

U.S. Department of Education
2020 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 Dr. Joyce Kenner Ed.D.
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Whitney M. Young Magnet High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 211 S Laflin Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chicago State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60607-5305

County Cook

Telephone (773) 534-7500 Fax (773) 534-7261

Web site/URL http://www.wyoung.org E-mail jdkenner@cps.edu

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. Janice Jackson E-mail ceo-jackson@cps.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name City of Chicago SD 299 Tel. (773) 553-1000

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Miguel DelValle
(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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the 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	58	68	126
8	71	54	125
9	211	236	447
10	211	285	496
11	223	283	506
12 or higher	223	262	485
Total Students	997	1188	2185

*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 18.9 % Asian
 - 19.3 % Black or African American
 - 28.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.5 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 27.6 % White
 - 5.1 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	22
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	2216
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 35 %

Total number students who qualify: 756

8. Students receiving special education services: 5 %

112 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>21</u> Autism | <u>10</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>25</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>40</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>30</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>9</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>22</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 27

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	102
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	22
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	13

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	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	98%	97%	96%	95%	95%

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 2019.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	448
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	89%
Enrolled in a community college	11%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2009

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

Our mission is to prepare students both to fulfill their potential in their own lives and to contribute to our multicultural society. We are a values-driven school.

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

Whitney M. Young High School is a magnet school within the Chicago Public Schools. Selection for both the 7th and 8th grade gifted program and the 9th grade selective enrollment program is based on three equally rated criteria: grades, scores on annual system-wide standardized tests, and scores on the selective admission test. Selection is further informed by socioeconomic status to ensure balanced representation from across the city. In an average year 11,000 students apply for 415 9th grade slots, and 4,000 students apply for 140 7th grade slots.

PART III - SUMMARY

When Whitney M. Young Magnet High School was nominated for the prestigious National Blue Ribbon Award in 2009, our response indicated that our school had literally risen from the ashes of the 1968 riots after the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King. Named for one of Dr. King's fellow civil rights leaders, our school was built on land cleared of debris from the 1968 fires, and it was one of Chicago's first responses to the racial turmoil of that era. Opening in 1974, our school symbolized our city's motto: I Will. In 1974 that meant, "We will build a new society starting in this place, founded on human rights, respectful multiculturalism, and the creative and collaborative pursuit of excellence."

After 46 years our educational philosophy and commitment to Chicago remain the same: we still serve students from every neighborhood among Chicago's population of 2.7 million, and we still believe in fostering both excellence in students' achievement and balance in their lives. However, Chicago's population now comprises about one third each African American, Latino/a, and white, with about 5% Asian population--a more multicultural city than even ten years ago. Mirroring those demographics, Whitney Young's student population is now 28% Latino/a, 27% white, 19% African American, and 19% Asian with a scattering of others. Special education students have always comprised about 5% of our population, but now present a much wider variety of disabilities than ever before. Our 7th and 8th grade gifted program still covers 11% of our total enrollment.

US News and World Report's latest ranking lists Whitney Young fourth among Illinois high schools in academic achievement, reflecting our unapologetic intensity of focus on success. As a selective enrollment school and a gifted center, we must both challenge our very able students and encourage them. The key is balance: we provide support through outstanding sports and extracurricular offerings, peer tutoring, counseling, and social work services. We have also instituted the only fully teacher-staffed writing center and math center in the Chicago Public Schools. We provide challenge through a curricular philosophy emphasizing differentiated acceleration. We offer 35 AP courses. Most students now take at least two, and some take as many as eight. Our AP pass rate is now 90% and climbing. All of our seniors graduate with college acceptances, the majority to highly selective universities. Last year we had 17 National Merit Scholarship Finalists, the highest number in Chicago.

Our students usually thrive in this environment, but we watch them carefully to provide emotional and social support. We hold advisory meetings three times weekly to allow students to decompress and to visit counselors and teachers. We recently hired another counselor, several special education co-teachers, and a second social worker. We have improved our Multi-Tiered System of Supports, so that the MTSS Team can now intervene with students at the first sign of academic or emotional difficulty. Our failure rate has fallen from 5% to 2%, and other district schools envy our level of organization with this initiative.

