

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):
- 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)

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	51	68	119
7	68	55	123
8	59	41	100
9	58	64	122
10	57	41	98
11	42	41	83
12 or higher	38	37	75
Total Students	373	347	720

*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
 - 17 % Asian
 - 19 % Black or African American
 - 12 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 51 % 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.

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	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	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	0
(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):

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32%
Total number students who qualify: 233

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
14 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>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 10
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	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	49
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 15:1

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

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	65
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2010

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

The mission of Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy is to provide a rigorous learning environment that assures college-readiness, while fostering leadership and encouraging community involvement for all students.

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

Students living within the district apply for admittance to Patrick Taylor. The students that apply must have a minimum grade point average. Students that meet this requirement are then tested by district. If the student scores at the required percentile the student is admitted depending on available seats at each grade level.

PART III – SUMMARY

Patrick F Taylor Science and Technology Academy (PFTSTA) is an advanced academy public school serving students in grades 6th -12th who live across the district. The school was designed for students who are ready to excel in a rigorous academic learning environment, and the teachers have high expectations of the students and hold them accountable. Students who attend an elementary advanced academy in the district are eligible to select to attend PFTSTA while others must go through an application process at the district level.

Over the last 15 years, PFTSTA has grown from a small half day science and math program for middle school students to a school that serves just over 700 offering a wide selection of honors, AP, gifted and talented, and dual enrollment online classes. Every student has a laptop for use at school and home either provided by the school or through the bring your own device program (BYOD). New sixth graders take a special course called Power Skills in order to prepare them for the school's curriculum and introduce them to the fabrication lab. There are 32 clubs and organizations on campus including several honor societies and clubs that promote community service, 22 district level sports, and talented programs in music, art, and theater. Since the school won a Blue Ribbon Award in 2010, more students in the district want to attend Taylor because of this recognition. Also, the school has been able to attain students who have had great success not only in their classes but have been recognized for their many achievements at the state and national level outside the classroom in science, math, technology, art, English and social studies.

The focus of the school's program is science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), but students with strengths in other areas have been able to find a home at PFTSTA, too. Beginning with the first graduating class in 2009, many traditions have been created to provide students with a full high school experience that helps to supplement the academic program of the school. Some of these traditions include: Ring Ceremony, Senior Award Night, MORP (formal dance for middle school sponsored by the juniors), Freshman/Senior Olympics, student-made floats for the school Mardi Gras parade, 6th grade/12th grade big brothers and sisters, and an orientation camp for new students and parents. The school uses social media to share these events and successes of the students with parents, alums, and the greater community. This has helped PFTSTA to build its reputation of excellence to a broader audience.

Students at PFTSTA have succeeded in many areas. The class of 2018 received ten and a half million dollars in scholarship monies and 100% of the class applied and were accepted into a four-year university. Since 2013, each class has had several seniors who have been named POSSE Scholars. In the class of 2019, there are eight National Merit Finalists. There are members of the Academic Games teams who qualify for nationals every year. Students have received many awards at the Greater New Orleans Science and Engineering Fair and several students have been the recipients of a Grand Award and were sent to the International Fair. Mu Alpha Theta, the math honor society, participates in numerous tournaments throughout the year taking home many trophies. The school has many students who place first or second at the district Literary Rally and go on to place in the state Literary Rally as well. PFTSTA students are encouraged to find meaningful extracurricular activities. It is not always about winning awards as there are students who participate in many service projects throughout the greater community either with an organization on campus or other local group.

All students at PFTSTA have the potential for academic success. However, there is a population of students who need extra support to succeed. The school offers daily homework support so students can complete assignments in a room with a certified teacher to assist. Also, there is a weekly Personal Academic Work Session (PAWS) program where teachers offer extra help for students who are struggling. Sixth graders who have had challenges meeting content specific outcomes are receiving interventions to help them achieve success, and several seniors are receiving extra prep for the ACT test, too. In 2013, the school moved into a state of the art building that was designed specifically for the PFTSTA program. There is a huge common area for everyone's use, a library with space for teaching and working, a fabrication lab outfitted with numerous types of equipment that can handle a whole class or individuals, two dedicated science labs, classrooms outfitted with smart boards, a huge band room equipped with practice rooms, and a large outdoor space for physical education and special events. The school is waiting for construction of an events center to

