

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 [X] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. James Gleason

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

Official School Name Communications High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1740 New Bedford Road

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

Wall NJ 07719-1320
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Monmouth County

Telephone (732) 681-1010

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Web site/URL http://chs.ctemc.org

E-mail jgleason@ctemc.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*Mr. Timothy McCorkell

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

District Name Monmouth County Vocational School District Tel. (732) 431-7942

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Clement Sommers

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 7 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	26	51	77
10	23	53	76
11	25	52	77
12 or higher	20	62	82
Total Students	94	218	312

*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
 - 9 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 82 % 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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	320
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1%
 Total number students who qualify: 4

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	27
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 12:1

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%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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

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

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	78
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	98%
Enrolled in a community college	2%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2012

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

Communications High School is a personalized academy with a career focus, providing a rigorous theme-based curriculum with community, industry, and higher education partnerships.

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

Students from every district in Monmouth County may apply to one academy. The first step in the admissions process is eighth grade students attend an information session, accompanied by a parent or guardian. During the information session students are provided with information about the school, our mission, and our curriculum. They are also informed of the application requirements. If they wish to apply, students complete and submit an online application. All applicants must provide a middle school transcript and take an admission exam.

Selection is based on an admission score that is comprised of 7th and 8th grade English, math, social studies, and science grades (30%) and admission exam results (70%). The minimum admission score for prospective students is 75%. To ensure a geographic distribution of students throughout the county, the student with the highest passing score, above a 75%, from each of the 52 sending districts in the county is offered admission. Subsequent offers of admission come from the top 40 to 50 students on a countywide, rank ordered list. The ideal freshman class size is 80 students.

PART III – SUMMARY

Communications High School (CHS) opened in Wall Township, NJ, in September of 2000 with a focus on the field of communications. The student body is drawn from towns across Monmouth County, NJ. Any Monmouth County 8th grader can elect to take the entrance exam, and the top-scoring student from each sending district is offered admission to the school. The remaining applicants are then ranked to fill the vacant admission slots. CHS has an enrollment of 311 students, roughly 30% male / 70% female, 82% white, 9% Asian, 2% black, and 4% Hispanic. The staff is comprised of 27 full-time teachers, two guidance counselors, one school nurse, two office secretaries, and 3 custodians.

In the 19 years since CHS opened its doors, students have earned consistently high SAT scores with averages of 668 (Evidenced Based Reading and Writing), and 681 (Mathematics) for the Class of 2018. All students have been proficient or highly proficient on PARCC exams. As reported for the Class of 2018, 96% of CHS students met or exceeded expectations in language arts and 92% met or exceeded expectations in math.

CHS's Mission Statement:

Communications High School, a personalized academy with a career focus, provides a rigorous theme-based curriculum in conjunction with community, industry and higher education partnerships. Monmouth County students acquire knowledge, skills and professional ethics while utilizing the latest technology related to their communication field. (Communications High School, 2019)

To support our mission, CHS offers an honors college preparatory curriculum which exceeds state requirements for graduation. CHS graduation requirements include four years of English, math, and science and three years of history and world language to graduate. All electives, including Journalism, Radio and Television Broadcasting, Digital Video, Fine Art, Graphic Design, Photography, and Computer Science, support the communications theme of the school. Students explore all the career tracks during their freshman and sophomore years. During their junior and senior years, students focus on one elective path to gain expertise. During senior year all students sit for a National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI) exam in their chosen path. Many of these exams are linked to industry certification programs.

The school is on a semester block schedule with 4 80-minute class periods each day. Longer class times permit teachers and students to delve deeply into content, as well as offer time for more performance-based tasks, inquiry-based activities, and differentiated instruction. In addition, a one-hour lunch/activity period provides time for greater student involvement in clubs, student/teacher collaboration on academic and service projects, individual academic support from teachers, and offers teachers time to collaborate through Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

Students participate in a variety of activities and clubs, including theme-related clubs, such as SkillsUSA, Junior State of America, and our award-winning school newspaper, the InkBlot. Many of our students have earned national and international awards for competitions in film, art, journalism, SkillsUSA competitions, Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and for the Congressional App Challenge. Also, the school has earned recognition at the state and national level, including National Blue Ribbon Recognition in 2012.

CHS students utilize a tremendous variety of technology every day. There are 6 computer labs with over 160 Apple computers and an additional 100 Chromebooks available for student use in class or during lunch. Smartboards, graphing calculators, and science labs enhance learning. Students are taught to use the Google Suite, the Adobe Suite, software for television and radio production, and software for film and music editing. Students are given in-depth instruction on the use of every piece of equipment in our state-of-the-art radio studio, television studio, photography dark room, and print shop. Every student is required to take a Python programming class.

