

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Jeffrey Shedd

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

Official School Name Cape Elizabeth High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 345 Ocean House Road

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

Cape Elizabeth ME 04107-2496
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cumberland

Telephone (207) 799-3309

Fax (207) 767-8050

Web site/URL https://cehs.cape.k12.me.us/

E-mail jshedd@capeelizabethschools.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. Donna Wolfrom E-mail dwolfrom@capeelizabethschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cape Elizabeth Public Schools District Tel. (207) 799-2217

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms. Susana Measelle Hubbs
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	75	66	141
10	70	66	136
11	58	59	117
12 or higher	80	65	145
Total Students	283	256	539

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 2%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	516
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

Finnish, Kinyarwanda

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3%
Total number students who qualify: 18

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
51 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>8</u> Autism | <u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>18</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 19
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	40
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	6

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 14:1

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

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	110
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	89%
Enrolled in a community college	7%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	3%
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. 2004

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

Open Minds, Open Doors

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Cape Elizabeth High School is a 540-student, high-performing, comprehensive public high school. We provide a rigorous academic experience that prepares students for college and career, in a caring environment, while also offering students outlets to explore their passions and interests.

CEHS is blessed to serve families who support education. During our annual open house and parent-teacher conference events, for example, our hallways are alive with positive energy. A typical teacher during parent-teacher conferences sees parents of roughly 2/3 of his/her students.

Our graduation rate is high (98-99% typically) and our dropout rate low (usually 0-2%). Our standardized exams scores place us among the top three schools in every area tested. Yet we are always seeking to improve. Since we last received Blue Ribbon recognition in 2004, our professional culture has transformed, becoming far more collaborative, with teacher teams working during built-in common planning times to develop common curricula and assessments.

Our school climate is safe and respectful. Suspensions are rare. We have not issued detentions for years. We have not had a fight at school in over ten years. Our approach to discipline is relationship and learning-based, viewing each negative student choice as an opportunity to learn.

Instruction at CEHS emphasizes student discussion and small group work. Our class size averages 16.7 students. Our students have high expectations for themselves. Although foreign language has never been required, for example, over 80% of our students take four years of a foreign language. Although only three years of math and science are required to graduate, over 90% of our students take math and science all four high school years.

Our school offers students many opportunities to receive extra time and support to learn. For over 15 years, we have had a resource we call the Achievement Center (AC). The AC is staffed by a coordinator who is a certified teacher, English and math teachers every period, and volunteer peer tutors. Additionally, our schedule features a 30-minute Achievement Period (AP) block every day. During AP, no classes are taught, students are assigned to be with their advisory groups, and students and teachers can connect for support four days per week. We even have a homegrown, innovative digital “claiming” system; teachers use this system to schedule students for extra AP help. On Friday, the AP time block serves as our advisory period.

Last year, CEHS committed to high-level graduation standards tied to the Guiding Principles of Maine’s Learning Results that cut across disciplines. For example, instruction in writing is a shared responsibility of the English, Social Studies, World Language, and Science teachers. Every teacher in each of those disciplines reports writing results using a separate gradebook category for Writing. We have similar shared responsibilities for Reading, Speaking, Research, and Problem-Solving. Our commitment to those cross-disciplinary Graduation Standards has served as a catalyst for professional conversations across departments as never before.

Over the past several years, CEHS has worked hard to ease the transition to high school. Every ninth grade student is assigned an upper class mentor. All students are assigned to grade level, four-year advisory groups. Approximately one-third of our ninth grade students participate in a unique, co-taught class called Freshman Academy; the class helps ninth graders explore their own values and strengths and to find their voices.

CEHS offers a rich array of course offerings. Approximately 60% of our students take at least one Advanced Placement course during high school. The majority earns passing AP exam scores.

The expectation for CEHS students is that they will attend college after graduation. Year after year, between 90 and 95% of them do precisely that. Each winter, dozens of CEHS alumni return to share their college application and transition experiences with current students.

