

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Andrew Michael Vincent

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

Official School Name Thomas Jefferson High School For Advanced Studies

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 17 Gretna Boulevard

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

Gretna LA 70053-4905  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Jefferson Parish

Telephone (504) 363-4300

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Web site/URL https://www.jpsschools.org/jefferson

high

E-mail andrew.vincent@jpsschools.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. Cade Brumley

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail cade.brumley@jppss.k12.la.us

District Name Jefferson Parish School District Tel. (504) 349-7600

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. Larry Dale

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

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. 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

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 54 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 15 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 14 High schools
  - 2 K-12 schools

85 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
  - Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
- 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	35	51	86
10	61	44	105
11	57	57	114
12 or higher	46	48	94
<b>Total Students</b>	199	200	399

\*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 19 % Asian
  - 29 % Black or African American
  - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 41 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: <1%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	3
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	399
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

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

Vietnamese, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 45%  
Total number students who qualify: 178

8. Students receiving special education services: 42 %  
169 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>1</u> Autism                  | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	9
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 22:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	97%	95%	99%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%

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

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

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	93
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	94%
Enrolled in a community college	3%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
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.

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

TJHS strives to provide a holistic academic environment in which all students will excel with the guidance and support of educators, parents, and the community.

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

**Magnet**

All students that attend Thomas Jefferson High School come from one of the district's feeder schools or they meet the following admissions criteria: For students entering grades nine through twelve, and who attended a Louisiana Public School during the 2017-2018 school year, the application will be screened for residency, standardized test scores for the 2017-2018 school year (ELA and Math - a minimum of Mastery in both subjects), and report card grades for the last two years. For students entering grades nine through twelve, and who attended a non-Louisiana Public School during the 2017-2018 school year, the application will be screened for residency and standardized test scores for the 2017-2018 school year (A student's overall composite, including all subjects tested, must be at or above the 85th percentile), and report card grades for the last two years. If previous LEAP 2025 test results are submitted, no rating lower than "Mastery" in ELA and math will be considered acceptable. Previous End of Course test results may have no rating lower than "Good". A student's end of the school year report card for the last two years must also accompany the application. In addition to the residency and standardized test score requirements, a student's end of year report card for the last two years must not contain a final/end of course letter grade average lower than a "C" in each reading, English, math, science, or social studies course attempted. In addition, the student must score in the 85th percentile or higher on the district's admission test. Students that come from one of the district's feeder elementary schools must have met similar criteria for admission to those schools and maintained a 2.0 unweighted GPA each year to enroll at Thomas Jefferson High School. All students must maintain an unweighted 2.0 GPA to remain continuously enrolled at Thomas Jefferson High School.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Thomas Jefferson High School (TJHS) opened its doors in August of 2006 as a college preparatory, magnet high school, to serve and educate the residents of Jefferson Parish. Situated just 5 miles south of the historic French Quarter in New Orleans, Louisiana, TJHS serves an ethnic and socio-economically diverse urban/suburban population. TJHS is the only 9-12th grade magnet high school in the Jefferson Parish Public School System, which is the largest LEA in the state.

TJHS is comprised of a student body that bears a strong correlation to the demographic makeup of the community it serves: 41.3% Caucasian, 29.2% African American, 19.1% Asian American, 9.6% Hispanic, and .8% Native American / Alaskan Native. TJHS is also a Title 1 school, with (45%) of its students qualifying for free and reduced lunch programs.

Since its inception, TJHS has continually adopted clubs, traditions, and programs to endear its students to the school and to create a holistic learning environment. TJHS boasts a full complement of prep sports and is a Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) member school. Our sports programs have become an important part of our school's culture, with many students and families being drawn to our opportunities in athletics as well as academics. In our short history, TJHS has earned district and/or state championships in 12 different sports. In the 2018-2019 school year alone, 5 team sports earned a district championship title. Service and honor associations have become an increased part of Thomas Jefferson's student experience. Key Club, Student Government Association, National Honor Society, National English Honor Society, National Art Honor Society, and the International Thespian Society have represented and served the diverse academic interests on campus. These groups spearhead community service projects in conjunction with the United Way's Mission Ignition initiative in an effort to improve our neighborhoods and to help those in need. In 2018, our graduating class accrued 8,868 service hours. Further, many of these hours were accompanied by the accumulation of tangible goods and money raised for charitable causes. In the 2017-2018 school year, TJHS rose \$1,882 for Hurricane Harvey Relief. According to the Second Harvest Food Bank, this provided approximately 7,528 meals to those in need.

