department organizes a variety of World Language Week activities, inviting all students to appreciate the value of acquiring a second language. Advanced Placement courses are offered in all five languages. To provide students with relevant applications of their learning, the department sponsors various travel experiences throughout the year, a German exchange program, and a virtual international internship in Italian. In 2018, 21 students earned the prestigious Illinois State Seal of Biliteracy, recognizing their high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English.

Maine South, and District 207, were one of Google’s first K-12 partners and for the past five years, the school has been 1:1 with Chromebooks. Our technology department, and Chrome Depot, include student

NBRS 2019

interns on their staff and serve teachers across every content area for support in instructional technology.

The Career and Technical Education (CTE) department is composed of applied technology, business and technology, and family and consumer sciences. There are 35 courses among these that align to five career pathways: Business Communications; Health & Human Services; Arts & Communications; Engineering, Manufacturing, & Design; and Exploratory Services. Twelve CTE courses offer dual-credit opportunities. Students engage in cross-curricular as well as real-world and industry-approved experiences in many of the courses including Project Lead The Way (PLTW) and Entrepreneurship. The PLTW program provides authentic engineering experiences and direct links to post-high school opportunities. Many of the CTE courses incorporate the use of cutting-edge technology including 3D printers, virtual reality, an incubator, and maker spaces. The department offers extracurricular experiences through DECA, FCCLA, Skills USA and investment club.

Finally, Hawk Pride is Maine South's character education and development program. Hawk Pride Leaders lead lessons with their high school peers to create a more respectful, responsible, and caring environment throughout the Maine South community. These lessons incorporate social-emotional learning competencies using our school acronym PRIDE: Purpose, Respect, Involvement, Dignity, and Empathy.

3. Special Populations:

At Maine South, every learner is valued for his or her unique contributions to our classrooms and school community. Teachers and instructional coaches lead schoolwide professional development in Tier 1 differentiation strategies, allowing teachers to differentiate by process, product, content, and learning environment. Additional 1:1 and small-group tutoring support is available for core subjects through our academic support centers. Each period and before school, students of all course levels can receive assistance from teachers and student tutors on reading or writing assignments for any course or skill. Additionally, teacher and course teams can refer students for support based on classroom assessment data and until a skill is mastered. Each core discipline also organizes a peer tutoring system, benefiting students needing academic support while also growing student leaders.

Exceptional learners are regularly accelerated into more challenging courses. In the 2018-2019 school year alone, we had over 60 students take Multivariable Calculus as seniors, and over half the Freshman class was placed in AP Human Geography or AP World History because of their academic readiness.

In the core disciplines, students needing more intensive support are identified using multiple measures including stakeholder input from teachers, parents, and counselors, performance on summative assessments in academic coursework, and standardized test scores on STAR and the Preliminary Standard Aptitude Test (PSAT). Three different literacy support courses are offered with emphasis given to reading strategies to aid comprehension and cross-disciplinary academic vocabulary. Additionally, students enrolled in Guided Study learn how to apply and practice executive-functioning skills for success in the classroom setting and beyond.

It is our responsibility to serve all students, and Maine South is committed to closing the achievement gap. As we try to advocate for all students and work for a more just and equitable society, we recognize that interlocking systems of oppression contribute to an achievement gap and do not provide all students with equal opportunities in school. The achievement gap exists with three of our sub-groups in particular: low-income students, students in special education, and Hispanic students. We are especially aware that tracking has a history of leading to unequal representation for minority students in the courses which are most academically rigorous; therefore, we have reconsidered both the way that students are grouped and the supports that we provide in each course, and, in 2019-2020, we are eliminating all transitional-level courses. We have already seen the impact that modifying course offerings and supports has had for our Hispanic students: over the past four years, the percentage of our Hispanic students who enroll in an AP course has doubled. Our leadership team is currently conducting action research to determine academic and environmental obstacles for our freshman low-income population. With additional supports including co-teaching and teacher assistants, we continue to place more students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) into general education courses.

Special education teachers collaborate with general education teachers regularly in order to develop modifications and differentiated instructional strategies and provide accommodations. Special education teachers also are a part of the general education curricular Professional Learning Community course teams. The Rush Neurobehavioral Executive functioning curriculum is infused into special education resource classes. Students in special education reading support classes are placed into two different courses depending on need: a comprehension and fluency-based course, or one that also addresses basic reading skills. Our Life Skills program focuses on the teaching of functional academic skills as well as independent living and pre-vocational skills.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At Maine South High School, we foster a positive school climate by focusing on building strong relationships between students and staff that are based on respect, kindness, and positive affirmation. We believe that it is important to hear everyone's voice to ensure that students and staff feel that Maine South is their home away from home. Several times throughout the year students are asked to express their thoughts and opinions by completing surveys developed by the Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC), a group of student leaders advising administration on topics related to school climate. In order to create this culture with staff, administration runs "How Are We Doing?" sessions with each department to gather staff feedback and ideas on how to continue to promote a positive school culture. The deans invite staff to "Donuts with the Deans" where they can engage in open communication about our school trends.