We are also known for the variety of clubs, activities, and social gatherings in which students can participate and parents can volunteer. We have over 100 such activities ranging from theater to robotics and creating community for parents as well as students. We lead the city in athletics as well, fielding 36 athletic teams at all levels from beginning track through varsity basketball and lacrosse, winning over 30 city, regional, and state championships last year.

Our 2009 National Blue Ribbon Award has been a major affirmation for us: it has spurred innovation, marked us as curricular leaders in our district, and greatly increased our confidence. We have updated our curricular offerings, showing that Whitney Young does not simply adopt new courses; we also create them. One example is our Machine Learning/Artificial Intelligence course, which was co-written by two of last year's seniors with one of our computer science teachers and was then adopted by the Chicago Public Schools. Similarly, our two-year sequence in 21st Century Multimedia, advanced film courses, and design classes were written in-house and have now been adopted citywide.

Recent events reveal our school's capacity to meet new challenges. In response to increased depression and anxiety among students nationwide, we have broadened our definition of curriculum to include social-emotional learning across all disciplines. We have also increased both our course offerings in computer

science and our use of technology to foster curricular innovation in every classroom. Right now, both of these initiatives are proving invaluable to our school. When the COVID-19 pandemic closed all Illinois schools, Whitney Young shifted smoothly to remote learning: we had devices on hand to lend to our students who needed them, and we have already had several years of professional development on trauma and social-emotional issues and their effect on student success. We are demonstrating flexibility in adapting effectively even under these unprecedented conditions.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

We at Whitney Young believe that teaching and learning are too complex for a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, we base our core curriculum on the Common Core State Standards for English language arts, math, and literacy in the content areas, the Next Generation Science Standards, and our state social science standards. These documents help us identify conceptual habits of mind for each subject area and those shared among them. Although we encourage interdisciplinary cooperation, we recognize that each academic discipline has its own habits of mind which students acquire with increasing depth and sophistication during their years with us. Nurturing that growth is what we are about. Our instructional approaches across disciplines share basic qualities of solid instruction: supportive classroom atmosphere, emphasis on cooperative learning, and full integration of technology.

Several types of assessment inform our decision-making. We use the PSAT/SAT Suite for 9th, 10th, and 11th grades and the NWEA/MAP for 7th and 8th grades to measure literacy and math growth. We also review our students' scores on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness for 7th and 8th grades and the Illinois Science Assessment for grades 8 and 11 as well as the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment for our special education students. The district also requires course-related exams at the beginning and end of each school year, which we use for formative and summative assessment.

However, because our students' standardized test scores tend to cluster near the top of the curve on any assessment, we rely most on students' grades in our rigorous classes to trace their growth, and we design differentiated interventions to help them. Using this measure we consistently achieve a failure rate of about 2%, although we always seek to lower that percentage further through various interventions. Thus our approach reflects our commitment to helping students prepare for college.

1b. Reading/English language arts

In accordance with our school's philosophy of fostering analytical and creative habits of mind, our English Department blends scholarly, creative, and social-emotional strands in every course we teach as we work through the upward spiral of literacy described in the Common Core. All students take English I (Survey of Literature), English II (American Literature), and English III (British Literature). Ninety-five percent of our students take these at the honors level, though we differentiate for diverse learners of various kinds by offering one carefully designed section per year at the regular level.

Our English instruction emphasizes small group work, conferencing, peer editing of writing, and thoughtful discussions of literature. Every course includes small group dynamics, fulfilling our commitments to both the literacy components of the Common Core and the Illinois Social-Emotional Learning Standards. Every English course now also includes projects requiring both production and analysis of electronically mediated texts; students produce videos, slide presentations, and electronic texts in fulfillment of course requirements.

Academic writing and research are taught in every course except creative writing, with increasing emphasis on college-level use of databases in English III and ensuing courses. Every English classroom has a set of Chromebooks for 1-to-1 student use, and most rooms feature Smartboards.

After the English I, II, III sequence students choose among several options. Most choose AP Composition and Language, but we also offer African American Literature (returning for next year after several years of low enrollment), World Literature, Creative Writing, Philosophy in Literature, and AP English Literature and Composition. AP English Literature and African American Literature are offered for dual credit with local universities.