begin this year. Parents play an integral role in the success of PFTSTA and are extremely supportive of the academics, arts, and athletics of the school. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) holds several fundraisers every year as well as organizes a huge yearly gala. The money parents raise is immediately put back into the school. There is also a grandparent group which meets several times a year and holds a bake sale four times a year. Over the years, the parents and grandparents have purchased technology, furniture, landlines for each classroom, instructional materials for AP classes, and basic teacher supplies. Four times a year, the parents serve a remarkable lunch for faculty and staff. The faculty and staff at PFTSTA are committed to providing an outstanding educational experience. Many have applied for and won grants to bring new resources to the school and won state and national awards in their fields. Many teachers attend and present at state and national conferences throughout the year. The district selected two teachers to be Teacher Leader Fellows who help in implementing and communicating district initiatives which includes modeling best practices, leading cluster meetings, and conducting classroom walk-throughs.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

PFTSTA's English language arts (ELA) curriculum is taught at an advanced level and places emphasis on close reading, supporting claims with textual evidence, research, test-taking skills, and speaking and listening. Much of the curriculum is outlined in the Louisiana guidebooks, yet as an advanced academy, Taylor expands its curriculum and exceeds Louisiana state standards. Students in grades 6-12 engage with rigorous pieces of fiction and nonfiction, going beyond simple reading comprehension to deep analysis of the pieces. Teachers use information from state tests, PSAT, ACT, and AP tests as well as common assessments to analyze the data and collaborate to improve instruction and design remediation. Using rubrics and lessons tailored to the needs identified in the data, teachers scaffold students' reading comprehension, writing, and editing processes.

A centerpiece of Taylor's ELA instruction is research, team taught with the PFTSTA librarian. Students employ high-level thinking skills by locating, evaluating, and synthesizing information in inquiry-based research. Technology plays an integral part as students assure proper citation. This year, to further emphasize research, the department also added AP Seminar. AP Research will be added in 2019, making Taylor one of just seventeen Louisiana schools that offer College Board's AP Capstone Diploma. To increase student motivation and community connections, Taylor has added service learning to its ELA curriculum. Currently, students in grades 6 through 8 participate in community service units with elementary schools, senior citizen centers, and the Jefferson Parish Department of Environmental Science, with all service work tied to the classroom. Peer tutors come from the PFTSTA National English Honor Society (NEHS) and National Honor Society (NHS) and shadow students who need additional help in organization and writing during the PAWS period.

1b. Mathematics:

Math classes at PFTSTA emphasize teaching students to understand why a process works rather than repeating the process. By using the Eureka Math curriculum, there is continuity in instruction from sixth grade through Algebra II. The PFTSTA math experience is characterized by hands on, technology enriched lessons from Desmos and the Math Design Collaborative that teachers adapt for the school's curriculum. To keep the math classes challenging, students are placed in the math class a year ahead of the traditional track. For sixth and seventh grade students who need help in the transition from elementary school to the rigorous math curriculum at PFTSTA, the students utilize ALEKS, a web-based, adaptive learning system that determines the needs of an individual student and guides them through selected content. Since students take Algebra I as eighth graders, the school is able to offer more opportunities for high school students to earn college credit through Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses with Louisiana State University taught by PFTSTA teachers. During the 2017-2018 school year, the math department Professional Learning Community (PLC) team identified the essential standards for all course offerings. With this foundational work complete, the math faculty is now able to focus on analyzing student data and using it to drive tier 2 intervention plans. The PFTSTA math faculty teach students to learn from their mistakes. Students complete an error analysis for each test, identify the type of mistake has been made (precision, problem solving, computation, or careless), then investigate why the mistake was made and determine how to fix it. Beyond the classrooms, students' enthusiasm for math is reflected in the multiple math centered clubs teachers sponsor. PFTSTA students are active members of Academic Games, Chi Alpha Mu, Math Counts, and Mu Alpha Theta, competing at the district, state, and national levels year after year.

