

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. Joshua Roe

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

Official School Name Tioga Senior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 27 5th Avenue PO Box 241

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

Tioga Center NY 13845-0241
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Tioga

Telephone (607) 687-8001

Fax (607) 687-8010

Web site/URL https://www.tiogacentral.org/

E-mail jroe@tiogacentral.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. David Hamilton

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

District Name Tioga Central School District Tel. (607) 687-8000

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 Mrs. Cathi Root

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	36	33	69
10	36	38	74
11	40	23	63
12 or higher	29	47	76
Total Students	141	141	282

*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
 - 0 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 97 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

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

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

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	9
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	13
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	282
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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: 57%
Total number students who qualify: 161

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
26 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>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>22</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</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: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	1
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	94%	94%	94%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	97%	93%	95%	95%	89%

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	79
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	39%
Enrolled in a community college	27%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	5%
Found employment	25%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
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.

To teach intellectual, civic, and social skills in a challenging and responsive academic environment in order to meet the diverse needs of our students.

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

Tioga Central School District's community, while mainly rural and agricultural, is also dispersed with those who work in both industry and business. While much of the district is made up of farmland and farmers, there are many families whose breadwinners work at one of our local health care facilities, for instance Guthrie Medical Group, or one of several thriving businesses, such as Lockheed Martin. These backgrounds account for a diverse student body. Our students, therefore, range from those who work on farms in the mornings and drive their trucks to school alongside those who would be considered on the other side of the socioeconomic spectrum driving their Audis and Volvos to school.

One of the school's yearly traditions demonstrating this dichotomy is the last day of school when farmers and non-farmers alike drive their tractors or lawnmowers to school, decorated to celebrate the last day! All participate in this ritual and embrace it as part of what makes Tioga unique. Another tradition that sets us apart is our yearly graduation. Not only do students walk to the podium as their accomplishments are read by the school principal, but their parents, caregivers or important people in their lives, also walk with each graduate hand in hand to receive the student's diploma. This tradition sets Tioga apart and shows the importance Tioga places on family.

Academically, here are many implemented strategies within our small district to ensure that each and every student reaches his/her potential. For hands on learners, we offer BOCES vocational programs as well as a New Visions Program that encourages future leaders to start their work in the field during their senior year. These programs reach our school-to-work students as well as our high achievers in the engineering, business, health care, and law fields who are ready to explore their intended future careers early. In addition to these off-campus programs, we offer 23 concurrent college courses partnered with a nearby community college at no cost to our students or families. This has helped bridge the transition for many students from high school to college in addition to making higher learning more affordable. In 2018, this recent partnership has led to six students (8%) earning an associate's degree prior to high school graduation, and 10 students (15%) on track to do so this year.

Above and beyond the excellent programs and curriculum, there is more to what leads to success here. Even in a rural county of central New York State like Tioga, there is diversity that good educators don't ignore. Students in school have already been greatly influenced by their guardians, be they one young single mother, elderly grandparents, foster parents, a single widower, or an older sibling. Some youth have already done two hours of chores on the family farm before coming to school, others were up late the night before because homework came after hard work at a sporting event. Some students have excelled in academics since early grades while others don't take school work seriously until their teenage years. At Tioga Central High School, each class of various students recognizes the importance of a supportive community. As teachers and secretaries, cafeteria workers and maintenance staff, coaches and principals make every student welcome and take every opportunity for learning seriously, the children are united without being uniform. On sports and academic teams, the young people encourage each other. In both the hallways and cafeteria, staff and students regard one another in positive tones. Politeness is expected, but interactions are generally not superficial, as respect is earned. Students trust teachers to care enough that when help is needed, help is given in ways that show patience, attention to learning style, and expectation of responsibility for the learning by the learner. Look around the school building and you might very well see the high school principal tutoring a student in math, a janitor setting up a microphone in the cafeteria so a music student can perform during a special lunch hour, a coach double-checking on a student-athlete's progress in science class, an aide helping a child find a winter coat that will fit from the 'student pantry', two secretaries going over the list of community groups to be contacted about scholarships for seniors, the guidance counselor tapping a student on the shoulder to remind him that it's time to finish an application, and an English teacher calling up the History teacher to make sure that a student they share is getting help to complete a project. Everyone plays a vital role, measures their success through the student's triumphs, and is committed to helping all students succeed.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Tioga Central School District has a rigorous ELA program aligned with New York State's Next Generation Standards. All our students complete the same sequence of demanding and common courses in English 9, English 10, and English 11. Students who are struggling are provided intensive intervention services by any of the English teachers through a combination of after-school support and in-school small group instruction. In grade 12 many of our seniors take a comprehensive English 12 while the majority take classes for college credit. College English 101 and 102 are offered on our campus as part of the regular day and taught by a State University of New York (SUNY) approved instructor. Students who successfully complete the course earn college credit that they can transfer to the institution of their choice.