The department meets regularly to review measures of student growth on both standardized and teacher-

made assessments. Teachers also share intervention ideas for individual students and examine patterns of skill development in the context of the Common Core. We are fortunate to have our school writing center staffed full-time by a licensed English teacher who is also a published author, as are several other members of the department.

We also offer several electives including a three year sequence in Debate and Argumentation, resulting in many awards and debate scholarships to universities. In addition, seven years ago we instituted our 21st Century Multimedia course, which was created by Whitney Young teachers and has now been adopted throughout our district. The students produce podcasts, a weekly television show, and a bimonthly newspaper in both electronic and print editions. During the ensuing seven years, the class has continued to evolve to include new multimedia and social media. Both the debate and multimedia courses serve not simply as electives, but as ways in which students can prepare for success in fields like law, journalism, and communications. Finally, each year about 60 students culminate their high school careers by taking the AP Capstone sequence, which gives them an opportunity to explore a research project of their choosing. While it is an interdisciplinary offering, Capstone is typically taught by an English teacher because of its focus on research.

1c. Mathematics

Whitney Young's Math department implements differentiated instruction from the student's first math course to graduation. The course sequence, which includes both honors and regular level courses at each step, moves through algebra, geometry, and algebra/trigonometry to pre-calculus or calculus and beyond; but students enter this sequence at their own instructional levels. As they enter in either 7th or 9th grade, all students are tested and placed into the appropriate math course. A few 7th graders begin in pre-algebra, but most begin in algebra. A few begin with geometry, and a few begin in algebra/trigonometry.

Until six years ago about 35% of entering freshmen began with algebra; thus they would not be able to take calculus as seniors. These freshmen tended to come from elementary schools with weak algebra programs. Dissatisfied with this inadvertent injustice, our math teachers proposed and initiated a double period schedule for those students as juniors, so that they could complete both algebra/trigonometry and pre-calculus in junior year. Thus they can now take calculus as seniors, which leads to greatly increased success in college STEM programs.

Similarly, two years ago we piloted a summer program for entering freshmen called Summer of Algebra. This program provides entering freshmen with algebra exit exam scores slightly below the cutoff for geometry with a six week intensive algebra class. At the end of the class they retake the district exit exam and can then enroll in geometry as freshmen, thus allowing them to take calculus three years later. Results have been very encouraging: about half of the students who previously would not have been prepared for calculus before graduation can now take this invaluable course, and our enrollment in both AP Calculus AB and AP Calculus BC has almost doubled. We now have almost 100 students per year finishing calculus as juniors, thus allowing them to explore topics like linear algebra in our advanced math classes beyond calculus.

We also offer statistics and discrete math to students who finish the algebra-geometry-algebra/trigonometry sequence and do not wish to take calculus, sometimes because they are planning careers in non STEM fields like social science or humanities.

Thus the math curriculum at Whitney Young is both highly differentiated and flexible. A student who does well in a regular level class can quickly be moved up to honors level, while a student who is struggling in honors can, with parent approval, change to regular level with the option to rejoin honors classes if evidence suggests.

Like other classes, math classes at Whitney Young are taught with embedded technology. Teachers use Nspire hardware and Desmos and Geometry Sketchpad software to help students explore and investigate major concepts in math. Our math center is staffed by our teachers.

The teachers' assessment discussions are robust. During department meetings the teachers analyze data and make recommendations about specific changes to the curriculum. In response to recent standardized test data, department members added a statistics and probability strand to all math classes. Subsequently our math scores rose in that subcategory of the PSAT/SAT as well as the MAP/NWEA.

1d. Science

Because many of our students go on to distinguished careers in science, medicine, and engineering, our science curriculum is designed to prepare them for success in those fields. Yet we know that all of our students must develop the habits of mind needed for critical thinking in science as adults. Thus all our science classes are inquiry-based. Our teachers innovate constantly, teaching students to use cutting edge technology like probeware for data collection and analysis. We rely primarily on course grades and the PSAT/SAT Suite to assess much of our success in science.