While service organizations serve as the cornerstone of the club offerings at TJHS, several other clubs have been chartered to represent and serve unique student interests. The Environmental Club, Photography Club, Academic Games, and Young Life are examples of some of the open membership groups that exist at TJHS. Each of these clubs participate in projects and endeavors to meaningfully engage students interests and passions. For example, in 2017 The Environmental Club affiliated themselves with LSU's Coastal Roots Project which develops and maintains on-site school nurseries for seedlings that are essential to maintaining our coast. In April of 2019, The Environmental Club will bring and plant over 250 homegrown Cypress and Oak trees to a strategic site identified as being at risk of experiencing irreversible land loss.

Academically, the school has embraced its role as a college preparatory school and has placed an emphasis on expanding opportunities for students via dual enrollment partnerships and College Board examinations (AP & CLEP). As college costs continue to rise and student debt becomes an increasing burden on young people, TJHS has made it a goal to graduate their seniors with as many potential college credits as possible. As of the 2018-2019 school year, TJHS has dual enrollment partnerships with 5 local colleges and universities. Further, 4 dual enrollment courses (College Algebra, Trigonometry, Calculus, and English Composition) are offered on site. The majority of these courses require that our teachers are certified during a summer institute at Southeastern Louisiana University (SELU) to facilitate collegiate level courses at Thomas Jefferson. TJHS offers 10 Advanced Placement courses. Also, through a partnership with Modern States, the school has become a leader in the New Orleans Metropolitan area in earning qualifying CLEP (College Level Examination Program) scores for college credit in various subjects. In the 2017-2018 school year, TJHS students passed 172 CLEP tests using vouchers earned via Modern States courses. In the last two school years, the number of seniors graduating with potential college credits via College Board examination programs increased by 25.27%. The graduating class of 2019 is on pace to have earned more college credits than any other class in TJHS history. TJHS also features a robust ACT Prep program designed to help students achieve their highest possible score in an effort to increase scholarship and grant opportunities during the college admissions process. Through targeted assistance programs and general elective ACT

course work, the average ACT score for the graduating students of TJHS has risen for three straight years. Currently, Thomas Jefferson's average ACT score is 26.7.

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

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

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

TJHS uses the Tier 1 curriculum, LearnZillion, Guidebooks. While using this curriculum, our teachers facilitate the learning of essential skills necessary for mastery on our state's standardized test, LEAP 2025. Our teachers also supplement additional complex texts and classic literature into their classes in an effort to promote deeper literary analysis, in anticipation of CLEP and AP exams offered at our school.

Our selection of curriculum is attributed to the belief that a meticulously curated selection of grade level appropriate literature must accompany the instruction of essential skills being taught in each grade level. Materials accompanying these texts; support the teaching of citing textual evidence when answering text dependent prompts, and also support the writing of claims.

All grades heavily employ the necessary rubrics, organizational tools, and research-based strategies necessary to support this important learning. As an example, our English students regularly use D.I.D.L.S. (diction, imagery, details, language, syntax, and tone) charts to analyze text and determine the author's purpose.

Students in English IV are encouraged to take the British Literature CLEP exams to obtain potential college credit. They are also encouraged to complete a Modern States online course as an extra study tool. In an effort to expose our students to a large variety of authors, we integrate interactive journals into the curriculum. The journal assists our students in the building of a portfolio of authors and works necessary for CLEP preparation. In 2017-2018, 82% of British Literature CLEP test takers passed, earning potential college credit.

The English department uses LEAP 360 interim assessment data to identify areas of refinement. There is time in class for peer and student feedback on writing. Teachers regularly review tests and skills for students in tutoring and intervention sessions offered during lunch and sometimes after school.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

In grades 9 &10, our math department utilizes the Great Minds, Eureka Math curriculum for Geometry and Algebra II. These curricular resources ensure that we expose our students to instruction and problem sets that are reflective of grade appropriate rigor and standards associated with each respective subject. It is common practice within our math department to use Eureka exit tickets as items for student analysis to determine whether or not our students mastered the content contained in our daily lessons. By identifying samples of high, medium, and low work, we are able to identify students in need of intervention and/or additional support. While interventions occur during the regular school day, the math department offers additional tutoring opportunities twice a week, after school.