The English department initiates academic intervention strategies with students of concern (SOC's) from the data collected on previous assessments and software initiatives such as castlelearning or NewsEla. Although the English Language Arts (ELA) state exam required for graduation is not administered until the completion of the junior year, this department attempts to identify and target students during their freshman year. This department has been critical to advancing student success in all subject areas, especially the History department where they consistently complete shared writing tasks between disciplines. The expectations and language developed as a team have created a consistent pathway for students to not only be successful on the state exam, but prepared for college or career.

1b. Mathematics:

The Mathematics results of Tioga High School are consistently among the highest in our region and the state, even when compared to much larger schools with higher average family income. Our main sequence of courses begins with Algebra I, followed by Geometry and then Algebra II. We have extended opportunities for students who show an interest in mathematics including an accelerated Algebra I credit-bearing course for 8th grade students, and culminating with college credit courses in Calculus, Trigonometry, and Statistics.

At risk students are provided intensive intervention services by their regular mathematics teachers through a combination of after-school support, in-school small group instruction, and a full-year preparation course. The math department is the shining example of how the teacher-student connection fosters student success through instilling a growth mindset. It is common place for teacher prep periods and lunches to be filled with students working on math. This department devotes themselves to their students, and in turn, the students meet the high expectations set within their classroom.

The New York State curriculum outlines what is to be taught, but the how it gets taught within this department is in a constant state of improvement. The math team works tirelessly investigating data analyzed state-wide, regionally, and down to the individual student performance by standard and question. Use of technology within software such as castlelearning gives the teachers immediate analysis of student understanding. Data drives their instructional changes that span not only the particular class, but also the entire department. Consistency between the four teachers is paramount and drives the student success as they will seek out any one teacher to get help at any time. This department internalizes a student failure as a teacher failure.

1c. Science:

At Tioga Central, students discover that science is a challenging way to look at their participation in the world, not a list of esoteric lists to memorize. New York State has shifted its science standards away from specialized vocabulary and towards tasks requiring investigation, analysis of data, and presentation of reasonable solutions. Laboratory experiences and class projects go beyond the number of “lab minutes”

required by the state as students in small groups have opportunities to make close observations and learn by their own trial and error. Through collaborative work with the math department, the science instructors ask each other whether students are prepared for the next level of applying math to solve problems that cut across traditional science disciplines. The principal provides detailed state test results where the data has been crunched to show where improvements could be made, not only in assessment tasks but also in designing new classroom explorations. The district has been quick to provide equipment and internet access that has helped science teachers develop student learners capable of successfully utilizing technology in their explorations. Most Tioga Central students have applied the basic laws of matter to earth science and applied life science to health and passed the state exams by their junior year in high school, so in their last four semesters they might design their own video game, prepare a presentation about the pros and cons of fracking natural gas, or earn college credit for physics, chemistry, meteorology or astronomy.

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

The social studies curriculum at Tioga High School focuses on challenging students to think about the past and present through multiple historical, geographic, economic and political perspectives. Students use a wide range of original source documents and scholarly research to look at the significant events of the world and our nation with a critical eye.