Our students are heavily involved in extracurricular offerings. Over 80% of CEHS students participate in at least one sport. Approximately 90% participate in at least one extracurricular club, team, or group, whether it's Jazz Band, Mock Trial, an athletic team, Science Team, Model U.N., Speech and Debate, Robotics Volunteer Club or one of our more recently added student-driven clubs such as Beekeeping, Knitting, Sewing, 70's Rock 'n' Roll, the Youth Activist Group, and on and on.

All CEHS students participate in certain cornerstone experiences as they proceed through their four years of high school. Taking students out of their comfort zones, with support, is the common theme. We will highlight four of those experiences here.

Beginning in grade 9, students are introduced to whiteboarding in their inquiry-taught Physics classes. Students work in groups to solve problems on whiteboards. They hold up their problem solutions, subjecting them to the critique of their classmates. Starting very early in the school year, groups may be called to the front of the room to explain their solutions. At first they are nervous about this approach, but they gradually build confidence.

In grade 10, all sophomores in World History 2 prepare a long-term research project on a current world (non-U.S.) issue they select. They prepare a poster that summarizes what they have learned and presents what they believe to be the best policy response to the issue. On Research Night, all the sophomores gather in the cafeteria, with their posters, to present their learning to an audience of parents, community members, and alumni. Each student meets with a minimum of three judges assigned to their poster, and they are scored on their presentations. It is truly an impressive night for sophomores as they interact with many adults they do not know.

In either sophomore or junior year, all students take Physical Education 2 (PE2). The culmination of PE 2 is the climbing unit, in which students use the school's climbing apparatus to climb as high as they can in our high-ceilinged (twenty feet from floor to ceiling) gym. The climbers are belayed by their classmates. All students get off the floor; most get to the ceiling on one or more of the apparatus; and some are able to climb in the rafters—all with appropriate safety harnessing. Students then reflect on what they have learned during the unit.

Finally, at the end of senior year, all students in level 5 and 6 World Language classes experience an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) with their teachers. The OPI is a one-on-one conversation in the target language. Students know the topic in advance, but they do not know the questions.

Thank you for considering our application for Blue Ribbon recognition. Our previous Blue Ribbon recognition in 2004 was helpful in securing our grant request to the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation for over \$50,000 to get our Achievement Center started, among other things. That Center has since served the learning needs of thousands of Cape students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

All high school English teachers instruct, assess, and report grades for students against four learning standards: Reading, Writing, Language, and Speaking. These standards are selected to match skills essential to college and career readiness. English teachers use a common planning period to plan common curricula and assessments. Instruction in English is typically discussion and small group oriented.

Consistent with our four grading categories, English instruction spirals through the four standards areas. While there are commonly taught texts--The Odyssey, Othello, Catcher in the Rye, Of Mice and Men, among others—the study of literature, except in senior year, is used to study language and develop the student’s own writing and reading.

The ninth grade course introduces students to diverse genres of reading and writing. Students write frequently. Their writing includes an I-search project, in which students research and write about a self-selected topic. Ninth grade students are introduced to CEHS’s Rules of Grammar, which spiral throughout high school. Students generally conference with a teacher before submitting a final draft paper and frequently revise work after it is returned. Teachers introduce Socratic Seminars in ninth grade.

Tenth grade focuses on techniques and terms of language analysis. Emphasis is placed on analytical writing and the development of voice. Socratic Seminars are widely used.

Eleventh grade focuses on non-fiction reading, argumentative writing, and rhetorical analysis. Readings in eleventh grade include shorter, argumentative and expository essays as well as book-length non-fiction works. The eleventh grade non-fiction focus prepares students for the non-fiction reading on the SAT. It also reflects the type of reading most non-English majors will encounter in college and career.

In twelfth grade, CEHS seniors have a number of course choices. Courses tends to focus on literary analysis, except in our growing dual enrollment course called College Writing, which can result in college credit for students who qualify.