At TJHS, we use 8th grade Algebra I LEAP 2025 data to identify incoming freshman who need additional support in mathematics. Students who scored "Basic" or lower on this assessment are placed in a transitional math course prior to taking Geometry in the second semester of their freshman year. This course blends the reteaching and reinforcement of essential Algebra I skills while also introducing students to fundamental Geometry concepts in an effort to better equip them for success in Geometry and beyond.

In grades 11-12, students at TJHS begin taking dual enrollment and/or advanced placement courses. Over 85% of 11th graders take a Southeastern Louisiana University (SELU) dual enrollment course for College Algebra, which is offered on our campus. All SELU courses on campus are the equivalent of 3 college credit hours. We currently have two math teachers on our campus certified to teach SELU math courses. As a result, many students elect to earn college credit in Trigonometry and Calculus after successfully completing College Algebra. Upperclassmen at TJHS also have access to AP classes for Calculus AB, and Probability & Statistics.

## **1c. Science:**

The Science department at TJHS relies heavily on teacher collaboration in an effort to best prepare our students for success in the many courses and disciplines represented in our course catalog. Our team ensures that instruction, scope, and sequence holds a strong alignment to Louisiana's Student Standards for Science. While the content is very different from course to course we have identified several essential skills which are vital for the development of our underclassmen. For example, in the last two school years, we have placed an increased emphasis on exposing our students to scientific phenomena as an anchor for students to apply content knowledge and investigate, evaluate, and reason scientifically. In planning meetings (clusters) we meticulously create and/or curate task sets based around scientific phenomenon for instruction and common formative assessments in Physical Science, Biology, and Chemistry.

Hands on labs are also a very important part of our grades 9-11 Science courses. Our department uses a variety of lab approaches (traditional, quantitative, inquiry, and guided-inquiry), incorporating the latest lab technologies in Physics and Chemistry to engage our students. We have two functional labs on campus that allow us to regularly prepare dissections and various experiments (determining the acidity of solutions, chemical reactions, etc.).

We offer a diverse selection of STEM electives to satisfy the ever increasing needs of our upperclassmen in these fields. Our longest standing AP course offerings have been: Biology, Environmental Science, and Chemistry. Nevertheless, in an effort to expand computer science offerings, AP Computer Science Principles was offered to students for the first time in the 2017-2018 school year. In this course, students learned about networking fundamentals, coding, and the ethical / social impacts associated with technology integration in the modern world. In our first year, 17 of 20 students (85%) received a passing score of 3 or higher on the AP exam.

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

In grades 9-11, social studies courses are heavily supplemented with a Tier 1 supplemental resource, The DBQ Project. These resources assist our students in the development of necessary skills in Social Studies needed for high school courses and eventually AP courses. While content standards vary greatly between World Geography, Civics, and American History, students in all of our courses must be exposed to complex, historical texts and documents. Further, when using these supplemental resources we support critical thinking, student inquiry, and effective document analysis by utilizing several research-based strategies such as "bucketing" for organizing evidence and using a "chicken foot" strategy for thesis development. These strategies reinforce the essential skills of making a claim and supporting that claim with evidence from primary and secondary sources.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the social studies department has collaborated on a weekly basis to create and strengthen common formative assessments. This process has allowed our teachers to assess and analyze student claim writing and strengthening those claims with relevant content knowledge. Common formative assessments are now regularly accompanied by teacher created content rubrics to strengthen student writing and to open up more avenues for teacher, peer, and self-assessment. These rubrics are modeled after the state assessment guide for LEAP 2025 and offer a tool for consistent monitoring and developing of these essential skills in every social studies course.

In grades 11-12, students have the opportunity to utilize the analytical and writing skills that they have developed as underclassmen by taking 1 of 3 social studies AP courses offered on campus. In 2016-2017, AP Psychology was added to our course catalog after our College Board "AP Potential" report revealed that our student's PSAT scores showed a strong correlation to potential AP success in Psychology. In May of 2018, 22 out of 31 (70.97%) of students earned a passing score on their AP Psychology exam.