We require the biology-chemistry-physics sequence, but most students exceed these requirements to prepare for college. Therefore we offer all these courses at both AP and honors levels as well as earth and space science, anatomy, and our new biotechnology course, which attracts students preparing for careers in medicine and biomedical engineering. Our students regularly win state and national awards and scholarships. In 2016 two students won the ComEd Science Fair for creating an ASL-capable prosthetic, receiving full academic scholarships to Stanford.

In terms of content, our most important recent curricular innovation has been our transition to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The NGSS bridge the gap between the classroom and careers and civic engagement, allowing us to use the district's new civic engagement requirement to institute biology service learning projects. Our teachers have helped 5000 students earn service learning credit, engaging in projects that serve the community while developing 21st century communication and critical thinking skills.

A further example of NGSS-based innovation is the Mycelia Project, led by our Golden Apple Fellow who is also a national leader in biology curriculum. His students have received \$75,000 in grants to support the protection of native Illinois turtles and helped pass a state senate resolution to protect 30% of Illinois land and water by 2030.

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

Of all the subjects we teach in schools, social studies are among those which change most dramatically. Therefore our methodology, curriculum, and assessments must change in response. Our social studies teachers lead in technological change, using flipped classrooms, Chromebooks, Smartboards, and interactive websites to deliver content and teach research and critical thinking.

Our social science department offers traditional courses in civics, geography, psychology, law, economics, global studies, and world history, US history, and African American history, including the equivalent AP courses; but in addition we have added the following new project-based courses in which assessment is also project-based: First, by district requirement, we now teach one semester of civics in 7th grade and another in grades 9 through 12, pairing each non-AP course with a semester of civics which includes a service learning project.

Another popular new course is Global Studies, which combines history, geography, economics, and political science to give students global perspectives and 21st century analytical skills. The teacher often leads spring or summer field trips abroad, as does our AP Human Geography teacher.

Other courses which have become more project-based include our law and AP Government classes, in which students can participate in political campaigns, serve as election judges, and recruit adults to become election judges as well.

Our students routinely win awards for their projects and their involvement in civic activities. Last year five of our 7th graders won first prize in Latin American History in the US History Fair. One of our seniors

served as Head of Social Media for the campaign of the winning candidate for mayor of Chicago, and three months later she came to graduation and handed him his diploma personally. Thus, our social science curriculum exemplifies our commitment to preparing students for success by giving them opportunities both to study and to contribute to civic life.

1f. For secondary schools:

Whitney Young is a college preparatory school. Every decision we make is aimed at helping our students to develop into strong, intelligent, compassionate young adults who will succeed in college and in their adult lives. Therefore our core curriculum and the other curricular areas discussed below are designed to ensure that students take a variety of courses across academic disciplines, going beyond memorizing facts to develop the habits of mind underlying those disciplines. In this way students can concentrate on areas of strength while coming to understand other subjects.

In our district every student is required to take four years of English, three years of science, three years of social science, at least three (preferably four) years of math, and at least two (preferably three) years of a world language. They are also required to take two years of visual and/or performing arts, one year of computer science, and a semester of civics. Every student must also take health/physical education or dance every year. Students in our district are not required to take more than six classes, but 90% of our Whitney Young students take seven.

Thus, the challenge for us is to turn every one of these requirements into an engaging opportunity for students to explore their talents, develop their skills, and acquire the habits of mind which will lead to college success; and we feel that we handle that challenge well. Our most recent semester failure report shows a 2% failure rate, with half of those students failing only one class. Nearly all our students graduate with at least one AP class on their records, giving them a preview of what college courses will be like. Our school's State Report Card shows that 89% of our graduating seniors in June 2018 were still attending college in December 2019.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Every student at Whitney Young must take at least two years of a world language, one year of computer science, two years of visual and/or performing arts, and health/physical education or dance every year. These classes meet daily and are open to all students. They are as integral to our curriculum as our core classes and as important in teaching essential skills, knowledge, and habits of mind and body.