Each year, approximately 85-90% of our graduates meet or exceed the College Board benchmark for college readiness in reading and writing based on SAT scores. In recent years, approximately half of our students have taken A.P. English classes, and a large majority of those student have earned passing scores of “3” or above on the A.P. exams.

1b. Mathematics:

CEHS students and our school place a significant emphasis on math learning. Of our graduates, all experience the study of statistics, the most important math course for non-math majors in college; over 50% complete A.P. Statistics; 99% complete Advanced Algebra; over 70% complete Pre-Calculus; and over 40% complete A.P. Calculus. Our average SAT math scores are typically between 580 and 590, and roughly 85% of our students meet the College Board SAT benchmark for college readiness in math by the time they graduate. We work hard to support the small percentage of students who fall short of the SAT standard. Of those who do not meet the college readiness standard based on the SAT, all but a handful meet college readiness based on the ACCUPLACER test, which is used extensively in our math classes.

Indeed, the strong math performance by CEHS graduates is a major reason why we have been recognized multiple times in the past ten years by U.S. News as among the top STEM schools in the country.

Math teachers at CEHS have a common planning period. They follow a pacing guide. They use common assessments nearly exclusively. They pay close attention to student performance not only on local exams but

also on standardized exams, particularly the PSAT and the SAT. For example, a recent, detailed analysis of CEHS student performance on the SAT over the past three years has caused math teachers to focus more on fractions, on open-ended and non-calculator problems, and on interpretation of sophisticated charts, graphs, and visual data representations. Every math teacher now instructs and assesses students on full-period, open-ended, integrative math problems at least four times per year.

Our learning support center, called the Achievement Center, is staffed throughout the school day by a math teacher who is assigned there two periods in lieu of a fifth teaching assignment. CEHS students seeking to improve their math skills extensively utilize the Achievement Center math teacher as a resource.

For the past four years, every CEHS student has taken an ACCUPLACER math exam in the fall. Students who fall short of college readiness benchmarks on that exam are assigned to the Achievement Center to refresh their math skills before taking the ACCUPLACER again.

1c. Science:

Cape Elizabeth High School's science sequence is the reverse of what one finds at most high schools.

Our ninth grade science class is Physics. Teachers use inquiry-based modeling as the instructional approach, with a heavy focus on mechanics. In tenth grade, students take Chemistry; in eleventh grade, Biology.

Our policy requires three years of science to graduate. In fact, approximately 90-95% of our students elect to take four years, building their college readiness. Options for senior science include AP Environmental Science, AP Physics 2; or Earth, Marine, and Space Science.

Science teachers at CEHS have a common planning period, which allows them to develop common curricula and assessments that ensure all students have encountered the same material. All science teachers incorporate instruction and assessments in the Graduation Standards of Reading, Writing, and Problem-Solving.

Problem solving is taught with an instructional technique called whiteboarding. Students solve problems in small groups and then present their whiteboarded solutions to the class. Students learn to critique, praise, and question others' ideas in a respectful way, a true career skill.

Lab experience in CEHS courses is heavily emphasized. Physics and Chemistry have an extra lab period in their schedule. Students are introduced to formal lab report writing in ninth grade, and they build their scientific writing skills throughout high school. Our graduates receive the exposure to be successful readers and writers of scientific material in college.

Technology is extensively integrated into science instruction. Teachers use sensors that record data that is fed into a computer for analysis. In this way, students focus their energies on developing a conceptual understanding, not just continually crunching numbers.

In upper level classes in Biology and senior year classes, students frequently engage in outside field studies. Our Biology students study water quality of nearby streams. In all our senior year classes except AP Physics, students perform long-term studies of seasonal beach migration and intertidal marine life.

In sum, science education at CEHS emphasizes depth of understanding and thinking and writing like a scientist. Students learn to share and critique their own and others' thinking. They work in lab groups continuously practicing group habits that are essential in college and careers.

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

Our Social Studies curriculum has two distinguishing strands.