1c. Science:

The Taylor science faculty integrates claim, evidence, and reasoning (CER) strategies into the curriculum to develop students' critical thinking skills starting in the 6th grade. The teachers emphasize using evidence to support reasoning in both middle and high school as a way to help students develop strong arguments. All

students enrolled in biology, chemistry, and physics complete an independent research project where they learn to conduct scientific research, design and carry out an experiment, analyze data, and draw conclusions based on the data. Students then have the opportunity to take the research project to the regional science fair to present the findings to local professionals. Six students over the past five years have been selected to attend the Intel International Science & Engineering Fair. Middle school students showcase their knowledge of the scientific theory to local elementary school students through an annual Science Extravaganza. In science classes, the teacher's design lessons with an emphasis on hands-on experiences in order to strengthen students' skills. For AP Environmental Science, students grow native plant seedlings to plant in a local restoration project in Southeast Louisiana, collaborate with a local national park to monitor water quality, and use equipment to treat wastewater and measure influent and effluent parameters to compare against EPA standards. Teachers also use inquiry-based labs and project-based learning to enhance the science curriculum, foster critical thinking, and encourage effective collaboration among students. This rigorous and hands-on approach to science leads to the students' success in both middle and high school level end of year examinations and AP examinations. The AP science classes in 2018 (chemistry, biology, and environmental science) saw a 90% pass rate and 97% of the students in the 9th grade biology course reached the level of mastery or advanced.

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

The social studies curriculum at Patrick Taylor emphasizes teaching through primary and secondary source documents. In planning lessons, teachers use materials from the Louisiana Department of Education scope and sequence materials, Document-Based Questions Project (DBQ), and online resources including Stanford History Education Group, Gilder Lehrman, National World War II Museum, National World War I Museum, and the Library of Congress. Students investigate history, civics, and geography by studying historical texts, maps, political cartoons, quantitative data sets, current events, and the written work of experts. Another significant focus across all social studies courses is the requirement for students to develop historical arguments and research the answers using reliable source materials. The social studies faculty teach their students to ACE responses: make an Assertion, Cite evidence, and Explain how the evidence supports the assertion. This skill is refined as students move through grade levels so that they are ready to perform successfully on end of year state assessments and AP social studies exams, as well as have the necessary argumentation and reasoning skills needed to be successful when they enter college and careers. In class, students participate in debates, small group discussions, and whole group Socratic seminars to support their argument development. These argumentation skills are then incorporated into both short and extended writing assignments given during class time, as well as in their honors research paper that all students write each year. During this research process the teachers work with the librarian to ensure that students are finding quality resources. The students' passion for social studies is demonstrated in their eagerness to compete in local and state level social studies competitions such as the Louisiana State Social Studies Fair and Louisiana History Day. Students also have the opportunity to participate in field trips, such as those to the National World War II Museum and Whitney Plantation.

1e. For secondary schools:

PFTSTA's rigorous academic program ensures that students are well prepared for success in college, as indicated by high student ACT scores with a 29 composite average, and in 2019, six students received a perfect score of 36. The school prepares high school students for future success by providing a wide range of honors, advanced placement (AP), dual enrollment (DE), as well as classes resulting in professional certifications. There are 14 AP courses in house and online that cross all discipline areas and are available for students in grades 10 through 12. Over the past five years, Taylor has offered a number of DE courses from local universities for juniors and seniors. All middle school classes in ELA, math, science, and social studies are at the honors' level and assure a solid foundation for future coursework in high school.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In addition to a robust core curriculum, PFTSTA offers a well-rounded course of study that allows students the opportunity to develop special interests and talents in the arts, PE, foreign language, engineering, and technology, as well as access to a first-class library and fabrication lab.

The art department offers general art courses to high school, a required 7th grade art elective unit, a talented art program for grades 6-12, an afterschool art club for middle school, and the National Art Honors Society for high school students. The foundation of the art courses emphasizes the elements and principles of design through drawing. Intermediate courses expand on foundations into more diverse media such as printmaking, painting, and multimedia. The talented art program has 130 talented art students and encourages growth based on individual student needs. Students display work at local exhibitions such as the WWII museum, annual Jefferson Parish Public Schools Talented Art Audubon Zoo Exhibit, and New Orleans Museum of Art. Students in the National Art Society focus on community service projects and have volunteered to paint a mural at NOLA Motorsports, helped paint backdrops for school plays, paint welcome posters for visiting authors, helped create the memorial garden on campus, and hosted a Painting with Parents art fundraiser. Taylor is proud to offer a comprehensive music curriculum that includes vocal and instrumental music instruction across all grade levels. Beginning band starts in the sixth grade with classes that meet during the school day. The band performs in two annual concerts, pep rallies, graduation ceremonies, and Mardi Gras parades. Band students also have the opportunity to participate in district honor bands and all-state music festivals. The talented music program offers more advanced instruction for all band instruments, as well as voice, piano and guitar.