Our computer science/business department offers some of our most popular courses. Students choose among several classes including two varieties of AP Computer Science. We also offer two years of robotics, one of which is also offered in the summer. Our computer science teachers have developed an innovative, student-centered, inquiry-based robotics curriculum centered on the Lego Mindstorms EV3 Discovery Book. Our Robotics Team was ranked #1 in Illinois in March 2020. Our students now run an after school robotics program, teaching coding and mechatronics at two local middle schools. We are also proud of our Machine Learning course, co-written two years ago by two of our students and then adopted by the district for possible use by other schools. Our computer science program teaches math, science, and marketing skills with concrete, visible results.

Whitney Young students do not simply take world languages; they relish them, master them, and apply them outside the classroom. Our World Language Department offers four years of Spanish (for both heritage and non-heritage speakers), French, Mandarin, Latin, and Japanese including AP courses in each language. Nine of the department's 12 teachers are native speakers of their languages, and our students win awards in local, state, and national contests in all these languages.

As part of our commitment to global understanding, we host exchange students from France, Japan, and China. We organize world trips to enhance students' language learning experience, and our Japanese

program won a fully funded trip for 10 to Japan in 2019; hundreds of our Chinese students have traveled to China and Taiwan on full scholarships. These experiences help students to connect their language learning with skills from English, science, and social science classes, and help them to develop the habits of mind they will need as 21st century citizens.

All students take physical education or dance every year as well as one semester of health, but our curricular emphasis in physical education has moved from competition to personal lifelong fitness. Health classes now emphasize nutrition and social-emotional health, thus relating biology and psychology to physical education. While our younger classes stress team sports, juniors and seniors choose among several courses including yoga, personal fitness, and weight training. Yoga is particularly popular for its social-emotional as well as its physical benefits.

Our robust visual and performing arts programs are also integral to life in our school. The walls and sometimes the windows are filled with murals, and sculptures line the hallways. A stroll through our arts building rewards the walker with the sounds of jazz trombones, sopranos singing scales, melodic violins, improvisational theater, and lively guitars. Dancers glide from the rehearsal hall to the stage and back. All this activity serves at least three goals: students practice the physical and mental discipline required to create something beautiful, they find an outlet for self-expression, and they see and hear connections between major concepts in art and those in academic subjects like the science (the acoustics of sound systems) and literature (drama, film, and costume). We offer sequences of these courses every year so that students can fully develop their talents and skills. Teachers lead field trips to museums and design studios, and our music students are frequently invited to join prestigious Chicago area musical groups. We also offer AP Art History, which is useful for its obvious connections with various history courses.

Yet one of the best opportunities we offer is our Creative Arts Studio, a co-taught course with general education students and special education students enrolled. Special education students are grouped with general education students who take turns teaching one lesson to the class on a rotating basis. This class is designed to be both enriching for the special education student and pre-vocational for the general education student who is interested in working in some capacity with people with special needs.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

In November 2018, as usual, our English and math teachers met to discuss their students, analyzing October PSAT scores so that teachers could offer effective specialized support to the 11% who scored below proficiency level. On the 2019 SAT the following April, 93.5% of our general education juniors met or exceeded proficiency standards in both literacy and math with less than a 10% difference in proficiency on the basis of ethnicity, gender, or income level. Among our special education population, 85% met or exceeded standards.

However, our students and their families are interested not just in proficiency, but in increasing their chances of acceptance at a highly competitive college. Although many parents pay for out-of-school prep classes, we also offer classes either free or inexpensively, depending on family income. Far exceeding proficiency level, 90% of our juniors achieved above the 90th percentile on the SAT, and most of the remaining 10% scored between the 80th and 89th percentile. Among the 5% of our population who are special education students, 15% failed to achieve proficiency in 2019. Our special education teachers work intensively with their students using the same resources we use in our prep classes and augmenting them with other materials.

In our 7th and 8th grade program in 2019, the average student scored at the 95th percentile in reading and the 96th percentile in math on the NWEA/MAP test. Four of 125 current 8th graders scored below that this winter, with the lowest 8th grade score being at the 78th percentile. Those students received specialized tutoring from two of our 21 National Board Certified Teachers.