First, unlike many other schools, our students experience a two-year World History sequence that is mostly

non-European-based. Students are introduced to world religions, Golden Ages, and themes of geography as important unifying themes in ninth grade.

In tenth grade, revolution is a unifying theme. Students study patterns of historical development, including the rise of nationalism and imperialism.

The second notable feature is our emphasis on research and writing. Indeed, Research and Writing are two of the three Social Studies Graduation Standards. In tenth grade, students research, write, and prepare an extended essay and poster about a non-U.S. current issue they select. They present their work during our annual Poster night, when dozens of volunteer judges hear what our students learned about their topics. In junior year U.S. History, students select a U.S. policy issue to research. Students present and defend their own policy proposal in a college-style research paper.

Reading is the third Graduation Standard in Social Studies. This past year, the department closely analyzed recent SAT results. As a result they have begun incorporating into their instruction more practice opportunities for students to read challenging, short articles that feature complex graphs, charts, and data visualizations.

As seniors, students take U.S. Government. Our Honors and College Preparatory Government classes are semester courses. Nearly 50% of our seniors take AP Government, a yearlong class. The culminating A.P. U.S. Government experience in most years is a four-day trip to Washington, D.C.

In addition to CEHS's core courses, the Social Studies department offers many electives.

But regardless of the particular course a student takes, reading, writing, and research skills are ever-present strands. By the time our students graduate, they are skilled in the sort of reading, writing, and research they'll do frequently in college. They also have a background in World History that enables them to comprehend the complex issues that increasingly confront our global society.

1e. For secondary schools:

Our Graduation Standards are those skills essential to postsecondary success—Reading, Writing, Research, Presentation, and Problem Solving. In classes and extracurricular activities, students work in groups and teams. Approximately 90% of our students participate in extracurriculars.

We work closely with the Portland Arts and Technology High School (PATHS) to increase our enrollment there. Five percent of our students now participate in PATHS, making our enrollment in PATHS among the highest for their sending schools. Our PATHS students elect to spend half their school days as juniors and seniors at PATHS and the remaining part of their day taking regular education classes in CEHS. PATHS graduates in most programs receive industry credentials. Recent PATHS graduates include students who have found lucrative careers as welders and others who were inspired by their PATHS manufacturing program to study engineering in college.

Finally, our graduates spend a multiple week, self-designed internship or service Senior Transition Project experience at the end of the senior year. They summarize their STP experiences to panels of teachers before they graduate.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Approximately one-third of our students participate for all four years in our award-winning music program. Indeed, our school district has been recognized two years in a row by a national music organization as among the most supportive and outstanding music programs in the state. Our band director received a

prestigious national award this year as an outstanding jazz educator. Our rich visual arts program introduces students to painting and drawing, sculpture, ceramics, and photography and allows students who wish a more in-depth experience to take advanced art classes. Each spring, our first floor lobby is decorated with displays of hundreds of student art creations during Arts Week. The Arts Show is attended and viewed by hundreds of guests and visitors each year. Our purchase prize collection of student art is on display in prominent places throughout the school. Our decorated theater program puts on three productions each year, culminating in our spring musical. The truly special aspect of our theater program is that it attracts a rich variety of students, finding places for athletes and others who do not fit the typical theater mold; students with special needs, too, are welcomed and featured in our productions. Students and student groups regularly win state and regional awards in visual arts, music, and theater.

Students are required to take two semester-long physical education classes. In Physical Education 1, the focus is on cooperative and lifelong games. Students also learn CPR, water safety (taking advantage of the pool that is attached to our building), and fitness principles. In Physical Education 2, students are challenged physically, mentally, and emotionally through rock climbing, mountain biking, and kayaking, among other things. CPR and self-defense skills are also learned. It is a joy each year to come into our gym and see students climbing on one of our various climbing apparatus, safely belayed by fellow students who are working together seamlessly to support those high above them. Recently, one of our significantly disabled students was cheered and filmed for climbing up a rope ladder to the top of the high ceiling in the gym, blindfolded.