There are general theater courses for high school students as well as a talented theater program which serves middle through high. Primary emphasis is placed on the development of acting techniques through monologue work, scene study, and short play performance. Students are also exposed to script analysis, playwriting, and improvisation. Additionally, the school offers Scenic Design & Technology as a technology credit at the high school level. Students work individually and collaboratively on production design through practical application of resources and tools in the fabrication lab and design technology. Finally, students have the opportunity to showcase talents in two school productions a year with auditions open to all the students in grades 6-12.

Taylor's physical education program consists of general PE and health for grades 6-10, advanced PE for juniors and seniors, as well as a variety of extracurricular sports for all grades. An essential goal of the physical education program is to teach students the core concepts required to maintain a healthy lifestyle that will last long after they graduate. Strength training and conditioning provide significant functional benefits and improvement in overall health and well-being. Team sports build, not only muscle and stamina, but also leadership and collaboration skills.

All students are required to study foreign language. Three levels of Spanish are offered on campus, and virtual courses make other languages available. The foreign language department offers more than basic grammar and speaking skills. In addition to learning the language, students study culture, literature, history, and various arts. Students have even used the fab lab to create cultural objects that reflect classroom studies.

The technology courses at Taylor teach computer literacy, computer science, and digital citizenship, while emphasizing 21st century skills and supporting core subjects. In sixth grade, students are introduced to Echo, the school-wide learning management system, and become proficient in a variety of software programs including, but not limited to, Microsoft Office and Google apps. They learn to use the Internet and other technology safely and ethically, in order to take control of their digital footprint and become responsible digital citizens. Finally, in addition to becoming proficient users, and responsible consumers, of technology, students become creators, as they are introduced to coding and electronics. Some of the technology resources available to middle school students are coding in SCRATCH, using Makey Makeys, printing in 3D, using laser and vinyl cutters, and programming with Arduino and Raspberry Pi. High school students learn digital design, HTML, and CSS, in order to create digital portfolios and contribute to the school's web site. Finally, PFTSTA is proud to have been awarded The Amazon Future Engineers grant, which will enable the school to offer an Introduction to Computer Science (Python), AP Computer Science NBRS 2019

Principles, and AP Computer Science A – Java, for the 2019-2020 school year. In the fabrication lab all areas of the school’s curriculum come together through hands-on learning to help build innovation and collaborative problem-solving for all students. The space has been designed for students to dream, design, and create almost anything. By combining experimentation and innovation with state of the art technology like three-dimensional (3D) printers, vinyl cutters, an Epilogue laser cutter/engraver, hand-tools, a host of design software and rapid prototyping resources, students turn their concepts from imagination into reality.

The library program at Taylor is headed by an award winning librarian and has been designed to provide support in three areas: curriculum, information literacy, and independent reading. The librarian collaborates with the teachers of the content areas on lessons to teach students how to research and use information responsibly. For these lessons, the librarian will create an electronic tool to help students navigate the research process to reach a finished product. Reading independently is highly encouraged, and the librarian continues to update the collection to provide high interest reading material as well as offer programs and activities throughout the year like the Winter Reading Challenge and Teen Read Week that promote reading for fun.

3. Special Populations:

Although the students at Taylor meet specific academic criteria in order to be accepted into the school, students still have strengths and weaknesses that need to be addressed to maximize the students’ full learning potential. More than fifty percent of the student population has been identified as academically gifted and/or talented in visual arts, music, and/or theater. To address learning needs, students are scheduled in gifted specific classes that allow teachers to go more in depth while meeting students’ individual education plans (IEP). Students in the talented program are scheduled during the school day to meet with a teacher to work on individual projects in line with IEP goals. Talented students participate in opportunities to display creative abilities not only at school (i.e. plays, concerts, etc.), but in the community as well.