## **1e. For secondary schools:**

It is our belief that we have the responsibility of exposing our students to rigorous collegiate level materials and courses in high school. Further, we must give our students the opportunity to reduce college costs by

NBRS 2019

earning credits while enrolled at TJHS. Our school offers 10 AP courses, and supports several CLEP examination programs, utilizing in class instruction and online curricula and instructional supports provided by Modern States ([modernstates.org](http://modernstates.org)). TJHS currently has dual enrollment partnerships with 5 local universities and colleges, giving our students exposure to real college coursework during their junior and senior years.

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

TJHS offers a rich selection of electives to give our students the opportunity to master skills and acquire knowledge in many different fields.

The Visual Arts Program program is open to grades 9-12 at TJHS and is facilitated by two National Board Certified Art teachers who teach sketching, painting, sculpting, and the use of visual design elements for 2D and 3D art. Both teachers strive to add value to the art program at our school by exposing their students to meaningful experiences and community events. Further, our art students are encouraged to create portfolios for AP Studio Art in an effort to leverage their unique talents and gifts to earn college credit. In the 2017-2018 school year, 13 out of 14 (92%) students earned college credit for a submitted AP portfolio. In the 2018-2019 school year, our art students participated in the Gretna Art Walk, The National WWII Museum's Gifts of Gratitude, New Orleans Museum of Art's (NOMA) Art in Bloom Showcase, and The Memory Project. In addition, several of our students have had their worked displayed in local and national exhibits including RAU Antiques, George Rodrigue's student scholarship galleries, and the Congressional Art Competition exhibited at the US Capitol Building.

Our theater students in grades 9-12 are instructed in a plethora of topics from Greek and Roman theater through present day. We utilize several skills from Constantine Stanislavsky and read historical pieces of literature from renowned writers, thinkers, and playwrights such as Shakespeare, Moliere, and Socrates. Through performances and monologue readings, students are taught creative expression, aesthetic perception, historical and cultural perspective, and critical analysis. Every year our students demonstrate their acquired skills, knowledge, and talent during our annual musical theater performance. Our theater department has performed musicals such as Return to the Forbidden Planet, The Little Mermaid and Beauty and the Beast for hundreds of students, community members, and fans of local theater.

Band and Talented Music programs on our campus give our musically inclined students in grades 9-12 the ability to participate in a program that is geared to each individual student's strengths and ambitions. Our music students participate in a fall and spring school concert, and in several festivals and competitions including the Louisiana Music Educators Association (LMEA): District 6 Honor Band, District 6 Honor Jazz Ensemble, and the All State Jazz and Classical Band. In March of 2019, our band earned a Superior rating at the Jefferson Parish Superintendent's Music Festival.

In 2017-2018, 16 students from TJHS earned a passing Humanities CLEP score thanks to the hard work of our visual arts, theatre, and music departments. This is an impressive number, considering there were only 22 passing Humanities CLEP scores recorded in the entire state of Louisiana that year.

Students at TJHS take at least 2 Health and PE classes during their high school career. PE and Health students are encouraged to participate in multiple sports and activities including basketball, volleyball, ping pong, cabbage ball, and archery. Physical well-being is monitored using the Focused Fitness Welnet Fitness Standards. Utilizing a progressive series of individualized goals, students use Pacer data and other measurables to monitor overall total fitness. All students complete 9 weeks of in class instruction emphasizing the "Health Triangle" as a way to stress the interconnectivity of physical, mental, and social health.

36 of our students are enrolled in a JROTC program, in which we partner with another school in our  
NBRS 2019

community (West Jefferson High School). In 2017-2018, the JROTC program our students are in passed their annual national inspection earning the highest possible distinction of “exceeding standards.” Our JROTC students are taught the core values of the US Air Force: “integrity, service before self, and excellence in all we do.”

TJHS currently offers Spanish I, II, and III. In the summer of 2019, one of our teachers will attend training to earn a certification to facilitate a Spanish dual enrollment course next school year. In the spring of 2019, a Spanish and Hispanic Culture club was founded to highlight language and culture and to increase awareness and appreciation of our local Hispanic community.

