

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. Eric Klein

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

Official School Name Yarmouth High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 286 W Elm Street

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

Yarmouth ME 04096-7906
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cumberland

Telephone (207) 846-5535

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Web site/URL

http://www.yarmouthschools.org/o/

yhs

E-mail eric_klein@yarmouthschools.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. Andrew Dolloff

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

E-mail

andrew_dolloff@yarmouthschools.org

District Name Yarmouth School Department Tel. (207) 846-5586

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. Anne Fleming

(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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	68	71	139
10	74	75	149
11	51	50	101
12 or higher	79	64	143
Total Students	272	260	532

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 90 % 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: <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	5
(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)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	536
(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: 2%
8 Total number ELL

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

Arabic, Polish, Chinese, Hindi

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8%
Total number students who qualify: 45

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
42 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>4</u> Autism | <u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	26
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	20
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 13:1

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	95%	93%	94%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%

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

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

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	148
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	90%
Enrolled in a community college	4%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	4%

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

Yes No

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

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

The mission of Yarmouth High School is to "empower all students to create fulfilling lives in a changing world".

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

Located on the coast of Maine just north of Portland, the town of Yarmouth was settled in 1636 and incorporated as a Town in 1849. With a population of approximately 8,350 people, our town covers 23 square miles. The median household income is about \$74,000. Our town's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean and its location on the banks of the Royal River, which empties into Casco Bay less than a mile away, makes it a prime location as a harbor. Yarmouth also has indoor and outdoor ice skating facilities, medical centers, hiking and biking trails, commercial development and several small shops and restaurants. Main Street, with a combination of old homes and small businesses, is referred to as the “village” where students safely walk and bike. Yarmouth residents contribute their time and efforts to make it a warm and welcoming community, thus exemplifying our motto, “Our Latchstring Always Out.” The town welcomes visitors each summer to the annual “Yarmouth Clam Festival” that is well known throughout New England. Our schools reflect this same investment in the community.

Our school district enrollment has grown from approximately 1,400 students K-12 in 2014 to 1,640 at present. The population continues to grow as our town anticipates a district wide increase of 300 students by 2028. While Yarmouth has historically been relatively homogenous, that is beginning to change as southern Maine grows in cultural diversity. Our school board is made up of seven members and two student representatives from Yarmouth High School. Our students attend the Yarmouth schools in a four building configuration: primary (grades K and one), elementary (grades 2, 3 and 4), middle school (grades 5 - 8) and high school (9 -12). Our district’s graduation rate is consistently above 90% and our proficiency rates on state assessments are consistently among the top schools in Maine, above 85%.

Yarmouth teachers’ instructional practices strongly support the achievement of the school’s learning expectations by personalizing instruction, engaging students in some cross-disciplinary learning, engaging students as active and self-directed learners, emphasizing inquiry, problem-solving, and higher order thinking, applying knowledge and skills to authentic tasks, engaging students in self-assessment and reflection, and integrating technology. On a school-wide basis, teachers at YHS assess individual student learning through the use of individual assignments, quarterly progress reports, quarterly grades, holistic and analytic scoring rubrics with accompanying exemplars of student work, portfolios, learning area assessments, state assessments, AP and SAT scores. Engaging students in authentic tasks and self-assessment as active learners, and reflection of their work is another practice at YHS that is found across all learning areas and grade levels.

