

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. Joseph DeGennaro

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

Official School Name Yorktown High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2727 Crompond Road

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

Yorktown Heights NY 10598-3199
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Westchester County

Telephone (914) 243-8050

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Web site/URL https://yhs.yorktown.org/

E-mail jdegennaro@yorktown.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. Ronald Hattar

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

District Name Yorktown Central School District Tel. (914) 243-8000

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. Jackie Carbone

(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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	140	140	280
10	128	114	242
11	156	143	299
12 or higher	161	149	310
Total Students	585	546	1131

*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
 - 5 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 82 % White
 - 1 % 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: 3%

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	15
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	33
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	1164
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%
20 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, French, Albanian, Fulah, Ukrainian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 10%
Total number students who qualify: 116

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
180 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>6</u> Autism | <u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>42</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>84</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>33</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: 11
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	5
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	56
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	38
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	17
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	11

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 20:1

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%	96%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	97%	97%	96%	98%	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	310
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	87%
Enrolled in a community college	9%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	1%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

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.

We believe that all students will best meet the challenges of the rapidly changing world by demonstrating a commitment to learning, an appreciation for diversity, and a capacity for innovation.

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

Yorktown High School is located in Yorktown, New York, a residential suburban town in Northern Westchester County situated approximately 40 miles north of New York City, and 10 miles east of the Hudson River. Yorktown has an approximate population of 36,966 residents with a median age of 43.6 years. At the time of the 2010 U.S. Census, 81.7% of Yorktown's population identified as White; 2.8% as Black; 9.4% as Hispanic; 4.9% as Asian and Pacific Islander; .1% as American Indian; 1.1% as 2 or more races; and .2% as other.

Yorktown has a high level of educational achievement. Of adults 25 years or older, 90.4% have earned a high school diploma, 42.7% have completed four or more years of college, and 19.4% possesses a Master's degree or higher. The Yorktown community has consistently supported its school systems.

The vast majority of houses in Yorktown (82.8%) are single family homes in a suburban-rural type setting. The 2009 median housing value was \$352,300, and the median family income in 2009 was \$129,244. Most adults work in Westchester County with 49.4% in the managerial/professional category. 27.2% work in sales and office.

Yorktown High School opened its doors in 1927 and was part of a new building in the commercial center of Yorktown Heights that housed the entire 1st through 12th grades. The current building opened in 1961, under the direction of Miss Mildred E. Strang, the supervising principal of the district and a descendant of one of Yorktown's first families. This new building answered overcrowding problems and allowed the district to modernize many of its programs with new science labs, more playing fields and larger rooms. The new Yorktown High School sits near the geographic center of town on a 58-acre campus on Route 202, known as Crompond Road.

To accommodate increases in student population, construction of a new wing, a new library, and extensive renovations to the existing building were completed in 2003. Additional upgrades to the fields and buildings were completed in 2012, and the broadband and wireless internet infrastructure has been updated extensively to accommodate 1:1 technology for our students and teachers. These projects were completed through the budget, or through community approved bond projects and donations, and reflect the commitment of the Yorktown community to provide our students with an exceptional learning environment.

The high school has active parent involvement. The Parent-Teacher-Student Association (PTSA) advocates for the student body and provides SAT/ACT tutoring and scholarships as well as resources and events that enrich the experiences of families in the district. The First Nighters support the performing arts district wide, while the Huskers are an active booster organization for athletics.

Our extra-curricular program consists of approximately 40 organizations and clubs that engage diverse interests. Our students have an organized Student Senate, a pro-active and representative group that works with the administration to address student issues, and our chapter of the National Honor Society demonstrates their commitment to scholarship and service by providing academic support to their peers. Peer tutors work with the English department to staff our Writing Center, a growing resource that supports the writing process across content areas. Our students are required to complete meaningful community service over the course of their high school career, and many students complete far more than the minimum required hours. Yorktown High School has a thriving athletics program which allows our student-athletes to achieve recognition for both academic and athletic excellence, and our Band, Orchestra and Choir students continually achieve state-wide recognition for their outstanding abilities.