In January 2020, 2% of our students failed classes, and half of those failed only one class. Any student

receiving below a C is referred to our Multi-Tiered System of Support Committee for counseling and tutoring.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Almost all our students perform significantly above grade level, which presents exciting challenges. Among our 9th through 12th graders who did not come through our 7th and 8th grade program, the average student performs from one to two years above grade level. Among our Academic Center students in 7th and 8th grade and throughout their time in our high school program, the average student performs from two to three years above grade level, though many achieve at much higher levels and we occasionally have a student who joins us at the age of 10.

We differentiate very carefully for all these students, most obviously in our math curriculum. Students can enter the sequence at any point; we have some 8th graders taking algebra/trigonometry or pre-calculus. These gifted math students typically take AP Calculus BC as sophomores, which allows them to take two extra years of advanced math as juniors and seniors. Similarly, students who join us in 7th grade typically take both years of AP English before graduation. Our most accelerated students usually take AP courses in a world language, social science, and physical science, yet still have time to play in our orchestra or band and to join a seasonal sport or team. They are also the students who most often take Senior Experience (which is more self-directed than the AP Capstone Program) in which they design a project and carry it out under the mentorship of a faculty member or designated expert. They then present these projects at a Local School Council meeting to demonstrate their capacity for independent study.

Because these highly self-motivated students in particular sometimes suffer from anxiety and depression, their counselors are specially trained in gifted education and social-emotional problems of the gifted, which the students and their families find helpful.

3c. Special education

Although students receiving intensive specialized services make up only about 5% of our student population, they form an important part of our school family. They require small classes with a full time Learning Behavior Specialist and an aide always present, but their classrooms are fully integrated among the other classrooms, and they often take field trips to stores and parks near the school and deliver school mail to teachers. We also have 70 students who have 504 plans, about 40 of them for conditions like asthma which do not affect their classroom performance. The remaining 30 have 504 plans for conditions like executive function deficiencies; they are able to access the general curriculum with only the support of a specialized daily study period or a Learning Behavior Specialist co-teacher in their academic classes.

In terms of specific disabilities, our largest single such population comprises students who are deaf or hard of hearing, who form a special community among us because Whitney Young was the first high school in Chicago to offer a comprehensive deaf education program. After a several year hiatus, we are planning to reinstitute ASL classes next year, integrating general education students and deaf students in a new world language department offering. In recent years we have welcomed more special education students with complex physical and mental disabilities. These students, who spend most of their day with an LBS teacher in a small class, must by law join the general population for two or three class periods daily, usually for physical education, Spanish, and visual and performing arts. These classes are then co-taught by the LBS teacher and a specially selected general education teacher. Our diverse learner/special education students are proud participants and frequent medalists in the city Special Olympics, in which Whitney Young won 31 medals in 2019.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Although we have three general education students whose records will list them as ELL until June of this year, all have passed the proficiency exam and are no longer receiving ELL services. Whitney Young's 21 ELL students are also members of our diverse learner/special education community. In addition to the Learning Behavior Specialists who work with them, their needs are served by an itinerant bilingual teacher.

Nineteen of these students come from Spanish-speaking homes and two from Ukrainian-speaking homes.

We do, however, differentiate for students who are proficient in both Spanish and English by offering classes in Spanish for Heritage Speakers which general education students can select to fulfill their world language requirement.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Our students come from every culture and neighborhood in Chicago, and many travel long distances to our building every day. Most but not all of our students are middle class. Between 35% and 40% of our students come from low income families who depend partly on food pantries, and many are the only proficient English speakers in their families. Some are occasionally homeless. Other students come from the wealthiest neighborhoods in Chicago.

The question is how to create a community from this divergence, and the simple answer is that we consider ourselves to be family. We are committed to serving the whole student, a challenging task which we accept with alacrity. Thus in recent years we have turned more of our attention to helping students to achieve balance in their lives. In addition to encouraging students to join one of our 36 teams and over 100 clubs, we follow our state's social-emotional learning standards, integrating them into our academic and physical education classes as well as into classes in the arts.

We welcome our new 9th graders with our two week Freshman Connection program and our freshman barbecue. Our 7th and 8th grade families participate in Family Night three times a year, providing many opportunities for networking among families from across the city.