Students at the high school begin with a two year study of global history from the beginnings of early civilizations through modern times. Juniors and Seniors then look at the rich and complex history of the United States with an emphasis on the constitutional bases of our government and their role as citizens in this democracy. Like our other subject areas, all students have the option to pursue College American History and College Government & Economics for college credit.

Our day-to-day instruction continues to evolve to meet the diverse needs of our students. Our curriculum is driven by state standards and standardized tests, but we believe real learning takes place through the utilization of several strategies that allow students to demonstrate their understanding in the classroom. We supplement instruction with activities where students examine sources, articles, artifacts, political cartoons, maps, graphs, etc. to critically analyze and contribute their thoughts in a collaborative manner. When appropriate, we utilize project-based learning to help students relate to history and make a personal connection to their learning. We have also implemented a targeted sequential writing program in the high school for improvement and excellence in our students' historical writing.

With the 21st Century Learner in mind, we are working to make history more 'hands-on' with the use of technology – utilizing web-based programs such as castlelearning, quizlet, imovie and google classroom to deepen our students' experiences and comprehension. This use of technology also provides real-time quantitative data to change and shape instruction based on student needs.

1e. For secondary schools:

We have a 3-pronged approach for post-graduate success. First, we emphasize a rigorous academic preparation. Students are challenged to make and support strong logical arguments in writing and through presentations. Second, our students (60%) complete college coursework in multiple subject areas, thus making the transition to higher education less intimidating. Third, we offer elective courses in high-demand skilled trades leading to internships, summer employment, and post high-school careers. Our welding program, in particular, has formed a partnership with a local precision welding company that provides expert assistance, job opportunities, and access to advanced tools.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Tioga Central High School recognizes the importance of non-core subjects and strives to provide opportunities for students to engage their passions by offering a wide range of electives. In the visual arts, for example, Tioga offers many courses that introduce students to the importance of creating art as well as its role in developing well rounded students. If requested, all students can take classes such as Studio in Art, Graphic Design, Ceramics, Drawing and Painting, and Design and Drawing for Production. Students culminate with a gallery-style exhibit either at the school or at a local business.

The Music Department also offers courses intended to connect students' performance-based and theoretical classes. Students in grades 9-12 can participate in band and chorus, adding additional courses such as Music Theory I & II and Music Appreciation for college credit. Our students routinely compete in state competitions, play at school events, as well as volunteer at local charity events. Under our music program, we also have a thriving drama club that has added to the participation rates of our school, often connecting with students who are not participating in athletics.

Beyond our extremely successful athletics program, Tioga offers several classes to maximize students' knowledge of good health practices. Health class is a graduation requirement that teaches wellness as a concept, as well as specific practices that are part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition to this, the school offers a food science course that promotes good nutrition and proper cooking practices that are also reinforced within our physical education classes. The health and physical education programs strive to teach life-long activities leading to a healthier lifestyle, all while providing students a relaxed environment. Similarly, Tioga consistently provides a New-York-State approved driver education course for our senior students, which adds to providing complete instruction for healthy, safe decision-making skills.

Tioga's technology courses are designed to familiarize students with the latest tools of modern technology and their application, whether in a residence or as a career. Students can choose from a variety of electives ranging from CAD, Architecture, Basic Electricity, Woodworking, Manufacturing, Transportation Systems, Building Trades, Welding, and Robotics. These classes routinely bring representatives from businesses to meet with students or take students to locations to see the application of course content. The technology teachers also run an after-school program called Architectural Awareness fostering student interest in this field.

Foreign language courses offered at Tioga are limited to Spanish, the most common second language in our rural, farm area. These classes include many cultural field trips as well as the opportunity to travel to Spanish-speaking areas, such as plays and concerts in New York City and the planned trip to Costa Rica this spring. Students can earn college credit in Spanish III and IV through a partnership with a local community college. Retention of students beyond the two-year graduation requirement is continually rising in this program as a result of the teacher's ability to engage and inspire their students.

3. Special Populations:

The Tioga Central High School may not have the cultural diversity of the urban districts within our region, but we heavily investigate our data provided by our Regional Information Center that is broken down into what we consider as our special populations.