Every CEHS student takes a semester-long Health class in the ninth grade. The essential question that guides our Health curriculum is this: who are you, and how will you become and remain a healthy adult? Students study and talk about important topics, including healthy relationships, consent and sexuality, nutrition, personal health, suicide and depression, and stress management, among other things. They form close bonds with one another and their Health teacher.

Cape Elizabeth students begin their study of French or Spanish in the first grade. Nearly all of our students complete at least through level 3 in high school. The vast majority reaches levels 4, 5, or 6. All of our senior World Language students in levels 4-6 take an Oral Proficiency Interview assessment in which they must demonstrate their reading, writing, and speaking abilities in authentic contexts. It is common to walk through the foreign language hallway and see teachers conversing one-on-one with students in the target language.

We offer a rich array of offerings in computer and industrial technology that serve nearly 200 students per year. Courses in computer technology include Video Production, Digital Design, Image Management, and Personal Finance, where students participate in the H&R Block Nationwide Budget Challenge. In industrial technology classes, students learn carpentry and welding or drafting skills, build boats or receive guidance on individual projects. An increasing number of students elect our computer programming classes, either our self-paced Introduction to Computer Programming that uses Code HS software, or AP Computer Science.

One full-time tech-savvy librarian and our full-time, teacher-level Technology Integrator staff our Library and Learning Commons. The librarian works closely and collaboratively with classroom teachers to support the resource needs of students learning research and writing. Together the librarian and tech integrator also work closely with teachers to support their learning needs with respect to the integration of technology in their instruction. In the past three years, since this strong technology team was formed, the use of technology in the classroom has become commonplace, even among teachers who were traditionally more resistant.

3. Special Populations:

We have many support provisions in place to support students who struggle. The gap that we track closely is with our students with disabilities. Each of the support provisions below deliberately supports those students.

Our Achievement Center is open every period, with Math teacher, English teacher, and peer help. An experienced teacher coordinates the Center. Many students serve as peer tutors. This year, as just one

example of how the AC works, the AC supported the needs of five students struggling in Advanced Algebra; those students lacked a common free period. The coordinator solicited three peer tutors to run a study group in Advanced Algebra two days per week before school.

Our Achievement Period (AP) is a 30-minute block in the middle of each day. During AP, all students are with their advisory teachers; no classes are scheduled. Four days per week, students can access support from any of their teachers during AP. Teachers “claim” students using our electronic claiming system. Each year, teachers enter thousands of AP claims. Those most frequently claimed are those most in need.

Academic Skills is a small, structured study hall that supports regular education students who struggle with executive skills. Our Academic Skills staff builds strong relationships with their students, teaches lagging skills, and assists students with organization.

Our Student Support Team meets every week to discuss students whose attendance or grades raise concerns. The SST consists of school counselors, social workers, administrators, School Resource Officer, AC Coordinator, Academic Skills staff, and a Special Education teacher. With our SST system in place, few if any students fall through the cracks.

We work hard to address the needs of learners whose strengths lie outside traditional academics. Over the past three years, we have worked closely with Portland Arts and Technology High School (PATHS) staff to spread the word about the hands-on, career-oriented programs at PATHS. During those three years, our percentage of students attending PATHS has moved from one of the lowest percentages to one of the highest among PATHS sending schools.

Through our Student Driven Learning (SDL) program, our Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) coordinator guides students who design their own courses. SDL has served over 80 students the past three years, including many whose interests lie outside traditional academics. Students have, for example, made movies, worked at a veterinary center, and organized and run businesses. The same ELO coordinator supports students to find internships. This year, for example, a senior who was seriously considering dropping out worked with our ELO coordinator to develop a half-day internship at a local electrical supply contractor.

CEHS has a strong Special Education team. We keep case manager’s student loads low so students receive needed support. With the exception of our Life Skills students, nearly all of our Special Education students take 100% of their academic classes in the mainstream.