In Yarmouth, students and faculty learn from each other to continue to find new ways of incorporating technology to create efficiency and improve instruction. Yarmouth High School teachers continually adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of each student in a variety of ways, including using formative assessment, especially during instructional time, strategically differentiating, purposefully organizing group learning activities, and providing additional support and alternative strategies within the regular classroom. Many school wide policies and projects have been deliberately designed to encourage students to be self-directed and active learners. Students, either individually or within small groups, are given opportunities to engage in collaborative project-based learning in classes by completing research projects, working on hands-on projects (such as building models), creating art, collecting data, and presenting their work to a variety of audiences.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

In English/Language Arts classrooms, teachers conference regularly with students - both online and in person - at various stages of the writing process. After receiving teacher feedback on essays, students complete a glossing activity to identify and correct standard English conventions errors as well as a Feedforward Sheet that asks students to look closely at teacher comments regarding analysis, organization, and depth of thinking. Teachers use a variety of formative assessments to inform and adapt their writing instruction including free writing, reflective writing, outlining, teacher and peer revision. English/Language Arts teachers also use quizzes, activities, and reading checks to measure student understanding of reading, vocabulary, and standard English conventions and to adapt their instruction accordingly. The English/Language Arts learning area, as part of their meeting time, has begun using teacher presentations of student work to help revise unit and lesson plans as well as improve instructional practices across the learning area. All English classes frequently utilize peer editing of writing and close readings as active strategies. Student writing emphasizes analyzing texts and original interpretation by the student. English students also apply and share their learning by engaging in annual book discussions that include community participants. Teachers use writing assessment results to determine what grammar lessons are needed and what parts of the writing process to review with students. Poems for the Poetry Out Loud competition are also strategically chosen with students to accommodate for varying vocabulary and reading levels.

1b. Mathematics:

9th Grade students start with Algebra 1 which includes key concepts of algebraic expressions, linear functions, application of linear functions, data analysis, and probability. In addition, students focus on mathematical modelling in order to learn to apply the skills learned in a variety of settings. For 10th grade, students study Geometry with an added focus of applying and extending algebra skills. The key concepts of Geometry include the definition of basic geometry terms, parallel and perpendicular lines, congruent triangles, polygons, proportion and similarity, and right triangle trigonometry. During 11th grade the next course is Algebra 2; the key concepts are matrices, linear programming, the transformation of functions, inverse functions, quadratic functions, polynomials, exponents, and logarithms. During 12th grade the next course is Pre-Calculus; the key concepts are exponential and logarithmic functions, oblique triangle trigonometry, circular functions, conic sections, polar equations, parametric functions, sequences and series, rational functions, and limits and introduction to derivatives.

Students often choose different paths in their mathematical learning. Some elect to concentrate their studies in math in order to take AP Calculus AB during 12th grade, while others take AP Statistics, Pre-Calculus, or a new concurrent enrollment course (College Algebra and Trigonometry) from Southern Maine Community College during their senior year. Online options through VHS or AP4All are also available. In mathematics, homework is checked regularly (for completion and/or accuracy) which allows individual mini-conferences with students. In math, at the conclusion of many units of study, a project is designed for students to apply their learning. For example, after learning about conic section equations, students complete a Face Project, in which they have to program correct transformations of equations to ‘draw’ a computerized design. After completing a trigonometry unit in math in which students investigate oscillating motion, students build a model of a ferris wheel to apply their mathematical knowledge.

1c. Science:

In Science, 9th graders are presented with a broad exposure to important earth and physical science topics, including: geology (forces that shape the planet, minerals, rocks) with astronomy (stars, galaxies, astronomers, how we know about the universe), chemistry (laboratory equipment, lab safety, measurement, atomic theory and structure, chemical bonds, solutions, and earth systems (oceans, atmosphere, climate). In 10th grade, the study of Biology focuses on biological structures, processes, and interrelationships from the

molecular, cellular, organism and ecosystem levels. Topics include biochemistry, cells and cellular processes, DNA, genetics, biotechnology, evolution, biodiversity, and ecology.

As upperclassmen, students may choose from one or more areas of study. In Chemistry, students explore the nature, structure, and behavior of matter. An emphasis is placed on the mathematical treatment of concepts and relationships, so a reasonable degree of comfort and skill with mathematics is expected. Topics include: safety in the laboratory, scientific math, atomic theory and structure, the mole concept, chemical formulas and equations, chemical reactions, the behavior of gases, equilibrium, oxidation-reduction, kinetics, nuclear chemistry, and organic chemistry. Students may also choose to take year-long coursework in Physics, Biology, and Environmental Science, with AP course offerings in all of these areas.