Although the data varies year to year, our state assessment scores separated by gender and/or race are not driving instructional changes. Our "watch areas" of concern are socio-economic status and our special education populations.

It is difficult to determine gaps when out of 519 State exams administered in ten different courses, only 39 did not meet the proficiency benchmark set by the state. In our data, our students with disabilities, primarily students with disabilities in reading comprehension, are a group we target with direct interventions above and beyond what is outlined in their respective Individual Education Plan. Tioga takes great pride in keeping students with disabilities (SWD) in the general education setting and challenging them until they meet the graduation requirements.

Our staff, from principal, teachers, guidance counselor, to study hall monitors focus on Students of Concern (SOC's). Whether the student is general education, a student with disability, a low socio-economic status, we focus intervention strategies to take these at-risk students and elevate them. Teachers are in constant communication with each other and the administration as they add or remove students from our SOC list. These students are given additional resources such as being scheduled into alternate sections of academic intervention (AIS) geared toward that specific subject area. Also, these students are pushed to attend our after school program two days a week providing an additional four hours of support. This is above and beyond all the classroom teacher's efforts that seemingly surpass the normal school day.

Above and beyond the academic issues that a particular student has, the teachers, principal, and guidance counselor meet to discuss the outlying factors contributing to the academic issues of SOC's. It is our experience, if a team combines connecting with the student emotionally while directly targeting areas of weakness through AIS, after-school study hall, and one-on-one attention from the classroom teacher. We will give that student the motivation and skills to be as successful as he/she can be.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

As a small district, it is very likely there is only one teacher per subject and content area, which in turn often leads our teachers to operate as islands. The limited faculty makes it difficult to collaborate or to bounce ideas off a colleague teaching the same subject to a different group of the same cohort. For example, there is only one teacher in the building certified in Chemistry, and one teacher has each and every algebra student in any given year. This setup may seem isolating, forcing teachers to interact superficially as they pass in the hall or to close their classroom door at the bell to teach. However, this depiction is far from accurate. Each student is OUR student. Not only do department's work together to align vertically and talk about strengths and struggles in individual classrooms, but teachers also seek others out to praise students. For example, if there is a debate in the Earth Science classroom, that teacher races to tell the English 9 teacher what a great job their students did. This culture of unique collaboration and interdisciplinary support builds rapport between teachers and students across the entire building.

The district is the heart of our close knit community, and our students know that this building is more than a physical structure: It is a haven for our students to feel safe and supported.

To so many of our staff, these students are “our kids” that we are so proud of, as we are privileged to watch them grow up and grow wiser. They are not herds of students who pass through our building and students can sense this on a daily basis. Many of our faculty and staff are graduates of this district or have chosen to have their own children attend Tioga, and their dedication and commitment shows. Academically, no student falls through the cracks. Teachers will seek students out to finish an assignment they may have missed or need extra help with, not hesitating to give up prep periods or lunches, or stay after school. While this practice may not be embraced by some students who prefer to socialize in study halls and lunch, they adapt and often recognize “that” teacher that ends up making a significant impact in the students’ lives. It is not uncommon for staff to be welcomed at student graduation celebrations with their family and friends in June.

Additionally, the principal is incredibly dedicated, loyal, supportive and appreciated. At the final faculty meeting of the year, he individually recognizes each teacher, staff member, and other administrator in the building with personal examples of what he appreciates about each person. While everyone may already know they are valued throughout the year, this sometimes emotional public display of recognition and encouragement validates that he is willing to make himself vulnerable as an additional way to show how he cares for, supports and values each person that contributes to the success of the students at TCHS. Last year he even donned a cheerleading uniform to model how he is in our corner and the staff’s biggest cheerleader.

While we may be rough around the edges in our rural location and with our unorthodox approaches, we take pride in each of our students and we are proud of who we are as educators.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Tioga Central High School is successful working with families and the community, which leads to an overall improved school attitude and atmosphere, which naturally leads to greater student success. The District has very active school-to-family participation, and vice versa, which is critical to a positive support system for students. An example of this is our Home Access Program. This is a great tool for the parent/student community. Parents can access not only their child’s current average in specific classes, but can also see grades for individual assignments, and whether assignments are late or missing. Anything that encourages parental involvement and student responsibility is a win-win.