For a handful of students with severe intellectual disabilities, our Life Skills program teaches students the skills they need in life to transition from high school. In the past few years, we have developed a rich Unified program, in which our most disabled students participate on athletic teams with their non-disabled peers. They compete against other Unified teams. What a joy it is to watch the smiles of these athletes bask in the glow of support from their many fans!

For our strongest academic students, CEHS offers seventeen Advanced Placement classes in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Computer Science, and World Language. We also honor credits that students are awarded in classes they take in nearby colleges or in accredited online programs. Each year, for example, we have students taking math classes in college that are beyond our highest math class—AP Calculus BC. Our Advanced Studio Art program is a highly individualized program for our most advanced art students. Music Theory and Jazz Improvisation are classes that cater to the interests of our most advanced music students. And our Industrial Technology teacher is endlessly supporting students on independent projects after they have completed all of our core Industrial Technology classes.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

When visitors come to Cape Elizabeth High School, they always notice how, as they leave classes, many CEHS students say “thank you” to their teachers. That single action, a habit students have absorbed through the positive school climate, is perhaps the best evidence of the school’s greatest strength—the positive relationship between students and teachers.

That positive climate is the product of caring, skilled teachers and students who care about learning.

Serious disciplinary incidents at CEHS are rare. There has not been a fight in the school for over ten years (knock on wood!). Total suspensions typically are no more than 10-15 per year. We have not issued detentions for many years.

Bad choices by students are treated as occasions for learning. Administrators build positive relationships with students, and they call on those relationships in dealing with poor student behavior. When two students are having a difficult time with one another, resolution usually comes through administrator-facilitated, face-to-face conversations.

In general, CEHS students feel heard and known. Teachers make room for student voice in classrooms. The bulk of instruction engages students to interact with the teacher and with one another. A major area of professional development in recent years has been real-time checking for understanding. Timely, frequent check-ins surface student confusion early, avoiding frustration that sometimes causes poor behavior.

Student voice has driven the addition of many new clubs and programs at CEHS. Just this year, for example, we added a knitting club, a beekeeping club, and a sewing club, all at student request. Our four TEDx events in the past seven years have been student-driven and student-led and featured student performers and speakers, in addition to outside speakers. We include students in interviews for many new staff positions. Two CEHS students serve on the School Board. Last year, we worked with students around a walkout to mark the Parkland school shooting.

Perhaps the best evidence of a positive culture among teachers is the fact that it is rare for teachers to leave CEHS, except to retire, once they earn continuing contract status. Turnover is extremely low.

Our teachers work closely with one another on a professional, not just collegial, level. All core academic departments have common planning periods. Teachers work together to plan curriculum and assessments. They are eager to learn from one another. They take the lead in hiring new teachers. The favorite professional development activity for CEHS teachers is to hear from their colleagues about strategies that have worked in their classrooms!

Treated as professionals, CEHS teachers typically get frustrated only with externally driven initiatives that interfere with their professional, collaborative autonomy. Currently, for example, the school is working through the state-required mandate for proficiency diplomas, trying to determine the most educationally meaningful way to implement this requirement.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We have discussed elsewhere the rich tradition of many, many parents attending our annual open house and parent-teacher conference events. During these events, our hallways are alive. Our parents have access to student information about students’ progress through our PowerSchool portal. If students are “claimed” for Achievement Period support by a teacher, parents receive a copy of the email notifying students about the claim. We educate parents to understand that an Achievement Period claim is not a bad thing, but it can prompt a conversation at home!

We have an active High School Parents Association group. Our school administrators regularly meet with this group and attend HSPA-sponsored coffee meetings.

Students in grades nine, ten, and eleven are recognized for a variety of accomplishments at evening awards ceremonies attended by many parents. We honor students in the same grades with "citizenship awards" at a whole-school assembly.

The Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation, the first education foundation in Maine, fosters innovation and excellence. Over the years, for example, CEEF has funded the creation of our Achievement Center, the commissioning of musical compositions for performance by our bands, sexual assault days planned by students and staff together, and teacher professional development.