In science classrooms, students work on laboratory write-ups or other activities in class in order to get direct feedback from their instructors. Students are given opportunities to receive direct, differentiated, and immediate feedback on their reports. In science class, students collect data through lab activities, analyze the results and make conclusions in active investigations of problems. For example, in the DNA Barcoding Lab, students identify the species of an unknown organism by extracting DNA from tissue samples, running gel electrophoresis and sending the samples to a lab for DNA sequencing. This project exposes students to the techniques and skills modern lab biologists use daily.

Since Maine recently adopted the NGSS standards, the science curriculum will continue to adjust to emphasize the three dimensions of science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts and disciplinary ideas. The learning expectations are built around these dimensions and students are learning about concepts as they use and improve their understanding of making models, engaging in arguments from evidence, and developing solutions to problems.

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

All 9th grade students explore key global historical developments from ancient civilizations to the Renaissance that have shaped the world we live in today. The scope of the course includes many aspects of human experience: government and law, art and architecture, religion, economics, science and technology, and philosophy. A study of geography is part of each unit, which include Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, The Middle Ages in the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia, and the Renaissance. As sophomores, students continue the study of world since the 16th century addressing forces and patterns of change in Africa, Latin America and Asia as well as in Europe over the last 500 years. Students examine the importance of science and technology, political revolutions, nationalism, industrialism, imperialism, and the interdependence of nations, in order to give students insights into many of the issues facing our world today.

The 11th grade curriculum focuses on how the United States was created and how it has evolved throughout different eras. Students will explore political, economic, and social and cultural trends of the United States in the past and those facing the country today through five major thematic units: The American Frontier, Government & Civics, Industry & Reform, Diversity & Equality, and 20th Century War & Diplomacy. As seniors, YHS students may choose from a range of electives to further their studies in history. Yearlong options include the traditional AP European history or a constantly evolving Honors Global Issues course. Electives include: Government, Economics, Psychology, Middle Eastern Studies, and Asian Studies.

In all social studies courses at YHS, rubrics are available before major assessments such as the junior year Public Policy Project. The US History Public Policy Project requires students to engage in individual research about a contemporary policy issue and then write a persuasive letter to a policy maker outlining the student's policy recommendation. In addition, social studies learning time is often spent working in common course teams to create and revise curriculum and assessments. The social studies team looks at assessments that are unique to a particular course, but may have implications for curriculum or assessment needs in other courses. Students actively analyze primary source documents and artifacts to create numerous presentations of their learning. All classes rely on examination of primary source documents for students to support their thinking. Document Based Questions (DBQs) are utilized frequently in various class levels. Ninth and tenth grade history students are responsible for learning about an important current events issue and then presenting it to their classmates through a multi-media presentation. Students are

asked to examine primary and secondary evidence, understand key aspects of Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic art (e.g. seven sacraments and a Catalonian Chapel) to understand the influence of the Catholic Church in Medieval Europe, and visit various places of worship in the greater Portland area to learn more about different faith traditions. We continue to use the Maine Learning Results and K-12 district curriculum to guide assessment and student learning.

1e. For secondary schools:

All sophomores and juniors complete a three-day Career Exploration Program (CEP), a job-shadow experience, during March. The CEP is a graduation requirement. Juniors in Math III complete a financial literacy project that assigns them a salary and career. From this information, calculations are completed that include buying a house and car and calculating the various interest and payment options. Juniors also participate in mock-interviews with local college admissions advisors. Seniors participate in workshops centered around financial literacy and other real-world skills.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In visual arts classes, units of study for each course are located on the course website and include the purpose for each assignment, criteria, rubrics, and reflection questions. Documentation of both formal and informal formative assessments (exercises, planning, exit slips, reflective writing, class discussions), along with the final summative assessments are located in each student's portfolios. In the visual and performing arts learning area, students create sets for actual plays, perform plays for live audiences, showcase original artwork in local art shows, and actively perform in instrumental and voice concerts. Acting and technical theater classes apply their learning when they create sets for and/or participate in performances for elementary students. In art classes, students write reflections on every piece of artwork created. Yarmouth's Photo I teacher uses a social networking platform as the vehicle for collaboration with a photo class at the International School of Beijing in China.