Yorktown High School is committed to the philosophy of helping each child develop into a mature, contributing member of society. Our staff is dedicated to helping all students reach their goals with programs to promote students' intellectual, social, and personal growth. We provide a strong foundation for students who will pursue either higher education or employment by continually enriching our programs with courses that diversify students' skill sets and give them exposure to opportunities and interests that spark enthusiasm and encourage success. Our students take advantage of the diverse offerings of our Advanced

Placement program and other college level courses and gain valuable career internship experience in our WISE (Wise Individual Senior Experience) program. Our Science Research program is highly competitive and produces national and international winners each year. Our administrative, guidance and clinical teams have cultivated a strong Response to Intervention (RTI) program, and work with parents and faculty to provide at-risk students with the support they need to be successful both academically and emotionally. Our Special Education program effectively addresses the needs of all learners by providing opportunities for students to thrive in an environment which best suits their individual needs, and includes a comprehensive Life Skills and Achievement program. Our leadership team implements a philosophy of positive intervention and support and leads with the belief that every child can succeed and have a positive experience at our school.

At the basis of our mission to educate the whole student is our district-wide effort to infuse empathy into the STEAM subjects, which has been embraced by our students and staff as “ESTEAM.” We believe that teaching our students from a young age to be sensitive to the challenges of others will give them the tools to be transformative problem solvers. In 2016, our district was awarded recognition as a National District of Character for our exemplary implementation of programs that support our students social, emotional and ethical development.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The Yorktown High school English department addresses the New York State Common Core learning standards using the EngageNY modules as a benchmark for rigor and both horizontal and vertical skill alignment. The department works closely with our K-12 ELA curriculum coordinator to ensure comprehensive exposure to skills and standards, and to implement best practices for instruction as students progress through their course work. Grade level teachers work collaboratively to design units based on overarching guiding questions that surpass content and broaden our students' perspective on topics that pertain not only to themselves, but to society as a whole. Using these guiding questions as a platform for exploration, they engage in content and hone communication skills that will prepare them for college and careers.

The English department has worked diligently to incorporate innovative practices into both curriculum design and instructional technique as the department transitioned to Common Core standards. Grade level teachers work together to enhance curricular quality and effectiveness through the the practice of “backwards” curriculum design, where planning is built around the initial identification of desired results, including enduring understandings and the exploration of essential questions. Using the New York State modules as a guide for formulating desired outcomes that are aligned with standards, assessment and instruction are then planned holistically to build a strong foundation and scaffolding to acquire the skills and understanding of the “big picture.” Our teachers have sought professional development in instructional practices that facilitate problem and inquiry-based learning and incorporate our 1:1 technology program across the grade levels.

The English department uses assessment data in a number of ways to enhance instruction in the discipline. Each year, the results of the Common Core ELA Regents exam are analyzed by item to assess weaknesses in student mastery. These areas of weakness are then addressed by the department and considered as areas in need of curricular enhancement. Additional support in these areas is then supplemented into the curriculum, measured formatively in daily lessons, and then summatively in unit and benchmark assessments throughout the year. The department has streamlined their administration of assessments with the use of Edocrina, which allows students to take grade-level benchmark assessments digitally, and then analyzes the scoring data by item for consideration by the department. The department also uses adaptive STAR Reading assessments to analyze students' comprehension and analysis levels and to assess when remediation is necessary.

1b. Mathematics:

Yorktown High School's Mathematics department works collaboratively to ensure that the New York State Learning Standards are addressed both horizontally and vertically throughout the curriculum and that various instructional methods are used to maximize student learning. The department develops curriculum under the guidance of our K-12 mathematics curriculum coordinator to ensure that all prescribed state and local skills and standards are addressed as students progress through the curriculum. Grade-level and course-specific teams work collaboratively to design unit plans in which the standards are clustered in an effort to review and build on previously learned skills. The learning standards are integrated into daily lessons and instructional approaches are chosen based on the collective experiences of the department as to what will convey the material most effectively.