Additionally, Tioga Youth Organization has used our facilities for decades to run soccer, basketball, football, wrestling, softball and baseball programs for Tioga students, instilling a love of athletics beginning long before they are old enough to play through the school. Participation in athletics brings

parents together in an organized fashion to advance the community connection through the school. The school pool opens its doors to the community, allowing not only structured and open swim time, but also for people from the community to hold or to attend exercise classes.

In addition to strong parental involvement, local community organizations are vested in our school and partnerships are welcomed. Every year, the local fire department uses our facilities to hold a well-attended pancake supper to raise money for equipment. The travel volleyball team volunteers to serve food at the event and an overwhelming number of community members look forward to attending. Our local Community Care Network holds an annual “Share-athon” here at our high school which for many, many years has collected or made toys for needy children in our area. Maintaining a positive relationship with the community occurs not only with community organizations, but also with students and staff. At holiday time, the whole high school works to raise money and collect food for struggling families in our community. The high school distributes Christmas boxes which include canned and boxed goods, whole turkeys and even toys made by our technology students. Our THS faculty donate their monthly Jeans’ Day donations to local charities and at numerous times help fill individual student’s needs. Our “Copy Room Lady,” Judy Jura, a beloved grandmotherly figure, collects school supplies, personal hygiene products and gently-used articles of clothing that all students have access to. All of the high school students know where to go if they need a pen or a folder (or a hug).

Overall, Tioga Central is proud to be the heart of our high needs rural area, and prioritizes maintaining a positive relationship with the community. Anything that promotes positive community relations is going to positively affect education. Children see this school as a warm, welcoming place where they will be supported, and where they want to be. That, in turn, positively affects their academics.

3. Professional Development:

The Tioga Central High School utilizes the expertise within our staff to increase the skills of all our staff. Rather than rely solely on external trainers and programing, we have a tradition of having our own teachers and administrators connect with regional, state, and national experts in their disciplines and then provide coaching and training on campus tailored to the unique needs of our students and faculty. In this way, we can make sure professional development at Tioga is constantly increasing the capacity of all our educators to do the best for students.

A key part of our collaborative professional development system is the use of K-12 Program Committees in each of the subject areas who meet several times each year. These committees are made up of a mix of teachers from all grade levels who are trained by outside facilitators to become our local experts on state standards, college expectations, and career skills necessary in that field. They are also trained to lead the process of creating high-quality curriculum and performance assessments. These Program Committee teachers act as peer leaders and coaches when the entire faculty engage in work around best practices in their discipline.

In Tioga we push each other to ensure new skills learned in professional development sessions are not passively learned, but instead are quickly prototyped, developed, and the integrated into our regular programs. One example was the piloting of high-quality performance assessments in ELA and Social Studies classrooms this fall after their study and creation this summer by the K-12 Program Committees in those subjects. Another example was TOT Program (Teachers Observing Teachers) where teachers would voluntarily observe teachers and participate in a discussion of strengths and weaknesses.

We believe the true measure of a professional development program is in the impact it has on students. By looking through the lens of student data we can determine what areas we need to focus on for additional professional development and what work we have already done that is having a positive impact on learning. This is true of the work of all educators in our high school whether they teach math, lead a building, or support the mental health of young people under our care. Our professional staff are our greatest asset. Their lifelong learning is a smart investment that ultimately leads to the high goals we have for our students.