CHS enjoys productive partnerships with over 50 industry, government, and educational organizations to supplement classroom instruction with a senior year mentorship, enabling students to gain real-world experience in communications careers. These partners also provide feedback about our curriculum and

support in-school initiatives, such as Career Day. Our Dual Enrollment articulations with Seton Hall University and Brookdale Community College allow students to earn up to 20 college credits upon graduation. A Memorandum of Agreement with Monmouth University allows students to receive college credit at Monmouth University.

In a previous initiative, CHS faculty, students, parents, and industry leaders came together to describe the characteristics a graduate of CHS should possess.

The Profile of a CHS Graduate describes an individual who:

Communicates with confidence and competence in oral, visual, and written forms.

Demonstrates a high level of competency using current technology.

Maintains technical flexibility and adapts to new technology.

Synthesizes information in innovative and creative ways.

Possesses an academic skill set that exceeds New Jersey educational requirements.

Exhibits academic confidence with strong study and time management skills.

Acts ethically, possesses integrity and exhibits accountability for his or her actions.

Interacts effectively in local, national, and global communities.

Works cooperatively to achieve academic and professional goals.

Assimilates both academically and socially in a college environment and meets the demands of the professional world. (Communications High School, 2019)

The Mission Statement and the Profile of a CHS Graduate guide planning and decision-making throughout the school year. With a 12:1 teacher to student ratio, the staff continually works to monitor progress and make recommendations to improve each individual's educational experience and environment. The Mission and Profile are continually reviewed and revised as living documents. Earning National Blue Ribbon Recognition in 2012 validated our program. It encourages us to expand our academic and elective offerings and to challenge our students even more. Industry feedback from our mentorship partners is incorporated into our curriculum, as well as input from parents. Reflection and growth are foundational to the CHS culture, as is the constant pursuit of a better outcome for our students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Students at CHS are required to take 4 years of English Language Arts throughout their high school career. The sequence of courses from freshman year to senior year is as follows: English 9: Culture and a Global Society, English 10: Identity and the Human Experience, English 11: Humanity and the Search for Meaning, and English 12: Creative Writing. The senior year creative writing course is available for college credit with articulation through Seton Hall University. During their English classes, students explore current and classical literature from multiple genres by a diverse set of authors. Additionally, students enhance their vocabulary, hone their writing skills, and explore grammar topics. The skills developed throughout the English curriculum lend themselves to a practical, real-world skill set and to the field of communications. Multiple clubs in the school support the English curriculum, including the school's literary magazine and school newspaper, The Inkblot.

A skilled English faculty executes meaningful lessons, using a variety of instructional strategies. These include, but are not limited to, differentiated instruction, project-based learning, technology-based instruction, and cooperative learning. Teachers also strive to create opportunities for students to incorporate the theme of the school, communications. This experience culminates in the senior year when students write their own books and work with the Print Production class to create an actual, soft-cover book. Across the English curriculum, the learning standards are used comprehensively to meet academic and 21st century standards.

English teachers use large scale and small scale data to drive instruction. Students at CHS take the PSAT test and PARCC exams in Math and English in 9th, 10th, and 11th grades. In class, teachers use data analysis from web tools such as Google Forms, No Red Ink, CommonLit as well as data from their own assessments and the midterm and final exams.

1b. Mathematics:

CHS students are required to take 4 years of honors level math, regardless of their starting point. The math curricula include Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, either Calculus or Advanced Placement Calculus A/B, and Statistics. CHS offers the flexibility of beginning freshman year in Algebra 1, Geometry, or Algebra 2. College credit for our Calculus course is available through a program with Seton Hall University. Technology-supported instruction, including graphing calculators such as TI-84 and TI-nSpire, Geogebra, Desmos and Converge, offer students visual interpretations of complex concepts and bring math to life.

The Mathematics Department is constantly examining student learning and teacher efficacy through data analysis. For example, midterm and final exams are analyzed for trends. Next solutions are discussed and implemented accordingly. Teachers examine PARCC data and PSAT data to determine where teaching methods can be improved and positively affect student learning.

Because our school attracts students based on an interest in communications, our students are equipped with a wide spectrum of natural math aptitude and interest. This demands a strong commitment to differentiated instruction by the instructors, such as offering student choice. Tiered instruction and scaffolding are always provided to ensure student success. Many assessments present project choice options that include art to fully engage students who are especially gifted and interested in the visual electives that CHS offers. For example, a two-point perspective project teaches students about an art concept, and then students find the equations of all the lines in their design.