We also build school spirit with our annual Homecoming activities and pep rallies celebrating our many state championships each year, ranging from sports to chess to the Academic Decathlon. There is something to engage everyone at Whitney Young.

Our school schedule helps: every teacher sees every student in class every day, touching base in emotional as well as cognitive terms. We also have an advisory period three days a week because the advisory teacher is the student's anchor in the school, the one adult who sees them almost daily throughout their time with us.

We also provide group guidance. With their counselor, each student creates a four- or six-year plan to ensure that college admissions criteria will be met in time for senior year. We also emphasize college readiness from the beginning of freshman year. Over 150 college representatives come to talk to students, and an annual citywide fall Selective Enrollment College Fair is held at our school.

Largely as a result of this environment, we have a 2% failure rate, a 95% attendance rate, a dropout rate of less than one percent, a college acceptance rate of 100%, and a college persistence rate of 89%.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school uses every possible channel to engage our families and community in partnership for our students' education. We are committed to ensuring that every student, regardless of ethnicity or income, feels part of our community. Our online newsletter, the Whitney Young Weekly, has 10,293 subscribers, many of them alumni. Ninety-nine percent of students and 37% of their parents have access to our phone notification system. Now that we are teaching and learning remotely, 100% of our students and 67% of our parents have enrolled in Google Classroom. In addition to our district-wide e-mail system, our students are automatically enrolled in Aspen, our district's new grade reporting system.

Our parents have generally been involved in their children's elementary schools and expect to have a role in their children's high school lives. We encourage that connection. We welcome parents to our events and meetings, beginning with 7th and 8th grade Family Nights, which attract 350 people to network and enjoy each other's company. Several hundred parents attend our Freshman Barbecue to begin that process in ninth grade.

Two very important parent and community organizations in which parents can be involved are our school's district-mandated Local School Council and our 501(c)3 group, Friends of Whitney Young. The LSC holds

monthly public meetings with administration to handle problems, disseminate information, and propose ideas. However, because we are always seeking to improve, the LSC's major communication initiative this year will be to study and implement ways to strengthen our relationships with non-English speaking parents. FoWY is our major fundraising organization, which networks with local businesses and our other neighbors to build support and positive interactions with the school. These two groups have been central to what is one of the major community-builders for our school and surrounding community: the construction of our new athletic field.

In August 2019 we held the ribbon cutting ceremony for our new \$4.3 million Michelle Obama Sports Complex, proudly named after our most famous graduate. The idea for the complex came from students and parents and was quickly embraced by our entire school community and our neighborhood. This district-funded facility, parts of which are open to our neighbors for fitness activities, shows our commitment not only to our students' physical wellbeing but also to the neighborhood in which our school is situated. Although we draw students from all across Chicago, we are embedded in our local community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Whitney Young High School attracts excellent teachers, who seek to work in this environment for its professional culture, for the respect and autonomy accorded to teachers, and for the outstanding support provided by our families. We have 21 National Board Certified teachers and five current candidates in our school. Seventy-five percent of our teachers have master's degrees, and five staff members have doctorates including our principal. Teachers seek to work here because creativity is valued here and multiple solutions to pedagogical challenges are encouraged and shared in teacher-directed professional development sessions dealing with content, methodology, and social issues.

Because our administration is open to new ideas in curriculum and pedagogy, our teachers take summer courses, workshops, and seminars, and travel to broaden their thinking. Then they bring these new ideas back to our campus and share them with colleagues and administrators. One of our English teachers spent last summer writing and producing a hip hop version of Macbeth, which was staged in a local theater and attended by students and faculty members as well as the general public. Other teachers have participated in anti-bias training and workshops on restorative justice. Several teachers have taken courses from the Illinois Holocaust Museum and the Facing History organization. One of our history teachers won a grant last summer to travel through Germany via the Transatlantic Outreach Program for history teachers. Several months ago our biology teachers spent a school day in a workshop on new techniques in teaching DNA concepts using recently purchased software for data analysis. Another was the state Geology Teacher of the Year two years ago, and we are proud to have a Golden Apple teacher on staff as well. One of this year's highlights was our Anti-Bias Workshop, led by a group of our teachers recently trained in these practices, who brought a set of techniques for surfacing and confronting bias in our own minds and professional lives.