4. School Leadership:

Leadership is a guiding force at Tioga Central High School, and the leader of that force is the building principal. He is the sole administrator in a building of approximately 300 students and 40 staff. Having been a teacher at Tioga Central School for 20 years, our building principal knows what it is like to lead Tioga students in the classroom. When a teacher, students flocked to his classroom during free periods. They may have needed help in calculus, but, more than likely, many students just wanted to be near a man they so greatly admired. His teaching/leading went way beyond math. He led Tioga students on their journey to adulthood taking breaks from content to facilitate philosophical or existential discussions. For fellow staff members, he exemplified leadership in his classroom. When fellow teachers needed guidance, his room was where they turned. Fast forward to the present. He has shifted roles, where he now also leads a staff. In faculty meetings, he often references his time in the classroom with self-deprecating humor, admitting his shortcomings all the while challenging staff to be better than he was or even better than we were the year, week, or period before. As an administrator, he also leads by example. If his teachers are expected to monitor the hallways, for instance, he participates, yet he never fails to greet, joke with, or inquire about how just about everyone he sees is doing.

The principal creates a unified vision for the school and then empowers all staff to work toward in their own respective manner. He holds high expectations for all employees within this high school and keeps the focus on the needs of our students. The principal reviews student data with staff in real time to support individual students who struggle as well as to improve programs for all students. Quantitative data such as grades, exams, attendance, and class averages are balanced with qualitative information about each student's personal life, family history, interests, and challenges.

The principal's constant communication with staff and parents prevents students from falling behind. He interacts easily and directly with students, often knowing how they are doing in classes before they do. Our principal is a passionate advocate for extra-curricular and athletic activities as a method for connecting students to the school community and giving them another reason to show up every day. He is more than the principal.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It isn't scientific. It isn't catchy. The Tioga Central High School just refuses to quit. One of the strongest factors that influences our success is the overwhelming feeling that a student's failure or crisis is OUR failure or crisis. The community, the teachers, the building, and the district as a whole will do everything in our power to ensure that truly, no child is left behind. The tradition that makes our district what it is, and is woven so deeply into our culture, is that we simply refuse to let kids fail. We hold each student to the highest expectations, recognize and develop the potential in each student, and refuse to lower the standards. Students cannot help but fall into the dedication and work ethic they consistently show, as it is modeled to them on a daily basis.

Because our teachers have such a vested interest in our students, the students, in turn, do not want to let their teachers down. Some day to day examples of this are the Math and English Departments playing tug-of-war over an at-risk student's free time, so they can continue to pour into these students outside the normal class schedule. Science teachers will know if a student is not keeping up in another class and as time permits, will send a student out of their class to check in with the other teacher. The High School offers AIS classes in place of regular study halls – and students WANT to go. If a student is not motivated by grades, a failing mark is not a motivator. Many unmotivated students would prefer to hide in their perceived failures and be left inconspicuously alone, but our teachers refuse to allow a student to fail in silence with their head down. Instead, the teachers continue to constantly teach, coach and encourage them toward the path to success. Much of this additional time with students happens after contractual teaching time has elapsed each day, with no expectation of pay, recognition or reward. Our after-school study hall program is a prime example: students who have fallen behind stay after school to catch up on work and bring their grades up. Teachers are contractually released from their teaching day at 3:15, but after school study hall runs until 5:00. It is not unusual to see a teacher working with students far after 3:15, with an obvious willingness to stay and work with that student for as long as needed.

This dedication to our students goes beyond education. At-risk students have an enormous support network within the school, made up of not just the Guidance Department, but of ALL staff. Last year, an at-risk, physically disabled 18 year old student had a terrible situation at home which left her homeless part way through the school year. In a larger school she may have dropped out to get a job or live off SSI the rest of her life. That was not an option at Tioga. Instead, our school secretary took her in and provided her with the sense of family and stable home life she had never had. She is now flourishing in college. Additionally, our Principal has, on multiple occasions, picked up students who had no way to get to school, pay for their college deposits, or facilitate a student being removed from an unsafe environment. We have had instances where rural district roads are impassable, so we have sent a special vehicle to pick students up so they do not miss school. Coaches serve as life-long mentors, providing guidance and encouragement long after students graduate. Staff and students donate money and time to Tioga students and families who may be struggling with a particularly difficult situation, such as a fire or flood. The list of examples could go on and on. The Tioga difference is that no one part of the Tioga family is EVER given up on or left behind. WE REFUSE.