Speech I and II are also popular electives at TJHS. In speech, students learn how to effectively communicate their ideas through verbal and written techniques. As students progress, they begin to study the importance and impact of mass media in modern life at local, national, and global levels.

### **3. Special Populations:**

Currently, 169 students at TJHS are IEP participants. The vast majority of these students have been identified as “gifted” and/or “talented” in a particular field (visual arts, music, theatre). Four students on our campus have IEPs for Other Health Impairments (OHI) and/or cognitive exceptionalities such as autism that require specific accommodations to assist them in the mainstream setting.

Gifted students are tracked into gifted English classes in grades 9-11, where they work directly with a gifted instructor. In these classes, students are exposed to additional rigor in writing and in literary analysis. Socratic Seminars and Think-Pair-Share strategies are commonplace in these environments as students and teachers engage in discussion designed to promote enriching conversations and debates featuring unique interpretations and opinions. Some students, including gifted 12th graders, meet with their gifted teacher on a weekly basis to discuss and track individual learning goals. Gifted goals are typically centered on autonomous learning, creative thinking and problem solving. Logic problems and puzzles are a regular part of these one-on-one meetings.

Talented Students take courses that correlate to their exceptionality. TJHS offers Talented Theatre, and Talent Visual Arts classes for all grades on campus. Furthermore, all of our Talented Music students have a resource period with a talented instructor on a weekly basis. In all of our talented classes and environments, teachers work directly with students towards continual improvement in their area of exceptionality. Talented teachers work with students on varying art projects, monologues, and musical pieces based on each individual student’s skills, learning goals, and interest.

We have 1 Special Education teacher on campus and 1 Special Education paraprofessional who assists 4 OHI and/or autistic students succeed in the mainstream setting. We provide small group and individualized testing environments for these students. Further, assessments are spatially reformatted for autistic students and other students who may require this accommodation. Typically, this requires our Special Education team to provide ample spacing between questions so that test items do not become “jumbled” for the student. In regards to daily accommodations, our Special Education instructor pushes into classes every day to ensure that our autistic and OHI students have everything they need to be successful. Our special education team regularly works with teachers to create study guides, notes, and to make necessary adjustments on lengthy projects and tasks.

Currently, there are twenty-one students on our campus that receive accommodations via 504, Individual Accommodations Plans. Our librarian also serves as our 504 chairperson and she ensures that all teachers are aware of these accommodations and fulfill them in their classrooms. Typically, our 504 population requires individual and small group testing and extended time on assessments and lengthy projects. Our 504 chair often facilitates the individual and/or small group assessments and works directly with our school’s test coordinator to ensure that their accommodations are received on all applicable assessments including LEAP 2025, ACT, PSAT, and AP.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Thomas Jefferson High School (TJHS) strives to maintain a holistic environment that nurtures emotional and social well-being for our students. Over the past 5 years, TJHS has added numerous clubs, programs, and events to endear our students to our school, and to create a sense of community on our campus. “The faculty and staff of TJHS cares for my children, not only in regards to academics, but I have seen how they truly care for all the students at the school.” – TJHS parent

New enrollees attend “New Jaguar Orientation.” The vast majority of these attendees are freshman. Therefore, the orientation is designed to ease the transition into high school through team building exercises and informal meet and greets with teachers, and upperclassmen. All attendees receive shirts and prizes and are made to feel welcomed to the Jaguar family.

Over 80% of our faculty sponsors a club or coaches a team. Many of these clubs and teams are formed due to student interest. Teachers sponsor these clubs with the motivation of providing a safe and productive outlet for these interests.

While all of the social and cultural events of a traditional high school exist (homecoming, prom, senior trip, pep rallies, etc.), TJHS also provides students with an outlet to address emotional and social issues that are of significance in the lives of young people. In the 2017-2018 school year, our Student Climate Team partnered with the Anti-Defamation League to become a “No Place for Hate” school. In this student-led endeavor, students discussed issues like bias, discrimination, and bullying and developed meaningful activities to promote a positive culture within the school.