Recently, the school district sponsored a Futures Search event that will inform our strategic plan for the next five years. Community members accounted for 70-80% of all participants. The chief of police attended, as did local clergy, business owners, realtors, retirees, a dozen students, and many others.

Over the past three years, we have added dual enrollment courses through which students gain both college and high school credit for courses taught at CEHS following nearby Southern Maine Community College curricula. Approximately 45 students participate in our dual enrollment courses, and that number is increasing.

Notable events engaging parents and the community mark the culmination of every graduate's experience.

At the Senior Celebration, every senior is recognized during a senior slide show in a packed room filled with students and parents. While a senior's photo is displayed, the senior stands while the Principal shares highlights of the student's qualities, strengths, and accomplishments, often accompanied by funny or poignant anecdotes gathered from teachers or the student's family.

At our graduation ceremony, we present twelve Citizenship awards that celebrate students not only for academic accomplishments, but also for traits of school spirit, leadership, and kindness. In recent years, for example, we have recognized students for excellence in welding at PATHS, for resilience in the face of family difficulties, and for leadership in creating and making cool our highly successful Unified sports program.

Engagement of the community is the name of the game in two other senior year events. First, during our Senior Transition Project, beginning in mid-May, every senior works in an out-of-school internship or service experience the students arrange. Staff advisors monitor their progress.

Finally, all CEHS seniors contribute a minimum of three hours of service to Cape Elizabeth senior citizens through our Senior-to-Senior program.

3. Professional Development:

Cape Elizabeth supports teachers who wish to attend courses and conferences. Such requests are rarely turned down, and many teachers participate in such opportunities. For example, our writing instruction in English classrooms has been greatly enhanced by teams of English teachers regularly attending writing conferences at Bard College. Influenced by what they have learned, many English teachers begin a class with journal writing, and all emphasize close reading of text.

Teachers are provided opportunities to share their expertise and questions with one another. Our five core academic departments each have a common planning period built into their schedule. Meetings during these periods focus on developing and writing common curricula and assessments. Recently teachers have worked on explicitly articulating learning targets for classes and learning targets tied to our Graduation Standards. Teachers also use the time to share experiences about what is working well and to ask for input about situations they are encountering in classes.

In addition to courses and common planning time, our school calendar features early release Wednesdays approximately once per month. Particularly this year, that time has been focused around (1) structuring opportunities for teachers to share instructional practices with other teachers and (2) developing learning targets tied to our Guiding Principles Graduation Standards. For example, our first early release Wednesday this year featured our Special Education teachers sharing information with rotating groups of teachers about working with students with different types of disabilities. The next early release Wednesday featured regular education teachers sharing instructional practices with one another using a similar, rotating model. We are also using early release Wednesdays for collaborative conversations between middle school and high school teachers about curricula, learning standards, and instruction.

We try to use faculty meetings not for information sharing, but for true educational work related to school priorities. A focus area this year, for example, was a careful and close analysis of SAT score trends the past five years. As part of this work, all teachers have taken portions of the SAT. As a result of this experience and collaborative followup discussions, teachers have adapted instruction and assessment. For example, math teachers are beginning to include more non-calculator experiences. Social Studies and Science teachers have enhanced instruction related to interpreting graphs, charts, and other data visualizations. English teachers have doubled down on expectations that students bring text-based evidence into class. Teachers buy into this work, not only to help students with the SAT, but also because these are important college and career readiness skills.

Having said all of this, finding the right balance in using professional development time to meet common school goals and meeting the needs of individual teachers is always a challenge. We have sensed that recently when we devoted two recent extended meeting times to proficiency education and experienced pushback. To address the concern, our Director of Teaching and Learning has begun to meet with every teacher in the district to be sure the PD experiences we are offering match teacher needs.

4. School Leadership:

School leadership is centered in the Principal and Assistant Principal in collaboration with department chairs and the entire faculty.