In addition to gifted and talented students, there are students who have other exceptionalities such as autism and other health impairments. These students participate in full inclusion and in some cases with the support of a paraprofessional or special education teacher. By using the IEP as a guide, the teachers work collaboratively with the special education department to modify lessons and assessments for these students. For continued support the students may meet with a special education teacher during a resource period to work on organization skills.

Several years ago, Taylor administration recognized a need to encourage more Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions within the school day. The faculty felt the learning needs of the students with identified exceptionalities were being met but that more could be done for every student on campus. Through the framework of PLCs, teachers began identifying essential standards for each course with the expectation that students will master those standards by the end of the year. Students’ confidence has been built by using the best practice of allowing test corrections or “repairs” to increase student performance. For more intensive interventions PAWS was created where students are assigned to meet with teachers based on academic need. During PAWS, the teacher is able to meet with students who either were not making adequate progress in the classroom or who may need further enrichment and targeted instruction is provided. Members of the honor societies are also tapped to help during PAWS to provide one on one attention.

When planning the implementation of PAWS, the staff realized a need to separate the response to intervention into skill versus will. There were students who were not making progress in the classroom only because they were not completing assignments and not because of a lack of understanding. As a result, a homework support program was implemented in the same year. Students not completing assignments are assigned a homework support ticket and report to an assigned teacher during the lunch period to complete those assignments. Both PAWS and homework support are opportunities for teachers to find time during the school day to address the students’ learning needs, as well as opportunities for the students to get the help that they need.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The student population at Taylor reflects the rich and diverse culture associated with the district of Jefferson Parish. The school serves students of all backgrounds, and teachers, administrators, and support staff are committed to fostering an environment where every student feels safe, valued, and included.

Taylor builds and nurtures strong relationships by offering a wide range of extracurricular activities with every teacher coaching at least one sport or acting as faculty advisor to a club. These diverse offerings ensure that every student has a place to interact with peers who share similar interests. Taylor is a STEM school, so, naturally, there are activities for students interested in those fields. There are two robotics clubs—one for high school and one for middle school. Students who excel in math participate in MathCounts and Mu Alpha Theta, while Coastal Roots and 4H combine science with service. Students interested in filmmaking participate in ‘Taylor Tube,’ where they collaborate on screenwriting, filming, acting, and editing.

A core element of Taylor’s mission statement relates to development of leadership skills, particularly in the capacity of community involvement. Teachers include service-learning experiences in their curricula, while several clubs place emphasis on volunteer work and social justice. Clubs focused primarily on volunteering include Key Club, National Honor Society, and National Junior Honor Society. Members of the National Art Honor Society also engage with the community, having recently completed a veterans’ portrait project in cooperation with the National World War II Museum. While the primary function of the Taylor Student Government Association (SGA) is to involve students in the planning and execution of numerous school-wide activities, many of their fundraisers benefit local charities. Clubs emphasizing social justice include Girl Up, Black Student Alliance, SAFE, and No Place for Hate. These serve to foster empathy, promote tolerance, and educate students about other cultures.

Taylor boasts a robust athletic program, which is another area where students forge meaningful relationships, while those interested in the visual and performing arts participate in Art Club, theater, dance team, or band. The school librarian runs three separate book clubs, and Academic Games members practice and compete regularly at the district and national level. The day-to-day routines at Taylor are influenced by the New Tech model which encourages development of 21st century skills. Through New Tech, teachers use Echo, a learning management system, which encompasses an array of resources to support teaching and learning. Students are assessed through Echo on five school-wide learning outcomes (SWLO) that are used in every class. These include agency, oral communication, collaboration, knowledge and thinking, and written communication. Teachers create technology-based, student-centered activities, acting as facilitators or coaches and allowing students to take ownership of their learning. Bells ring only twice each day (to signal the beginning of homeroom and dismissal), and teachers institute a no-pass policy, allowing students to simply sign out if they need to use the restroom. Work areas outside the classroom, called pods, provide space for students to collaborate while teachers keep an eye from the classroom. Students are aware that teachers trust them to behave responsibly and consistently live up to this expectation. Taylor Tigers are respectful, polite, and kind and have built strong relationships with teachers and staff, and treat everyone accordingly. There are several policies in place to ensure that all teachers have the support they need in the classroom. Before the start of the new school year, new teachers are given an orientation with an emphasis on how to utilize Echo. These teachers are also given a mentor who has been at the school awhile who can assist as needed during the school year. The head of each department meets monthly with teachers in their content area to set goals and discuss how these goals can be met. Department heads in the district’s central office are also available to provide support if needed. The weekly cluster meetings for all content area teachers are designed to allow teachers to look at data in order to help make decisions of how teaching needs to be modified to provide for all learners.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