Student leaders run our advisory and character education program, called Hawk Pride, where lessons each week focus on social-emotional wellness, career planning, and self-discovery. Students actively engaged in creating change in the world is a hallmark of our student culture; this can be seen in their involvement in the SWF, student and class councils, Southwords (our student newspaper), and specific events like one student's orchestration of a peaceful memorial for the victims of the Parkland school shooting. All of avenues demonstrate student agency and ownership of their high school experience.

We provide wrap-around services through our problem-solving Student Service Teams (SSTs) to make a large school feel smaller. Every student is assigned to one of three SSTs. Each team has a dean, school counselors, one social worker, one psychologist, and the school nurse. When a student struggles academically, behaviorally, or emotionally, the SST analyzes the issue and implements interventions to ensure that the student is supported. All school and community stakeholders can refer a student for discussion. A progressive way that our school provides social-emotional support to our students is through interactions with our therapy dogs, Sadie and Luke.

Many of our students have developed such strong relationships with our staff members that they like to spend more time in their SSTs by helping out through our Student Aide program.

Students are empowered when they feel comfortable sharing their ideas for change with staff and administration and then working alongside adults to implement improvements. This past school year alone, students made recommendations for our leadership team to focus on student-to-teacher relationships, homework consistency, and summative assessment changes. None of this would have been possible without a positive and collaborative school culture.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Maine South, we believe that to be the best high school, we need to consistently work toward constructing and fostering partnerships with our families and communities. Maine South's dedicated leadership team and faculty members utilize a variety of approaches to sustain effective engagement with our community as a whole.

Our administrative team studies data to identify areas of need for the school and the community it serves. Analyzing results from resources such as the 5Essentials survey, freshman parent surveys, and exit reviews from graduating seniors, strategic teams bring together recommendations to our leadership for continued response. At a recent Parent Academy, parents expressed a need for a more personal and informative introduction into Maine South for our new families. Administration took the opportunity to collaborate with parents and counseling staff about more specific needs. Thus, the "New Parent Bootcamp" and our "Incoming Freshmen Family Meetings" were created in 2017 to an enthusiastic and appreciative community response.

Our school leadership has always desired to build a strong connection with the community—especially with parents that currently have children enrolled at Maine South. Providing parents with a wide variety of

opportunities to engage in the school community can only make a strong school even better. Booster organizations for our dedicated athletics, music, and theater programs, as well as our own Maine South Parent Booster Club, build connections with families and offer them a valuable way to support the school and their children. Our administrative team has also engaged parents in some of our most important school functions, including serving on interviewing panels and strategic planning sessions. Our administrative team also hosts monthly open forums for parents to articulate their concerns at our “2nd Cup of Coffee.” Furthermore, the incorporation of community stakeholders is also critical to our school counselors through its recognized American School Counselors Association Model Program Advisory Council in which parents and community leaders have representation in our school counseling program goals, core curriculum, and educational programs.

Maine South has benefitted from concentrated efforts to build strong business relationships with over 600 partners in the Park Ridge, Des Plaines, and Niles communities that provide opportunities for internship and employment to our students. Employers across multiple job areas regularly visit the school to coach our students in their entrepreneurship and business courses and to provide industry-specific feedback on our curriculum to ensure student success once they leave Maine South. These feedback sessions are held annually and aid teachers in aligning their classroom curriculum to career skills. Students also participate in more focused field trips called career treks where students can tour cutting-edge businesses in the Chicago area and interview their employees.

3. Professional Development:

Our professional development program is focused on active adult learning. Teachers work one-on-one with a coach or with a group of teachers on various practices that are important for student learning. Maine South (and District 207) is likely the only District in the country in which every teacher is coached annually, and teachers select coaching plans from five options. An individual coaching plan requires participants to identify an instructional goal, gather data throughout the year, implement instructional strategies, and reflect on progress. Other coaching plans include cohort programs focused on instructional rounds, differentiated instruction, technology integration, assessment literacy (based on Stiggins), or even National Board Certification. There is also an action-research program known as Collaborative Learning Education Action Research (CLEAR) that supports teachers as they identify a research question to study. Findings are presented to peers once the research cycle concludes and are potentially showcased with partner school districts at the Illinois Leaders and Educators Action Research Network event, hosted by District 207.

Maine South has five building instructional coaches, an instructional coach for each department, and an academic literacy specialist who coordinates interdisciplinary work and coaches teams in the use of research-based literacy strategies. As a result of this coaching, we are seeing literacy gains for all students, with over 75% of students in supported literacy classes meeting or exceeding their Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW) standard on the PSAT. Many coaches also serve on district-wide planning teams to set-up professional learning for future endeavors, such as competency-based learning, standards-based grading, and deep equity work. Instructional coaches are trained and certified at the Chicago Coaching Center (CCC). CCC is a program started by District 207, and our coaches provide coaching training for other instructional coaches across the country. We also have a relationship with Northwestern University and National Louis University for student teaching mentor programs where cooperating teachers become CCC certified.