The teachers at our school contribute to our culture in numerous ways. As aforementioned, our teachers regularly engage themselves in the lives of our students through clubs, sports, and events. Every week our teachers participate in a “Student of the Week” initiative by nominating a student based on our 4 core character values: truth, justice, honor, and service. Concurrently, faculty and staff also nominate a “Teacher of the Month” to highlight the excellent work being done by our educators on campus. Each year, 2 off-campus faculty socials are organized for team building. We have enjoyed catered meals, facilitated gift exchanges, and even went bowling a few times to spur friendly competition among staff. Further, our Jaguar Parent Orientation and our school administration partner together during Teacher Appreciation Week to ensure that teachers received a meal, treat, or token of appreciation each day.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

TJHS has continually strived to engage families and to strengthen its relationship with the community. In 2016-2017, our parent organization was renamed the Jaguar Parent Organization (JPO). The change in name also signified a change in direction that would create a more inclusive environment for parents and families to engage in our shared responsibility of creating a positive and meaningful educational experience for all of our stakeholders. Since that year, the JPO has co-organized a yearly fundraiser and community event called “The Gretna Jubilee.” With three other schools in the community, our JPO has sponsored an event that brings revenue and awareness to the “advanced studies academies” in our community. This particular fundraiser includes local restaurants that compete in a “best bite” food tasting competition and also attracts local businesses as corporate sponsors. Last year, The Gretna Jubilee enjoyed \$40,000 in sponsorships from local businesses. Further, our JPO has organized an annual “JPO Tailgate,” which is an event that promotes fall sports at our school. The entire community is invited to the school for hot dogs and hamburgers and to enjoy performances by our band, cheer, flag, and dance teams. The Gretna Jubilee and the JPO Tailgate are mostly run and organized by the school administration, parents, and family volunteers. Further, the JPO organizes two annual socials at a local restaurant to engage and fellowship with volunteers and parents who are interested in joining the organization.

TJHS has developed numerous, beneficial relationships with governmental organizations and philanthropic organizations in our community. In the 2015-2016 school year, the TJHS administration and the mayor of

Gretna developed an internship project designed to give our students a full immersion experience in local government. Each year, TJHS and the mayor's office selects up to 8 sophomores to attend a 2 week internship that is designed to immerse our students in all of the inner workings of our municipality. Interns work in the water department, visit a sewerage maintenance facility, attend council sessions, and have direct contact with the mayor on a near daily basis to ask questions and to plan events. The internship is designed to last three summers. Once students are admitted, they can remain with the internship through the summer prior to their freshman year of college. Outside of this program, our students regularly volunteer to work events sponsored by the city including a weekly farmer's market and "Back to the Drive In" family movie nights.

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

TJHS has two main leadership teams that conduct professional development and offer instructional and strategic support to our teachers. The Graduation Leadership Team (GLT) is designed to monitor student progress in regards to graduation and college readiness. The GLT is comprised of the principal, assistant principal of curriculum, the guidance counselor, and a lead ACT teacher. This team identifies dual enrollment, AP, and CLEP opportunities for individual students and nurtures the development of strong ACT Prep, Work Keys, and curricular supports. A vital member of this team is a lead teacher who develops course scopes and sequences, and curates the materials necessary for in class implementation. Currently, this team is developing a 2 month curriculum for ACT Prep students that focus on potential career paths and financial literacy. This curriculum will culminate in an ACT Work Keys assessment that will generate a Career Interest Inventory, and perhaps lead to additional college credit via the American Council on Education (ACE).

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) exists to directly support content specific professional development which typically occurs in content area cluster meetings. The ILT is composed of the principal, assistant principal of curriculum, our lead mentor teacher, and our "Ignite" teacher leader. The Ignite teacher belongs to a district-wide cohort of teachers trained to support instruction and professional development on campus. Implementing National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) protocols and practices, this team regularly analyzes student data and evaluates the instructional needs on our campus. Once needs are identified ILT members develop plans for training and support to be implemented in content specific team cluster meetings. Clusters meet weekly to analyze student work, track progress, and strategically plan for upcoming lessons. Currently, ILT members are working with teachers in clusters to strengthen our capacity for teaching claim development and thesis writing. In cluster meetings, we are redesigning assessments and rubrics to address this skill. Further, we are planning for methods to integrate these newly created writing rubrics into the classroom.