World language teachers meet to review common writing, reading, and oral assessments, and to make necessary changes to teaching strategies and curriculum based on student work. Additionally, world language teachers dedicate regular meeting time to the development of rubrics that assess student proficiency based on national language standards. Teachers also meet to review common writing, reading, and oral assessments, and make necessary changes to teaching strategies and curriculum. World language classes study newspapers from the region to draw conclusions about the culture.

In health science classes, students complete winter survival activities where they problem solve appropriate clothing for the conditions and must learn to build a fire in the outdoors. In health science classes many of the athletic activities center around lifelong sports such as canoeing. Students also learn about, and become certified in, CPR/AED. In health science classes, teachers adjust instruction to meet students' differing athletic abilities. For example, in beach volleyball, a student who can serve well is challenged to learn to put different actions on the ball. Other students may need the court shortened in order to serve successfully. With our current programming, all 9th grade students take a year-long Health Science I course. Students focus on a variety of health topics and lifelong physical activities which include: nutrition, stress management, communication, substance abuse, sexuality, CPR/AED certification and first aid. Seniors end their studies with a semester-long Health Science II course which builds upon previous coursework. Units of study include: health care, personal finance, sexual health, and substance abuse and lifelong physical activities such as: canoeing, ultimate frisbee, fitness training, and outdoor preparedness.

Electives offered are either a semester or full year in length and open to all grade levels. Certain advanced classes which require a pre-requisite are open only to the 10th, 11th and 12th grade students.

3. Special Populations:

The professional staff at YHS regularly collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement. For example, each year the math department analyzes the performance of both the sophomore and junior classes on the PSAT to identify strengths and weaknesses in student performance and tailors the math curriculum to improve students' skills. Additionally, an algebraic skills assessment is administered at the start of all freshman-through-junior math classes to identify essential skills that may be lacking. As an example of disaggregated data that has been used to examine inequities in student achievement, the Student Assistance Team (SAT) examines attendance data, current grades, teacher comments on PowerSchool, and behavior logs on a weekly basis to identify students who need support. In cases where inequities in student achievement are identified by the SAT, the team connects the identified students to appropriate support personnel which includes the academic support specialist, special education teachers, social workers, guidance counselors, or individual teachers as appropriate. To further support and personalize student learning, YHS also utilizes Personal Learning Plans/RTI plans (PLPs) for students who do not qualify for a plan based on a disability status, but require some individualization to succeed with their learning. These PLP documents are written plans indicating the types of personalization a student needs. Audiobooks, weekly math support, quiet environment for tests, extended time, frequent positive reinforcement, etc. are examples of learning/teaching strategies found on such plans.

One to one instruction, reading test items aloud, additional explanations, extended time, modified assignments, and other individualized strategies are used to support student learning. Consultation with social workers, special education faculty, the academic support specialist, the instructional strategist, the English Language Learning (ELL) teacher, speech and occupational therapists, and guidance counselors is both an expectation and a resource utilized frequently by Yarmouth's content teachers in order to adjust instruction practices as needed to respond to student needs. Yarmouth teachers recognize that it takes a team of professionals to support students in the regular classroom, whether it is due to social, emotional, and/or academic needs. The 9th grade teaming structure allows these teachers to quickly recognize who is having difficulty in multiple classes and provide them with the needed supports and/or adjustments to instruction. Faculty in support roles are often in the classroom as well to present information and assist teachers in differentiating. Educational technicians are scheduled into classes for special education students with the added benefit of supporting all students. As needed, small group pull-out instruction is used for students with disabilities. Yarmouth teachers are invested in supporting each student to achieve success with their learning and utilize varied instructional strategies, a multitude of support options, and an attitude of teamwork to accomplish this task.