New students feel welcome on the first day of school as the family engagement program begins before a student even enrolls in the school. Each October, a prospective student open house is offered for families to tour the school with current students as their guides. In May, there is a New to Taylor Camp. Students learn about the unique technology-integrated classes, discover expectations of the school, and meet some of the teachers. While the students are learning, new parents meet the PTO and administration to learn more about the school.

Before the first day of school, there is a Back to School Bonanza for parents and students to visit to greet teachers, sign needed forms, and receive students' schedules. Parents are involved in every aspect of the school. Quarterly parent meetings are held by the PTO. Presenters at these meetings include students, school counselors, the police department and Crimestoppers. Families are invited several times during the school year for special events like Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dad, the Grandparents' Breakfast, the Grandparents' Club Bake Sale and holiday lunches. Every spring, the Friends of Patrick Taylor host a fundraising gala to invite teachers and parents to meet together and celebrate success. Parents and community members come in to the school to give career presentations. Seniors intern with businesses and present their findings to a panel of parents and community members. Keeping parents involved in their child's scholastic efforts is also important. Parents have access to grades through the online Echo program. Parents and teachers are also frequently in contact via email. Parents receive a digital copy of "PAW Prints" and "Tidings from Taylor" to keep them updated on school happenings and important events.

In efforts to make sure that students are college and career ready, the school partners with several companies throughout the region. Science students pair with The National Parks Service and Jefferson Parish Public Works to learn about protecting the environment. A partnership with Entergy, allows our students to have access to more technology. The Patrick Taylor Foundation offers four scholarships to graduating seniors each year. Additional companies, such as Fluor Petroleum Operations and Chevron, also assist teachers to ensure that the students have access to quality resources. Through some of these grants, including a grant from the Patrick Taylor foundation, the school created the fabrication lab which offers students a wealth of technological resources.

Students don't just accept help from the community; they also give back. For example, NHS members adopt a needy family for the holidays. Seventh and eighth graders team up with low income schools in the New Orleans area to provide lessons and materials and high school students teach hands-on science classes at a local elementary school. Through the Mission Ignition service project and Girl Up, students have improved parks and schools throughout the area and fight against human trafficking. Several times a year, students, faculty and parents run a blood drive and donate blood to support Ochsner Hospitals and the Blood Bank.

3. Professional Development:

The goal of the 2018 – 2019 professional development program is to design relevant, systemic professional development that is seamlessly aligned to the school-wide academic goal: By April 2019, PFTSTA students will be able to analyze a prompt and cite relevant evidence in writing as evidenced by a 5% increase in ACT scores and a 10% increase in middle school LEAP scores. Aside from this shared common goal, the professional development program at PFTSTA has included the following agenda items: instructional accommodations for children with exceptionalities, Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying (HIB) Prevention training aligned to the Jefferson Parish Public Schools System guidelines, Positive Behavior in Schools (PBIS), Restorative Practices Training (RPT), Response to Intervention (RTI), and content specific training (ELA guidebooks, Eureka Math, DBQ in Social Studies, etc.). PFTSTA teachers attend various workshops, conferences and trainings both at the district, state, and national level; teachers return to school to share content with their colleagues.

In keeping with the district vision for job-embedded professional development, PFTSTA uses weekly cluster-meetings to ensure continuity of all professional development. The crux of these meetings is for everyone to commit to, "Making student learning the heart of what we do." Teacher Leader Fellows (TLF)

are responsible for organizing the agenda and facilitating these meetings. TLFs share data, help to roll out parish-wide initiatives, model effective classroom instructional practices/strategies. TLFs also invite staff members to share best practices with the goal of creating a clearinghouse of effective strategies that can be implemented across content and grade level. This instructional strategy sharing, as a regular feature of professional development, has yielded greater teacher intentionality in the classroom. Meetings typically focus on the nexus between strong classroom instructional practice and data outcomes. Teachers are expected to come to cluster meetings with actionable data based on students' performance on norm and criterion-referenced assessments. Using teacher feedback from anonymous surveys administered after each 9 weeks, the focus of these cluster meetings has been adjusted to reflect teacher needs. The faculty has been guided by the belief that professional development needs to be consistent with the needs of the individual teachers and respective student population(s).