1c. Science:

Every CHS student takes 4 years of science. The science curricula begin with freshman Biology concentrating on cellular biology, biochemistry, genetics, evolution, and ecology. Sophomores take Conceptual Physics, covering concepts in statics, dynamics, electricity, and magnetism, and the junior level chemistry course analyzes the composition, properties, and reactivity of matter. All students take 1 senior level science course: Advanced Biology, Advanced Physics, or Forensics. This last course explores how science is applied to criminal and legal proceedings, expanding upon the fundamental principles of biology, conceptual physics, and chemistry.

All science courses are aligned and updated according to Next Generation Science Standards to ensure an inquiry-based approach. Each course includes a laboratory component that increases in complexity and nuance over 4 years. The students have opportunities to evaluate their skills in each course through student-centered learning and assessment opportunities, such as a class trip to a local pond where water quality and species diversity are analyzed, a murder mystery which requires students to use forensics knowledge to solve a crime, or a culminating Physics project, demonstrating electricity or thermodynamics concepts.

All science classes make use of online textbooks, online powerpoints, and online videos and applets, in addition to the labs and demonstrations that normally occur in class. The introductory classes and the advanced classes have completely different learning environments. The introductory courses are teacher-led. Senior level courses are predominantly student-led; concepts are mastered through in-class group work in which all students participate and contribute equally. Students do a good portion of learning independently and demonstrate new skills through written work and lab investigations in the classroom. In Advanced Biology, a study of human anatomy and physiology, students learn concepts through reading and lecture and then apply their knowledge through complex case studies and dissections. In Forensics, students learn the practical lab skills related to processing crime scene evidence and then demonstrate their skills during a final project that requires intense group cooperation, planning, and execution to reach the ultimate goal of solving a crime. These classes require a high level of critical thinking and independence. Of course, students who are having difficulty with particular material are supported by the teacher, the class, and peer tutoring.

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

CHS boasts an extensive and comprehensive history program where students learn to apply historical situations in practical ways. CHS students are required to study history in their freshman, sophomore and junior years. The sequence of courses starts with World History, followed by US History I, and finally US History II. In their senior year, students have the option of taking the elective, Modern History through Film.

The experienced history faculty employs a plethora of instructional strategies that encourage students to use technology, work cooperatively, and complete interdisciplinary projects. In World History, document-based questions (DBQs) are used to assess students' ability to analyze historical documents. As a school with a theme, that theme is constantly reinforced throughout the academic curriculum. During US History II students create interactive bulletin boards within the classroom, using the skills they developed in their art and design classes. The History faculty uses student debates often throughout their courses, where students employ the skills they learned in their Effective Speech class.

The history teachers at CHS employ the use of data to drive instruction from formative and summative assessments in class, as well as midterm and final exams. The history faculty use PLC time to identify and address strengths and weaknesses, allowing teachers to give additional attention where needed and build on students' expertise.

1e. For secondary schools:

As a member of the Monmouth County Vocational School District, our instruction revolves around college and career readiness. Each sequence of academic courses is designed to produce students who can manage time, study efficiently, work collaboratively, and operate independently when they go to college. Every CHS student participates in a senior year mentorship, where they work in a local company to gain professional experience. During their mentorship seniors also attend weekly classes that teach professionalism in dress,

behavior, and work ethic. Additionally, every senior takes a NOCTI exam. Some of these exams certify students in a particular skill or industry.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Because CHS is a vocational career academy, career-readiness is the core of our culture. Teachers within these disciplines are typically hired from industry and bring years of experience in their field to the classroom. Faculty members create all career readiness curriculum within their area of expertise. Career concentrations include Digital Video, Visual Communications, Journalism, Communications Technology, and TV/Radio production. Students spend their underclassmen years surveying the spectrum of electives at an introductory level. Then students choose an elective focus and pursue advanced training in that focus.

The career readiness curriculum provides students with a program of study that culminates in a nationally recognized industry test, the NOCTI exam, developed to assess career readiness in each field. Many of the NOCTI exams are linked to industry certification programs. Intense instruction in each career concentration is combined with participation in a senior mentorship program. Mentorship provides on-the-job career readiness training. Students go to a local industry partner and work with a professional in their respective field. As a result, career readiness teachers strive to replicate the type of projects students will be asked to complete in the professional environments of their mentorships, in their college courses, and in the students' future careers of choice.