The department incorporates the principles of explicit instruction into each lesson and differentiates instruction within those lessons to accommodate for learners of all ability levels. Problem-based learning is used throughout the curriculum to illustrate the use of mathematical concepts in real-world situations and to promote the development of critical thinking skills, problem solving abilities, and communication skills. The department takes advantage of our 1:1 Chromebook program to offer flipped instruction to our students and

maximize the use of classroom time.

The Math department relies heavily on data to maximize instructional outcomes. Each year, the results of the Algebra I, Algebra II and Geometry Regents exams are analyzed by the department to identify areas that students are not performing well in. The curriculum is then augmented to provide reinforcement to ensure understanding of the identified topics. Our 9th grade students take adaptive, computer-based STAR assessments three times over the course of their freshman year to provide teachers with an estimate of the students' skills and a comparison of their abilities to national norms. These assessments inform curriculum development and instruction by providing feedback about individual students. In addition, our teachers build formative assessments into their daily lessons which allow for immediate feedback on topics that may need to be reinforced.

1c. Science:

The Yorktown High School Science department addresses the learning standards with an interdisciplinary approach that correlates with the Common Core and P-12 Learning Standards. Science, engineering and math are intrinsically incorporated into the department's teaching approaches. Additionally, the department integrates ELA and science standards by incorporating ELA skill-based research projects and lab reports as major forms of assessment. The department views their approach to curriculum implementation to be rooted in the underlying fabric of ESTEAM as a guide to weave and unite the content areas.

The department works collaboratively across the grade levels to incorporate various instructional approaches into the curriculum both horizontally and vertically. Tiered instruction is used in daily lessons in the department's efforts to explain new concepts in multiple formats using sounds and visuals, to model those concepts using demonstrations and examples, and to give students opportunities to practice new skills and concepts both individually and cooperatively with teacher support. The department works to incorporate inquiry-based activities into their lab work and differentiates within these activities by providing opportunities for choice in projects, homework, and level of resources. The Science department has embraced technology-based learning by using a flipped-classroom approach for the delivery of new content in which students receive direct instruction through teacher-created videos for homework and use class time to explore problem-solving based activities and higher-order thinking skills. Technology implementation within the department also includes Vernier lab interfaces and sensors, Logger Pro data analysis software, three-dimensional Augmented Reality Sandboxes, and digital microscope cameras.

The Science department utilizes NYS Regents gap reports to inform future instructional supplementation based on content topic or skills. Additionally, the department uses item analysis reports to analyze their local exams and identify topics in the curriculum where students show weakness. These areas are then addressed by the department and instruction is adapted as needed. The department uses a variety of formative assessment in daily lesson planning to inform their instruction and supplements the curriculum with technology-based assessment and reinforcement tools such as WebAssign and EDoctrina.

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

The Yorktown High School Social Studies department works collaboratively by grade level to address how the learning standards are integrated into daily lesson planning and how the standards are assessed. The department develops a common pacing calendar to maximize their skills program which allows scheduled students to access additional support throughout the school year. Regents level classes are populated heterogeneously in an effort to offer the best learning experience for all students, and students are given the opportunity to opt-into AP US History, AP US Government and Politics, and AP European History in their junior year.

Each grade level team in the department works collaboratively on unit and lesson planning by sharing best practices and resources for each topic. Explicit instruction techniques and differentiated instruction are incorporated into lesson and project planning based on individual student needs. Social studies students are encouraged to seek support for extended writing assignments in the Writing Center, which is partially staffed by social studies faculty members.

The department uses various assessment data to analyze and improve student and school performance. Initially, Regents gap reports are analyzed by grade level teams to identify areas of performance that need reinforcement in the curriculum. As the school year progresses, teams compare item analysis reports on their common assessments to inform future instruction as well as reinforcement and review for future assessments and the Regents exams. A variety of formative assessments are used in daily lesson planning to support instruction and reinforce the skills needed to complete summative assessments such as inquiry-based research projects, written and verbal analysis of primary sources, and multiple-choice assessments designed with higher order thinking processes in mind. Teams also utilize student essays as exemplars to support unit assessments.