Students performing above grade level have several opportunities to further their learning. In many of our courses, students are given an honors-level option which includes additional units of study and assessments which foster a greater degree of critical thinking and level of analysis. Students may also elect to move ahead in course levels (e.g. taking a higher level of world language or mathematics after demonstrating proficiency on assessments). Additionally, students may elect to take either independent study opportunities (these include curriculum based programs with assessments developed by a teacher) or extended learning opportunities (these include project based programs developed collaboratively with a mentor).

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Yarmouth High School community builds a safe, positive, respectful, and supportive culture that fosters student responsibility for learning and results in shared ownership, pride, and high expectations for all. The school ensures access to challenging academic experiences for all students, fosters heterogeneity, and supports the achievement of the school's graduation expectations. The culture of collaboration that permeates all parts of Yarmouth High School helps to ensure that the curriculum provides a common experience for all students, and ensures that all students are prepared to meet learning area and school wide graduation expectations.

Yarmouth High School maintains a robust, formal advisor program through which each student has an adult in the school who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school's graduation expectations. Every Yarmouth High School student is assigned an advisor, whom the student first meets at an eighth grade transition conference. This advisor is a teacher or administrator with whom that student interacts at the start of every high school day, in the same classroom or office, with the same group of 10-12 students. This daily interaction over time provides the consistent contact and space for the advisor to get to know and understand each member of the advisor group, and for the members to establish a positive relationship. Each advisor is given the freedom to accomplish this task in his/her own unique way. Often advisor groups develop norms or traditions, such as limiting technology use or celebrating birthdays, to facilitate relationship building among its members.

Yarmouth's culture is one where feedback, both formal and informal, is frequently sought out and valued. Gathering feedback is a long standing practice at Yarmouth High School that is modeled by our administrators, who conduct yearly surveys for the faculty to provide feedback on both their performance and school climate issues. Teachers likewise gather feedback to adjust instructional practices in their classrooms and feedback is also solicited to assess school-wide practices. Reflection on feedback is a norm built into Yarmouth's culture. From the evaluation system to professional interactions, Yarmouth teachers value feedback as a way to improve. Teachers in Yarmouth frequently engage in professional discourse around best practices. Yarmouth educators enjoy talking about their craft and are eager to share and learn new ways of engaging students and improving their already strong instructional practices, though this practice could become more formalized.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Yarmouth High School fosters a community environment by actively soliciting information and feedback. Annual surveys are distributed to students, staff, and parents seeking feedback to continually improve the practice by staff, administration, coaches, and clubs. Survey results are viewed as a tool to strengthen instruction and programming, and therefore are shared with appropriate personnel. The Yarmouth High School Student Senate allows students to be directly involved in decisions regarding policies, academics, school culture and student initiatives. Students and parents join staff and administration on interview committees to select candidates for positions at Yarmouth High School.

School administration provides parents and community members with bi-weekly Sunday "Parent Notes" which are designed to share information and student accomplishments, and the monthly "Coffee with the Principal" chats provide parents with the opportunity to meet him on a less formal basis and discuss pertinent issues or concerns. The school's twitter feeds are also used to celebrate student celebrations. Finally, parents are asked to engage in learning by attending student presentations of project-based work. All 9th grade students share their advisory Power of One projects during a parent evening, and all 10th and 11th students present their Career Exploration experiences to their advisory groups and parents. Additionally, parents are invited to attend the interdisciplinary 11th grade public policy presentations as well as the extended learning (ELO) presentations which occur once a semester. Our students are often involved in learning experiences within our community as well, supported by various partnerships. Economics classes will visit local businesses, Environmental Science classes are involved in various

community projects related to clean-up and recycling, and all 9th grade classes visits local religious centers as part of their studies in World History.