In addition to theme-related courses, students take three required years of Spanish. The incoming freshmen take a placement test that evaluates their knowledge of the language and places them in level I, II, or III, according to their abilities. As juniors and seniors, students have the option to take Spanish IV or Spanish V: Spanish Communications. Both the Spanish IV and V courses are available to students for college credit. During World Language classes students participate in a variety of communicative activities and read, write, listen, and speak in Spanish. Projects in the World Language curriculum are geared towards incorporating the theme; often students create videos, podcasts, newspaper articles, and relevant artwork in Spanish.

Every student at CHS participates in a 4-year health and fitness program. The Fitness curriculum at CHS, in conjunction with the Health curriculum, encourages students to take responsibility for their personal health by proactively establishing positive health practices that support and enhance lifelong wellness. The Fitness curriculum serves as a building block for optimum fitness. It provides an integration of scientific facts, practical applications and the concept of play into an understanding of how personal choices affect health and fitness.

In junior and senior years, CHS students take three courses that are solely focused on real-world skills. Students take Junior Seminar in their junior year and Financial Literacy and Research Paper courses senior year. Junior Seminar is a 1-semester course that covers various topics, including business portfolios, educational portfolios, screenwriting, sitcom writing, public relations, and business writing. Business and educational portfolios include writing resumes, cover letters, and college essays, as well as learning the essentials of interviewing. The Research Paper course explores liberal arts subjects through literature and film with the ultimate goal of inspiring students to successfully complete an individual piece of research for their senior year. The overall theme of personal financial responsibility is woven into the Financial Literacy course where students are exposed to career choice, earning, banking, credit, debt, budgets, savings, investing, and risk management. The importance of identifying and prioritizing personal money management goals is something that is often not adequately addressed in the lives of young adults.

3. Special Populations:

CHS strives to provide every student with the tools they need to succeed. If a student falls below a grade of C or 77% in a particular class, then a Pupil Improvement Plan (PIP) is created. The PIP engages the student

and all support systems, including parents/guardians, the Guidance Counsellor, and the Principal, to come together to help the student demonstrate proficiency in the course. Every teacher offers extra help at lunchtime. Additionally, there is a schoolwide peer-tutoring organization that pairs upperclassmen with students who need additional academic support. As part of this program, a teacher may request a Writer's Workshop for support for a specific writing assignment.

Students who are working above grade-level may attend college-level classes at Brookdale Community College to do advanced work during the school day. Many instructors offer extra help to students who are pursuing AP credit in courses that are not formally offered by the school. CHS constantly strives to support and challenge every student at their level.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Students choose to attend CHS and are motivated by a rigorous theme-based curriculum. Beginning with the application process students are continually engaged at CHS. Applicants attend information sessions that are run by current students who are eager to answer questions and share their passion for the school. Once students are accepted, they attend freshman orientation in the Spring, where they are assigned a mentor from the National Honor Society. This mentorship continues through their freshman year. Additionally, the Guidance Department meets individually with the freshman class within the first month of school. These meetings serve to acquaint Guidance staff with each pupil on a personal level. Guidance counselors are available throughout the day to meet with students that have questions or concerns. During students' junior year counselors meet with each junior student and their parents to assist in the college planning process. The guidance department works effortlessly to support students and faculty. Throughout the school, counselors post monthly mindfulness reminders to promote social and emotional learning.

Students are supported academically in a multitude of ways. Teachers are continually available for extra help during their office hours which take place during the hour-long lunch/activity period. The majority of our school clubs also meet during this time. Additionally, National Honor Society peer tutors are regularly available to students by appointment during lunch/activity period and offer "walk-in" hours during exam periods. Grade level meetings take place among teachers, counselors, and administration each semester and work to solve student academic issues.

There is a collegial atmosphere throughout CHS. Teachers are supported by each other and by administration and support staff. Staff uses their PLC time to have meaningful pedagogical discussions and to enhance student learning. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to seek professional development opportunities. Faculty and instructional council meetings are open forums used encourage communication, discuss current issues and to foster staff-wide discussions.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Communication is key in a school that serves students from over 40 sending districts throughout Monmouth County. CHS strives to communicate with families in a multitude of ways including the school's website, email, social media, the online grade book and automated phone calls for important announcements. All stakeholders are involved in the comprehensive education of students at CHS. CHS has an incredibly active Parents Students Faculty Association (PSFA) that hosts regular meetings and events. Meetings are held monthly, are advertised on the school's calendar and social media, and all CHS families are encouraged to attend. In the spring the PSFA hosts a charity gift auction, a fundraiser that is entirely focused on supporting student success. Funds from this event are used to support student field trips, extracurricular clubs, student events and the end of the year field day. The field day, or Color Wars, is an opportunity for parents to spend the day at school, assisting in events, meeting teachers and spending time with their children.