With all of these supports, we are able to isolate the impact that coaching has had on teacher efficacy through teacher surveys and through teacher evaluation ratings. The percentage of teachers receiving the highest performance rating of Distinguished has risen each year. Teachers also have reported in our instructional coaching survey that coaching is impacting their performance positively.

New teachers attend the New Teacher Cohort Academy for their first four years and are paired with a mentor who has received comprehensive training. During that time, new teachers are supported with full-day training in instructional strategies and monthly sessions focused on legal topics, IEP implementation,

and school processes. The program is designed and implemented with teacher leaders in each building and establishes supportive collaboration across the district to enhance professional learning.

4. School Leadership:

School leadership operates in a manner that is collaborative and driven, using the motto, “Better, Together.” Our network of teams works towards shared values for improving how we serve our students, faculty, and community. There are four leadership teams composed of teachers, instructional coaches, department chairs, assistant principals, and our principal. We regularly discuss student academic and behavioral performance and adjust our systems and vision. For example, last year we noticed our low-income population was struggling to meet their credits to remain on-track, so we formed a new team to study low-income freshman experiences, which then informed our discussions about student discipline and the need for a schoolwide behavioral framework. Students are working on our leadership team now to choose a framework that will be implemented in the 2019-2020 school year.

Collaborative decision-making results from frequent and regular staff listening sessions called “How Are We Doing?” Each department meets with the principal and assistant principals to discuss four thematic areas and challenging new ideas. Faculty have four additional regular formats for feedback. Every month, there is an open session after school called the Building Communications Committee, where department representation can raise concerns; a staff advisory committee that meets once a quarter with the principal; lunch drop-ins scheduled regarding specific initiatives; and union representative meetings once a month with the administration to co-plan communication and clarify understanding surrounding various school programs. While this generates large amounts of information, the guiding principle is always, “what is in the best interests of our students?” Examples of responsiveness from this year alone include changes to the final exam policy, directives for student movement between study spaces, and enhanced communication regarding student discipline and behavior.

Much like the teacher adult learning program, leadership capacity is developed in multiple ways. We are piloting skip-level interviews for our leaders to gather feedback from those whom they serve. Those results are then discussed with the leader to isolate areas of improvement. A network of monthly 1-on-1 coaching sessions are incorporated into our schedule and allow for feedback to be a continual process for our administrators. Individual development focuses on emotional literacy, effective interpersonal communication, self-awareness, and the sharpening of one’s core values. There are three off-site retreats for the leadership team and one organizational retreat where faculty, students, and parents are included in setting the vision for the upcoming school year. Annually, the principal delivers a “state of the school” address based on these large conversations with the faculty about how these will impact student needs in the community.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Maine South operates as a community of professional learners. All teachers work together in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that meet weekly before school begins. The primary goals of the PLC's are to align curriculum with National and State standards, identify struggling students through formative and summative assessment data, and create supports to help all students through differentiated learning opportunities. Teachers collaborate to create high-quality assessments that provide feedback to both the teacher and students so that adjustments to the classroom experience can be made to support learning. Together, the PLCs review data from the assessments to plan engaging lessons that meet students' individual needs. Teachers, with the support of their colleagues, then implement the lessons, reflect on the learning progress, and refine their techniques based on student needs and performance. These instructional practices, which are accessible to all students, are considered tier I of our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) in the core academic areas. We know these are impacting student outcomes positively because we have increased the number of students in our AP program who have a home language other than English, and who are first-generation AP students, while at the same time improving our exam performance every year since our AP program has begun.

Students identified by PLCs as needing additional supports outside of tier I receive academic, executive functioning, and social-emotional supports in tier II. The Maine South Academic Support Center is open to all students. Some students are recommended through the PLCs for additional skill development, and others self-select to practice particular skills with the guidance of a teacher. The Literacy Data team meets three times a year to review student progress on STAR Reading assessments, grades and feedback from teachers and parents. Identified students are provided intensive literacy courses, and last year, 76% students enrolled in these courses met or exceeded the EBRW standard on PSAT, while 85% of the juniors in these literacy courses met or exceeded standards. Our counseling teams also use an early warning system to identify students who may not be on track for earning credits based on their attendance and grades, and the teams make recommendations for interventions that these students may need, such as our guided study program.

PLCs are supported in their curriculum design and instructional implementation through our instructional coaching and professional learning program. A menu of professional learning offerings is planned and taught by instructional coaches and other teacher leaders. An adult learning committee reviews teacher requests for new learning experiences based on student response and need. These requests are considered for developing our future professional development courses.