The teachers at our school regularly participate in vendor provided training provided by the district as we commit to incorporating Tier 1 instructional resources and programs. This year our teachers have attended professional development sessions provided by the DBQ Project, Eureka Math, LearnZillion Guidebooks, and Code.org. Also, members of our ILT will attend a National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) training in the spring of 2019 to strengthen the capacity of our ILT and teacher planning clusters.

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

First and foremost, school leadership is viewed as a corporate responsibility shared by the principal, school administration, teachers, and district level employees. The principal of TJHS serves as the instructional leader on campus. The principal guides and supports instructional practice directly or by supporting professional development offered through the GLT and ILT. The principal believes that all of the students on campus must be exposed to the best curriculum and instructional practices available. This can best be demonstrated by our current commitment to the adoption and implementation of Tier 1 curriculum and resources in all applicable courses. The principal also works to maintain a high degree of social capital in the school by fostering long-standing relationships with government, businesses, and national organizations. The principal believes in being accessible to all members of the school community and anyone that has invested in our success.

There is one assistant principal on our campus that supports the principal in supporting instruction and professional development on campus. In addition, the assistant principal is imperative in administering some of the necessary and vital roles of the school. As a school test coordinator, the assistant principal directly maintains the AP, CLEP, LEAP 2025, LEAP 360, ACT, and PSAT testing programs on campus. During the 2018-2019 school year, the Jaguar Policy Committee was formed to uphold and amend school policies in an effort to ensure proper implementation of policy at the classroom and administrative level. This team is composed of the principal and two teachers who volunteered to participate in this important work. In the spring of 2019, this team developed a new policy for academic honor and honesty in an effort to embolden and encourage academic integrity on our campus.

Teachers and staff take on numerous leadership roles aimed at making TJHS one of the best schools in the New Orleans area. One of our PE teachers serves as an Athletic Director to ensure compliance, competition, and safety for all of our sports teams. Teachers serve as grade level sponsors to plan dances and events to enhance student life. A member of our front office staff serves as a Community Service Director, meticulously recording and documenting all community service endeavors on campus. TJHS is truly blessed with a faculty and staff that regularly contribute to the important task of leading and organizing essential tasks necessary to our school's proper function.

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

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TJHS has developed many strategies and programs that have brought about academic success. Yet, one of the initiatives that has garnered the most attention from the public has been our partnership with the philanthropic organization, Modern States.

During the 2016-2017, TJHS was in the middle of a reconfiguration of courses that were designed to earn students college credits via College Board examination programs, AP & CLEP. AP courses were being strategically added and/or removed based on student interest and AP potential (identified via PSAT data). In regards to CLEP, the school began to look at its existing course catalog to determine which courses held a correlation to specific CLEP exams. While pursuing the possibilities surrounding expanding our CLEP program, a Spanish instructor on campus discovered Modern States while researching CLEP curricula online and made the leadership team aware.

Modern States has a slogan, “Freshman Year for Free.” It is their mission to provide future college students with an avenue to earn college credit via CLEP as a method to combat rising college costs. Enrollees have access to their instructional materials, video-taped lectures, texts, and assessments. In addition, students who complete the course receive a testing voucher from Modern States. We truly saw this as a great match. We believed we had students that are capable of earning these credits, but we also knew that course, curriculum, and testing fees presented a barrier. In December of 2016, TJHS entered into a partnership with Modern States, integrating their courses into several of our classrooms on campus.

In the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, 323 CLEP tests were taken with Modern States vouchers. 207 tests were passed, earning over 620 potential college credit hours. As of May 2018, approximately \$27,455 of Modern States vouchers have been utilized to save our students hundreds of thousands of dollars in potential college costs.

As a result of our successful partnership, the school has been featured in local newspapers with articles highlighting student success in this endeavor. In particular, one article featured a TJHS student who has actually earned 32 credits and potentially his “freshman year for free.” TJHS and Modern States have been asked to participate at national and local conferences and conventions to share our story and hopefully inspire others to employ a similar model. In December of 2018, leaders from Modern States and TJHS served as panelists on a forum titled, “Hacking College Access and Affordability” at the National Summit on Education Reform in Washington D.C.