CHS administration and faculty find enormous value in connecting with local industry partners to inform and provide feedback on our curriculum and the career-readiness of our students. Quarterly, the CHS Advisory Committee meets with local industry professionals to discuss the kinds of skills that are in demand in the workforce and the level to which our students possess these skills. These same professionals and companies host our students for a 9-week internship during the senior year Mentorship Program.

3. Professional Development:

CHS is part of a district that places a high value on professional development. Employees begin their time at CHS with a week-long, new employee training that is a complete introduction to the policies and procedures of the district, as well as a forum for pedagogical workshops across five days. Training on many of the district's online support systems, including the district's curriculum platform, Rubicon, the

Understanding by Design framework, Frontline Evaluation System, and PowerTeacher Online Grading System is given during the new employee training. Throughout the school year, professional development is offered in content specific areas, technology training, and best practices. Presenters are experienced education leaders from within and outside of the district. Additionally, academic departments participate in PLCs that establish goals and meet monthly to work toward realizing said goals. PLC's record their meeting minutes and share them with the building administrator. The school's principal meets regularly with the district administrators and the principals from the other schools in the district to collaborate and discuss district-wide concerns.

4. School Leadership:

CHS has one full-time administrator. There is also a vice principal, shared between five of the district's five career academies. This flat organizational structure facilitates direct and vibrant communication between principal and staff. There is a department for each academic area and for the school theme faculty, but there are no department heads or supervisors, providing unlimited opportunity for faculty to contribute to the leadership and instructional direction of the school. The Instructional Council meets once a month. It is comprised of faculty from all departments, several students and the principal. They meet to discuss and decide on larger issues, such as the introduction of new courses or the creation of an Honor Board. Any member of the school, including students, may bring an item to the Instructional Council for consideration. Another instructional leadership opportunity is the Community Advisory Board. The Community Advisory Board is made up of industry partners who hire our students for credit-based internships, faculty, and the principal. The feedback from these partners informs curriculum and career-readiness initiatives throughout the school. Several district-wide initiatives give faculty opportunities to be leaders, as well. Both the Strategic Planning Process, discussed earlier, and the Understanding by Design/Rubicon Cohorts asked for volunteers to be leaders in each of these initiatives. The leadership philosophy is based on continuous, student-centered improvement. Every initiative, meeting, and act is focused on improving the learning experience for each individual in the school. The leadership and faculty are engaged in a constant iterative process of celebrating successes and understanding failures, reflecting on both and deciding on a path that moves us toward improved student achievement. This may be enacted on a large scale, such as maximizing time in the schedule, or it may be enacted on a small scale, such as the effectiveness of a single lesson.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

CHS offers a theme-based education that prepares students for higher education and professional success in our evolving workforce. The college preparatory/honors program at Communications High School provides exemplary learning experiences in areas such as new media, journalism, publishing, commercial art, digital video, and TV/ radio broadcasting. The CHS community fosters a collaborative work environment where students, parents, faculty members and administrators work toward the common goal of providing a rigorous theme-based curriculum.

The first line in carrying out this practice lies in the strength of our curriculum. Our theme-based curricula are founded upon a current and relevant knowledge base. CHS students are continually engaged in classroom projects with real-world applications. All CHS students participate in a mentorship within a chosen thematic track in their senior year; they also receive a theme-based education through a variety of required and elective courses. Within each thematic area offered at our school, students are introduced to the theory and practice of the specific field. They are then tasked to complete assignments and projects both in school and in the community in order to apply what they learn to real-world situations.

One example of a thematic area offered at CHS is the TV and Radio Broadcast track. In these classes, students work in industry-standard studios and create news programs that are broadcast daily to the entire school. The Digital Video program requires students to produce and budget a short film to be produced both in and outside of the classroom, involving themselves in the entire process, from budgeting to final edits. These courses allow students the opportunity to utilize the skills they have learned in class in a practical environment. The same concept holds true for the Journalism, Graphic Arts and Programming theme courses. The curriculum is developed by teachers with trade and educational experience, with input from an advisory committee made up of current industry professionals and student mentors and is consistently revised by theme area teachers to remain on the cutting edge of what is going on in the real world.

Each theme course has a student club that supports and enhances the concepts taught in class. The radio and TV classes air student created advertisements that detail upcoming student events. The design and print production classes create programs for school events and the student newspaper reports on these events. Students take the concepts they learn in class and are able to immediately use these skills in a real way. Graduates from CHS carry the themes they study in their professional careers, some have gone on to hold such job titles as content creator, video producer, post-production coordinator, sound designer, and story producer.