1e. For secondary schools:

The programs we offer our students give them the opportunity to prepare for a post-high school experience at either the college or career level. As eighth graders, students can opt into accelerated Earth Science and Algebra 1, and as freshmen, honors-track English. Juniors can begin to take advantage of our extensive Advanced Placement offerings across the content areas. Our English department offers an inquiry-based internship experience for seniors, and our Social Studies department offers a civic internship option within the community to provide experience with government through direct participation. Juniors and seniors can opt to spend part of their school day at the Putnam Northern Westchester (PNW) BOCES Tech Center participating in a two-year occupational education program in an area of interest. The Tech Center offers over 30 programs for students to seek training and skill development as a prerequisite for further education or employment.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Yorktown High School offers a well-rounded variety of programs that support our core curriculum.

Our Visual Arts department offers a range of courses to students grades 9 through 12. Students have the opportunity to comprehensively develop their skills in foundation courses, advanced electives and AP courses, as well as courses specific to art history and media arts. Core curriculum components that are used to support students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge include emphasis on the evolution of idea development, giving productive and meaningful feedback to peers, collaboration with peers to solve problems for a desired outcome, self-reflection, and understanding the impact of the visual arts on cultures and communities throughout history. Our faculty has worked diligently to incorporate technology into the visual arts curriculum in an effort to advance our students' acquisition of skills and their ability to communicate through visual imagery.

Our Music department offers a comprehensive Band, Orchestra and Choir program which builds on the districts offerings that start in the 5th grade. Our students perform twice a year and have opportunities to compete in music festivals at both the regional and national level. Students also have the opportunity to participate in drama and musical performances each school year.

Yorktown High School's Physical Education program is at the heart of our efforts to nurture healthy, well-rounded individuals. All students in grades 9 through 12 participate in physical education for 82 minutes per week one semester and 123 minutes per week in the opposing semester. Our physical education faculty has designed a rigorous curriculum in which students engage their psychomotor, cognitive and affective domains in support of becoming a well-rounded student. Our curriculum supports the science that our students are more likely to be motivated to adopt healthy lifestyles and maintain a lifetime of fitness. In addition, our physical education program provides students with the opportunity to internalize the importance of cooperation, teamwork, leadership and communication skills for their lives beyond high school.

The Health Education program at Yorktown High School includes primarily 9th and 10th graders who are enrolled in health one period per day, 5 days a week for one semester. The mission of our Health Education program is to positively influence our students' health behavior as individuals as well as members of a community, and to assist them in developing systemic strategies to improve health knowledge, attitudes, skills and behavior.

Our Health Education program is unique in that our freshmen participate in a semester long, daily course called "Husker Discovery" which is dedicated to skill-based instruction to aide our students' transition to high school. The curriculum includes Dialectic and Behavior Therapy skills such as mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation and distress tolerance techniques, academic skills including research, time management and organizational skills, and activities that promote social skills such as collaboration and decision making.

Our World Language program begins with an exploratory program that gives middle school students experience with each of the four languages offered so they can make an informed decision regarding which language they would like to pursue. They begin a track of daily instruction that culminates with college level courses that are offered in conjunction with SUNY Albany, as well as Advanced Placement courses. Within our world language classrooms, our teachers use best practices to support our students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. By designing authentic, interactive and engaging tasks, our teachers give students practical motivation to acquire the target language. Technology is used extensively to enhance and enrich instruction, and our faculty has been flexible in adapting to innovative ways of teaching world languages in the 21st century classroom.

Our library media center is open to all grades throughout the day and offers a safe place for students to explore their interests. Our collection contains materials in a variety of formats to assist students with different learning needs and represents a range of topics that foster empathy for all individuals and encourage the formation of lifelong reading habits. Our students use the library as a quiet study space, and to seek the support of National Honor Society tutors. Our full-time library media specialist facilitates student use of the Makerspace by promoting independent exploration, and by inviting students to participate in weekly problem-solving challenges geared towards our district's ESTEAM initiatives. Throughout the year, our media specialist collaborates with our faculty to support their curriculums by guiding students through the research process. Our library is also the epicenter of our one-to-one technology program, where students seek guidance on how best utilize their devices as a tool to support their learning as well as to troubleshoot technology issues.