3. Professional Development:

The organization of professional development supports research-based instruction, professional collaboration among teachers, and the learning needs of all students. Because significant meeting time and resources are allocated for professional development, the principal and professional staff engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning that leads to increased student learning. Time has been dedicated for staff to engage in professional discourse for reflection, inquiry, and analysis of teaching and learning. Each Wednesday and on three Monday afternoons a month, the professional staff meets as a full faculty, learning area, or grade level to address issues of teaching and learning. Many of these meetings devote time for teachers of common courses to work together with one another on the above mentioned assessments.

This year's four inservice days dedicated time to professional development focused on classroom culture, project-based learning highlighted by A. J. Guiliani's work on innovation and creativity. Outside learning is vigorously supported, as teachers attended forty-two different conferences including visits to the EduCon at the Science Leadership Academy in Philadelphia. Yarmouth High School has weekly collaborative opportunities for staff to meet by various teams and learning areas, including teachers of freshman divided into teams. Yarmouth High School teachers also have the opportunity to submit summer work proposals in order to collaborate with colleagues on the development of curriculum. Collaborative opportunities further aim at improving student achievement, enhancing delivery of instruction, and strengthening supports. All Yarmouth educators have access to a yearly summer technology course that focuses on increasing the integration of technology into classroom instruction. Many teachers present to the faculty upon return from conferences to share new learning.

4. School Leadership:

The principal and assistant principal regularly use research-based evaluation and supervision processes that focus on improved student learning. The principal and assistant principal are consistently collaborative, reflective, and constructive in achieving the school's learning expectations, and the principal is given sufficient decision-making authority to lead the school. Yarmouth High School has a leadership team made up of representatives from each of the different learning areas. The mission of the leadership team is to provide instructional leadership that is rooted in the school's core values, beliefs about learning, and learning expectations. The Leadership Team meets twice a month to discuss learning expectations, current school improvement initiatives, and other staff concerns. The team publicizes the minutes from its meetings, and a Leadership Team member reports on meeting highlights at Wednesday morning meetings with the full faculty.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Yarmouth High School’s teachers routinely create school-wide initiatives that foster learning and leadership essential to the improvement of the school, and these initiatives increase student engagement in learning. This strategy is not a singular concept, but rather a commitment to continuous improvement and reflection. For example, six years ago the freshmen team created the Power of One project which highlighted the issue of world hunger. In their advisory groups, students plan community service projects to raise local awareness of food insecurity while studying world history and literature focused on food scarcity. We complemented this initiative with workshops based on increasing student understanding of digital citizenship, where students created public service announcements – again in their advisory groups – for middle school students.

Two years ago, our 10th grade teachers sought to recreate the success of the 9th grade thematic approach with “Sick Reads” - a grade-wide interdisciplinary book read based on infectious diseases that brought the world of Biology, World History, and English together for students. Inspired by the work at the Science Leadership Academy in Philadelphia, this has now turned into a thematic and project-based approach focusing on student’s roles as individuals in society where our social studies classes now end the year with a grade-wide Model UN type forum.

We have recently begun to explore providing upperclassmen with more meaningful learning experiences that break away from traditional AP curriculum-based coursework. To date, this has focused on providing students with more access to alternative pathways through vocational programs, dual enrollment coursework with local community colleges, and extended learning opportunities. We’ve also redesigned STEM coursework to meet student interests, introducing courses such as “Build your Own Electric Race Car” and “Computer Game Design.” Starting next year, students will have a choice of ten semester-based English courses rather than the traditional AP Literature and Language. As these student-centered curricular changes start to take hold, we hope to extend the 9th and 10th grade thematic approaches to all levels of learning at Yarmouth High School.