Our leadership approach is perhaps best illustrated by the process five years ago leading to the creation of the Achievement Period. At that time, after years of implementing PLC practices committed to a high level of learning for all students, the school faced a reality: some students needed more support, but support opportunities during the school day with students' own teachers depended largely on happenstance—whether the student and teacher happened to have a common free period. Thus, we did not have an adequate answer to the third major question that drives PLC cultures: How do we support students who need more time and support to learn?

Of course, students could get extra support any time of day through the Achievement Center or before or after school. Students most in need of extra help, however, were those least inclined to seek it outside of school hours.

Discussions ensued in both faculty and department chair meetings. Gradually a proposal emerged around the idea of shortening each class by five minutes, freeing time to create a thirty-minute support block in the schedule.

In the winter the principal, supported by a group of teachers, formally proposed to the faculty that we pilot a support block after our spring break. We proposed to track usage of what we had decided to call the Achievement Period. Following a PLC decision-making process called “Fist to Five,” the faculty arrived at consensus behind this pilot plan.

It was also agreed that we would work with our technology staff to create a method through PowerSchool for teachers to schedule students for AP support. Within a few weeks, our tech staff succeeded in creating an online “claiming” system.

For the last two months of that year, we piloted the Achievement Period. Almost immediately, teachers and students recognized its value. At the year's last faculty meeting, we shared data concerning AP usage; it documented thousands of claims of students during the pilot period. It also showed that students who needed the most support were claimed the most. The Achievement Period was a success.

This example of the Achievement Period illustrates our leadership model and beliefs—identifying a problem, identifying the causes of the problem, identifying possible solutions, settling on a best solution and piloting if possible. Not all issues meet with the same degree of success as the AP example. In particular, external mandates typically face a higher burden of proof that the mandate will be best for our students. But the longest-lasting innovations at CEHS follow the process leading to the creation of the Achievement Period.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In the last ten years, one instructional area where there has been improvement across the board is in teachers' formative assessment practices, particularly informal practices that provide teachers critical information in real time to identify a need for reteaching or individual student support.

The concept of “formative assessment” as a vital educational tool became commonly recognized as the school built capacity and understanding concerning Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices, a journey that began about ten years ago. Over the course of two years, administrators accompanied almost half the faculty to national PLC conferences featuring Rick and Becky DuFour. The DuFours stressed the role played by formative assessment in reframing the understanding of teacher work around student learning. Teachers began talking about and experimenting with formative assessment practices to check for understanding.

For purposes of this discussion, we will illustrate our progress in formative assessment by focusing on just two particular formative assessment practices that are now widespread in CEHS: whiteboarding and cold-calling.

The first practice is whiteboarding—students working in small groups solving a problem in Math or Science (usually) and then holding up their whiteboard solutions for all their peers and their teacher to see. With whiteboards held up across the room, teachers can spot who is meeting the learning goal of a class and who is not. Oftentimes the teacher calls on students to explain their solutions and invites discussion and debate about different answers. Often the discussion itself is enough for students with wrong answers to see their mistake.

Whiteboarding has been a mainstay practice in CEHS math and science classes for the last eight to ten years. This year, following a PD Wednesday experience where science teachers demonstrated the use of whiteboarding to their colleagues in other departments, the English department purchased whiteboards to use in grammar instruction!

The other formative assessment practice that is now almost ubiquitous at CEHS is cold calling—teachers calling on students whose hands are not raised, not to shame or punish them, but to check their understanding. The practice of cold calling began to spread several years ago when we as a faculty read excerpts from the book *Teach Like a Champion*. Teachers began to understand the advantage of cold calling. Administrators observing classes reinforced the importance of formative assessment, including cold calling. Now cold calling is encountered just about every day in every CEHS class, and it is evident very quickly when students are understanding and when they are not.

It is common today in CEHS classes to see teachers using whiteboarding, cold calling, and other formative assessment tools, including digital check-ins with student iPad apps. Non-learning is surfaced quickly, allowing for support to be directed much more quickly to students who are struggling.