3. Special Populations:

Yorktown High School tailors instruction to meet the needs of our special populations in numerous ways. We offer our special education (SPED) students self-contained and integrated co-taught (ICT) classes in all core content areas. Our SPED students are given the option of taking multi-year classes in Common Core Algebra and science classes that include full lab components for a comprehensive experience. Additionally, we offer our SPED students resource room support with their contact teachers, many of whom are dual certified SPED teachers who have equal expertise in content knowledge and SPED methodologies. Each of our SPED students is assigned a contact teacher who monitors their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and overall academic progress and works with the student to determine ongoing needs. In addition, each SPED teacher places work samples in a file for each SPED student and contributes to tracking sheets to monitor IEP goals.

Students who are performing above grade level are given the opportunity to participate in more rigorous honors level courses, as well as college level and Advanced Placement courses throughout their high school experience.

The Skills and Achievement program at Yorktown High School is comprised of two 8:1:2 classes that service students ages 14-21. The highly individualized program focuses mainly on functional academics that are necessary for successful transition into everyday life within the community. In addition to an academic

program which focuses on current events, functional reading and writing skills, mathematics and science, the students also work on social and emotional skills as well as daily living skills. Internships and community-based instruction allow students to practice classroom learning in real world situations. Individual needs are further targeted with the assistance of service providers in the areas of speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling.

Our high school offers a broad range of services to meet the needs of our special populations including individual and group speech and language services, individual and group counseling sessions with members of our clinical team, counseling sessions specific to at-risk behaviors with our full-time student assistance counselor, occupational therapy, one-to-one student aides, certified teaching assistant (CTA) support in self-contained classes, dialectical behavior therapy pull-out sessions with our trained clinical staff, and a fully-staffed mindfulness space where students can go throughout the day to utilize various behavior therapy resources. Additionally, we have expanded our reading skills program by maintaining 1.5 reading specialists and a full-time CTA available in the skills center to assist students. We also have a full-time ELL teacher to help students who have immigrated to our country and need support as they transition to a new language and culture.

Our faculty tailors assessment to meet the needs of our special populations in a variety of ways. STAR assessments are administered by ELA and math teachers to measure growth, progress and needs. The results of these adaptive assessments are used, in part, to inform instruction and to determine appropriate class placement. In order to ensure that students are placed in the least restrictive environment, formal class assessments (ie. exams, projects, papers) in our ICT classes are modified on an individual basis. Self-contained math classes utilize online assessments such as Delta Math, to reinforce class concepts. SPED teachers utilize the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test and Woodcock Johnson testing to help develop a better picture of current levels of functioning. We also maintain a dedicated testing room to ensure student accommodations are met.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Yorktown High School works on many levels to cultivate a community where students feel safe, respected, valued and confident, and where they can pursue their interests with enthusiasm and support. At the forefront of this effort are our faculty and staff, who dedicate their time, expertise and vision to understanding our students' needs not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well. It is largely through their observation, input and support that the programs we offer our students are conceived and put into action. These programs vary as widely as incorporating engineering and robotics into our curriculum, creating a mindfulness space where students can take time to reflect, or to offering healthy options in the cafeteria.

Although our high school serves over 1100 students, our administrators, faculty and staff take the time to know each and every one. It is through this familiarity that our culture is formed. Based on student feedback, it is evident that our students sense that they are cared for by the adults in the building, and as a result, they are comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns. When they have an idea for a club, activity or event that would be beneficial to the community, they know that if they present it to a teacher or administrator, they can garner the support they need to put their idea into action. When a student has a concern or an issue that is causing them distress, they know that there are staff members that will listen to them and offer support. When staff members, faculty, administrators and parents communicate, the collective knowledge of the student will inform the best course of action, and the student's concern will be addressed. In this manner, all of the students in our building are given the support they need to have a positive experience in a community of students and adults who respect them.