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy at PFTSTA is one of collaboration and shared leadership. Every staff member is considered a valued and critical member of the team, and their contribution to the collective goals is directly linked to the school's success. The administration team consists of a principal, assistant principal, and dean. There are two teachers designated as TLFs by the district, and each department has a teacher leader. Other teachers have been tapped by the principal for input and feedback on the school's goals with several teachers serving as leaders for specific school initiatives. Critical for the success of PFTSTA is the work of the collaborative teacher and administrative teams that meet weekly.

The principal consistently communicates the vision and mission of the school through words and actions and expects the faculty to analyze data in order to plan and implement the school improvement plan. As the school's leader, it is the principal's responsibility to track overall student performance and how it relates to the annual school performance score. It is the assistant principal's job to coordinate all state testing, serve as the chair of the special education department ensuring that all IEP and 504 plans are met, and chair the Academic and Behavior Intervention Team (ABIT). The dean handles student discipline, the AP program, PBIS, DE with LSU, CLEP, and serves as advisor to No Place for Hate. The counseling team consists of two counselors with one dedicated to high school and the other to middle school. They are responsible for supporting students' academic and emotional needs. Each department meets monthly to discuss next steps to improve student performance and instructional practices. The ELA department determined the need for daily ACT practice beginning in sixth grade. The increase in students' ACT scores indicates that this practice has been beneficial. The teacher who leads the Title I program coordinates eight components school-wide that include improving ACT, AP, and middle school math state assessments. The teacher leader for PBIS helps to maintain a positive school culture and climate. PBIS incentives for the students are provided weekly with a culminating activity each quarter. Students have a voice as the elected SGA members meet regularly with all members of the administration team. The SGA created a Fall Fest two years ago to raise funds for a charitable organization. Students asked the administration to implement new courses and for the first time in the 2018-19 school year, they were given the opportunity to take AP art and AP seminar.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In a recent Psychology Today article, Tim Elmore outlines the seven top skills that Google wants to see in college graduates. These skills include critical thinking, communication, problem solving, and empathy. The program at PFTSTA is designed to facilitate mastery of these and other 21st century skills needed to succeed in college and career.

Classroom experiences are assessed by the SWLOs that include agency, oral communication, collaboration, knowledge and thinking, and written communication. Every assignment is assessed with one or more of these SWLOs. This non-traditional grading puts more emphasis on collaboration and oral communication than in a traditional system. Students working in groups must plan together; specify responsibilities; negotiate the logistics required to accomplish the tasks including the effective use of technology for research, analysis, and presentation; critically examine their results or products; and revise as needed.

A variety of methods are used to assess ongoing collaboration; presentations and papers are graded for agency, oral communication, written communication, and knowledge and thinking. For example, English 7 students collaborate on a digital storytelling project for The Hobbit. They must create a video, cartoon, animation, or travel diary to communicate how Bilbo's journey corresponds to Campbell's vision of the hero's journey. Group members must create annotated maps, detailed scripts, captions, summaries, and credits as well as carefully edit all visuals. All must demonstrate depth of thought and awareness of audience. Students will be assessed on agency, collaboration, written communication, and knowledge and thinking. AP Biology students investigate plant genetics and evolution. For the initial screening, each student cares for and then scores the phenotypes of 5-10 individual plants. After the plants mature, the plants are pooled for the whole class to perform an evolution experiment. Small groups then design their own genetic cross experiment and coordinate with the whole class set of 200 plants to find the parents for the cross. This involves two levels of collaboration: within the small group of 2-3 students and between the small groups and the whole class. In this assignment, the biology students would be assessed on agency, collaboration, knowledge and thinking, and written communication. Such assignments as these, mimic workplace project development where students must demonstrate the ability to work with a diverse group of people while performing at a high level in a competitive environment. By using this unique process of assessment, the faculty knows that the students have been prepared to move on to the next step once they graduate from Taylor.