Since many schools have highly qualified teachers, what makes Whitney Young's faculty different? It is simply that our administration shows respect to teachers and their expertise, encouraging new approaches and understanding that teacher creativity requires a degree of trust and autonomy. The teacher is considered an expert in the classroom. That attitude, which is shared by parents and students, encourages teachers to experiment, to collaborate, to integrate technology in new ways, and to bring new techniques to share with each other.

4. School Leadership:

Our school's leadership team is unified in vision and diverse in role. Led by our principal and three assistant principals, the team includes the attendance director, admissions director, counseling chairperson, dean, school scheduler, special education/diverse learners director, athletic director, and special projects director. The principal and three assistant principals are responsible for all classroom observations for over 100 teachers. The assistant principals also oversee day-to-day scheduling and operations, curriculum and instruction, and technology and the physical plant. Other school leaders include the 10 department chairs, the professional development team, and the members of the Local School Council.

The question is this: with such a small team for such a large school, how do we create and sustain an urban school that consistently produces Ivy League graduates, award-winning filmmakers, doctors, lawyers, scientists, teacher-leaders, and a seventeen year old student who successfully manages the electronic media portion of the electoral campaign of the mayor of Chicago while still in high school?

Fortunately, the answer is simple: a compassionate commitment to excellence in all dimensions. Administrative decisions are discussed thoroughly and professionally until consensus is reached based on which choice will help our students most as they grow into adulthood. A recent example shows this process: Students, who are a valued source of new ideas for the leadership team, have been asking for several years for the reinstatement of American Sign Language courses for hearing students. This topic was discussed at a recent leadership team meeting, yielding questions like these: How might this addition increase communication between the deaf and hearing communities in our school? Does ASL qualify as a world language for college admissions? How many sections can we offer, and will deaf students also be able to take this course? The resulting consensus was that despite some unknowns of funding and transcript review, we should offer ASL next year for its probable salutary effects on the students and the school community. This is the exemplary leadership culture at Whitney Young.

In the current COVID-19 crisis, our leadership team has swung smoothly into action: distributing devices to needy students, finding materials, organizing the retrieval of items left in school, and serving our school's vision of excellence. We have confidence because of the steadfast leadership of our principal, who has led our school through many challenges and is now leading us through this as well. We know that with her guidance we will find a way or make one.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Underlying our school's 46-year record of great success in academics, athletics, and the arts is a simple framework: we are family.

Like the head of a family, our principal sets a tone of authoritative enthusiasm. Her example is powerful: she regularly reminds everyone to be "extra kind to someone today." She or another administrator attends almost every extracurricular event. During the COVID-19 crisis she creates and sends a cheerful video to our school community every Monday reassuring everyone that we will get through this discouraging time.

Yet she does not work in isolation. Teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, parents, and students co-create this family and sustain it. We encourage students to visit our counselors about their problems. We collaborate but do not coerce each other. We acculturate new staff members to hold students accountable but to be kind and nurturing to them as well. We were one of the first schools in our district to carry out a workable plan to get Chromebooks into the hands of our students during the COVID-19 crisis. It is not just that there is no physical violence in our school; it is that the atmosphere is remarkably friendly, calm, and filled with the positive energy of adolescents who know that if they work hard they are on their way to success. Role models are all around them, from peers, from parents, from alumni, from teachers, counselors, and administrators, and from the principal herself. It is not that our students never have problems: 35% of them live in poverty, incidents of emotional illness have increased over the past few years, and complex questions of gender and ethnic identity show up as they always do at this age, especially among gifted students like ours. But when these questions arise at Whitney Young, they are handled "in the family" with compassion and respect for everyone involved, using outside resources as needed.

One new sign of this respect we have noticed recently is that when students leave the room at the end of class they now sometimes spontaneously thank the teacher for that class period. The teacher says, "You're welcome!" and students know they truly are.

Our students are highly motivated and very ready to learn in every sense, and it is our joyful job to encourage them and to help them build on their strengths and work on their weaknesses. No one falls through the cracks at Whitney Young. We are family.