Our teachers are our most valuable asset and the heart of our students' experience. The culture of our school is such that there are many avenues of support for students and this translates into support for teachers who spend the most contact time with our students. When a teacher has a concern about a student, it is quickly addressed by the appropriate support staff or administrator. When a teacher offers feedback regarding an improvement that can be made to a specific program, procedure or aspect of the environment, their suggestion is carefully considered by administration because they have a unique perspective of both the students and of the building, and their input is invaluable to the success of the organization. Teachers are given the opportunity to take on leadership positions within their departments and pertaining to the management of daily operations and student organizations. These opportunities serve to facilitate communication between students, faculty, staff and administrators and support an overall positive culture in our building.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Yorktown High school is fortunate to be part of a community where parents and guardians are actively involved in the educational process. Our PTSA works closely with administration and faculty to provide enrichment and support for our students and their families. Families are invited to presentations regarding various aspects of the college admissions process, and students are encouraged to take advantage of PTSA sponsored review classes that support the SAT and ACT exams. The organization funds grants to our faculty and staff towards the enrichment of our programs, and awards scholarships to college-bound students. The PTSA shows their support of our faculty by hosting several teacher appreciation events throughout the school year and celebrates our graduating seniors with a number of special events.

We work closely with several other organizations to engage families in our school culture and disseminate important information. The Alliance for Safe Kids provides resources to families to safeguard our students from the dangers of substance abuse and other destructive behaviors by promoting healthy decisions and spreading awareness. The First Nighters are a group of parent volunteers who support our Performing Arts programs by raising and donating funds that provide our students with equipment, scholarships and recognition for their efforts. The Huskers Sports Club provides support for our sports programs by donating equipment and facility upgrades, sponsoring professional development for our coaches, and hosting

recognition events for our student athletes. The Foundation for Excellence is a non-profit organization comprised of parents and teachers in the district who sponsor a series of fundraising campaigns and receive donations from corporations and community businesses to fund grants to educators in the district. The grants fund projects that address academic, development and social issues specific to our district.

Our leadership team uses social media and a frequently updated website to disseminate important information to students and families and to celebrate the vibrant culture of our school. Social media has proven to be a dynamic way to involve the various stakeholders in our district in the day-to-day happenings within our buildings, and to build a sense of community.

Our parents and students have access to current grades for each course through our online portal, and each teacher maintains a website through our Google platform where families can find links to course materials and additional resources. Administration works with our guidance department to determine academic eligibility for athletics and extra-curriculars, and to initiate RTI supports. RTI initiatives begin with a meeting between teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, parents and students to formulate a plan for academic improvement and additional support as necessary.

3. Professional Development:

At the heart of our school's approach to professional development is our Curriculum Council, a committee of educators representing grades kindergarten through twelve, whose purpose is to develop and nurture communication across the district and to advise decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, assessment, and staff development. It is within this forum that our faculty and staff consider current curriculum and pedagogy and plan the implementation of initiatives to ensure a rigorous, articulated and relevant curriculum and instructional program with the purpose of raising student achievement. Through our assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and representatives from Curriculum Council, information regarding our district goals, and plans for implementation and improvement is disseminated, and each department works collegially to seek professional development to enhance their understanding and ability to implement the initiative specifically in their content area. Development and training can then manifest in a number of different ways. Individual teachers may choose to seek development in an area that is particular to their student population or content, or the department may choose to seek development as a group to benefit their department as a whole. In some circumstances, for instance, our implementation of RTI protocols, technology initiatives and Dignity for all Students Act compliance, training is provided to the faculty as a whole.

We encourage our faculty to seek professional development that is specific to their needs and beneficial to our students by giving them the opportunity to seek relevant options. We subsidize professional development that is supportive of curricular and instructional improvement and work with our teachers' union to provide a professional improvement program (PIP) where teachers can request funds for development opportunities. Teachers also have the opportunity to apply to our parent volunteer organization, the Foundation for Excellence, for grants that support their programs. Our district encourages individual professional development by offering opportunities for salary advancement through the acquisition of graduate credits that are relevant to their content area or support general pedagogy. Administrators are given every opportunity to participate in training that supports instructional leadership and the management of our organization. Some examples include emergency response training, changes in testing protocols, best practices for the evaluation of faculty and staff, and internal forums that support communication amongst administrators.

We gauge the effectiveness of our professional development program through data analysis and teacher feedback. For example, the resources we have invested in training faculty and staff in RTI protocols have significantly decreased the number of students that are referred to the Committee on Special Education. Our World Language department's work with a curriculum consultant led to the implementation of technology that increased the rigor of our program and in turn supports our students' skill acquisition which can be measured in both formative and summative assessments. Our Math department's desire to broaden our course offerings led to the research and development of an engineering program that supports both our ESTEAM initiatives and college and career readiness.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership team is comprised of our principal, three assistant principals, and our director of alternative education. Our team works collaboratively to create a community of learners who have the opportunities and resources to construct knowledge through authentic experiences, and to use that knowledge to contribute to society in a positive manner. These opportunities begin with our faculty, who we encourage and support in their roles as facilitators of the learning process, by giving them the resources they need to allow our students to reach their highest levels of academic and creative achievement.

As instructional leaders, we lead our faculty in developing curriculum that meets the needs of all students and gives them opportunities to excel and to gain the confidence they need to be successful. As a team, we work together to create a strategic plan with measurable objectives for the continuous improvement and implementation of the district's goals.

As ethical leaders, we strive to meet the needs of all learners by investing resources in programs that give equitable opportunities to all students based on their individual needs, and to create an environment in which students of all abilities can meet their educational goals and be prepared for advanced educational or vocational pursuits. We are dedicated to providing the time and resources to our staff for engaging in professional development that will encourage the education of the whole child and give them the knowledge and skills to address the needs of a broad range of learning styles and abilities. These resources extend to support the infusion of a strong character education element into our curriculum, and into our building in general.

Part of our leadership philosophy is to lead by example, and to demonstrate respect through professionalism. We strive to keep the lines of communication open to all stakeholders, and to relate the core values of our organization in an honest and ethical manner. In an effort to ensure the success of all members of our school community, we place a high priority on listening to any concerns of our faculty and staff, and to meeting their needs and thus the needs of our students by providing the necessary resources and support systems. We believe that all educators should maintain professional goals that continually build on their knowledge of content and pedagogy, and that it is our responsibility as leaders to advocate for members of our organization in their developmental pursuits. It is at the core of our mission as leaders of Yorktown High School to help others reach their goals.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

When asked to identify a single practice that has been the most influential in our school's success, we unanimously agree that that practice is the implementation of our Character Education program. We believe that character education provides the basis for developing a stronger, caring community and individuals that believe in their ability to improve the world through hard work and initiative. We have found that nurturing these characteristics in our students has contributed to an increase in individual students' confidence levels and in their belief that they can succeed both academically and socially. Character education initiatives in our district have helped create a community that values responsible, respectful behavior and that unifies our students' experiences of being part of a community that can make a difference in the world. Our efforts to infuse character education into our curriculum have brought to light a side of their ability that is not always highlighted for young people - the fact that their actions can have a positive effect on not only their immediate environment and academic achievement, but on mankind in general.

Our administration, faculty and staff have committed themselves to contributing to a holistic effort to infuse strong empathetic values into our students. It is evident to all that as our students progress through the grades and build on a foundation of awareness and empathy, we are contributing a valuable asset to society - individuals that recognize their ability to be better people through not only their actions, but through the implementation of their ideas to problem solve and improve the world beyond their immediate experiences. This ability manifests in many ways at Yorktown High School. Our community service requirements have led many students to embark on service learning opportunities that they may not have otherwise considered. Our students participate in activities such as Midnight Run and Operation Santa that give them exposure to populations who are less fortunate than they are. The ability to step outside their comfort zones and assist those in need has proven to be inspiring for our students and spurs ideas for how to create change on a larger scale. This shows itself clearly in the national and international honors awarded to the students in our Science Research program year after year. In this program, students in grades 10-12 pursue in-depth research of a topic of their own design in the fields of science or engineering. Our students consistently choose topics which serve a need in the world or contribute a potential solution to society.