

**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. Tenika L Holden-Flynn  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Herron High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 110 East 16th Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Indianapolis State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 46202-2404

County Marion County

Telephone (317) 231-0010 Fax (317) 231-3759

Web site/URL http://www.herronhighschool.org E-mail tholden-flynn@herronhighschool.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\* Mrs. Janet McNeal E-mail jmccneal@indianapolisclassicalschoools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Herron Charter, Indianapolis Classical Schools Tel. (317) 231-0010

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. John Watson  
(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):
- 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 2 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	106	170	276
10	106	157	263
11	79	117	196
12 or higher	84	129	213
<b>Total Students</b>	375	573	948

\*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):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1.4 % Asian
  - 25.2 % Black or African American
  - 11.5 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 54.2 % White
  - 7.6 % 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: 8%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	20
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	53
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	73
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	906
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

Spanish, Arabic, German, French, Polish, Japanese, Mandarin, Tigrinya

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %  
26 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 42 %

Total number students who qualify: 396

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

102 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>17</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>1</u> Deafness                | <u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>72</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>45</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>14</u> Emotional Disturbance  | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>2</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: 3

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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	55
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 17:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	97%	99%	96%	99%	99%

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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	202
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	88%
Enrolled in a community college	5%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
Other	3%

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.

Herron High School is a community of scholars that advances timeless ideas and content, builds a culture of respect and trust, and engages in an urban environment in order to prepare students to be world-class citizens.

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

Diversity in all aspects is central to Herron High School’s approach to student recruitment. Embracing the words of Justice Thurgood Marshall, United States Supreme Court, who said, “Unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever learn to live together.” Herron High School believes maintaining a racially, economically, and culturally diverse student body is essential for wholistic student learning and character formation. Therefore, the enrollment plan includes targeted marketing to attract underserved students as well as middle-class students who might otherwise seek an educational opportunity at private schools or public schools outside of Center Township.

The school participates in the city's unified enrollment system, Enroll Indy. During each open enrollment period established by Enroll Indy, families apply to multiple schools in the order of their preferences. Enroll Indy then matches families to schools according to enrollment availability, and notifies families of their matches. Families then select and accept a seat at the school of their choice. Following each enrollment period, Herron High School receives the notification of families who have confirmed their student's enrollment at Herron High School.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

---

Herron High School is an urban charter school situated within the Indianapolis Public Schools District. Student enrollment is diverse and multicultural in scope. The school's racial demographics mirrors the racial demographics for Marion County according to U.S. Census data.

As a Title I school, approximately 40% of students participate in the Federal free or reduced lunch program. Students attending Herron High School come from over 100 different sending schools. More than half of the students reside within Center Township, and the remainder come from all seven counties surrounding Marion County.

Herron High School's leadership is committed to the belief that a classical, liberal arts education, in which students are steeped in great historical thought and invention, is the best preparation for a future life of leadership and service. Embedded in the school's Core Values is the idea that students will be exposed to and transformed by unchanging, timeless ideas that are embedded in all subjects. These ideas transcend cultures and geography. The liberal arts focus encourages critical reasoning. Students learn to see issues and challenges from multiple perspectives, and to synthesize those perspectives into creative solutions.

The classical methodology is built upon the classical Trivium - grammar, logic, and rhetoric. All lesson plans across content areas are created based on the Trivium. Herron High School teachers implement teaching practices that are indicative of Classical learning. Socratic discussion and dialogue is a hallmark of Herron classrooms. When used effectively, learning that occurs through the use of Socratic discussion inspires deeper understanding, creativity, and academic liberty. In addition to strategic and thoughtful questioning, Herron teachers believe in the power of memorization and recitation. Embodied in Herron High School's Classical classroom practices is an understanding that through Socratic Dialogue, teachers facilitate learning environments by using specific tools selected to empower scholars to think critically and articulate effectively.

Herron High School offers twenty-three different Advanced Placement courses, representing nearly a fifth of their total course offerings. AP participation rates are extremely high due to the school's open access philosophy. Herron High School offers an additional five pre-Advanced Placement courses. Through its partnerships with Indiana University and Ivy Tech Community College, Herron High School also offers dual credit classes on its campus. The school also has a High Ability program that meets these learners' academic and social needs through a differentiated curriculum across grades nine through twelve.

Herron High School's graduation requirements require all students to engage all four years in all five core subjects: English, math, science, social studies, and world languages. This rigorous requirement exceeds the state's Core40 graduation requirements and results in most students earning the state's Academic Honors Diploma.

Herron High School uses a unique grading system. Because high school graduation, college acceptance, and college credit are overwhelmingly determined by student performance on assessments of knowledge, mastery of knowledge becomes the single most important measurable outcome of a student's experience and must be reflected in a student's grade. The Herron High School Mastery Learning model is specifically designed to distinguish between how a student practices learning and the evidence that a student provides to demonstrate mastery of learning. Herron High School believes that 70% of a student's grade should be determined by performance on Mastery assessments (which include quizzes, tests, standards-based projects and writing activities, etc.), and 30% should be determined by the effort of completing Independent Practice. Students who do not earn at least 70% as their final grade are given an NG – "no grade." A student who receives an NG in a required course must remediate that course to receive credit.

A significant percentage of incoming students arrive working below grade level and underprepared for Herron High School's academic rigor. The school has a robust system of academic supports for these students, including an array of remedial courses offered both during the summer as well as throughout the school year. These courses, along with optional or mandatory extended school days through participation in

Office Hours, help accelerate achievement for students with skill gaps with the intention that by the end of the students' sophomore year, those students will catch up with their peers and be prepared to pass the state's standardized tests and be on track for graduation. This system of multiple student-supports results in high retention and extraordinary 4-year graduation rates of 98% or better.

Through its classical model of education, Core Values, advanced course offerings, and rigorous graduation requirements, Herron High School sets high expectations, both in terms of academics and personal development, for all of its students.

## **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

All curriculum is developed in-house. A rigorous and formalized process of scope and sequence development and review is used for continual curriculum examination and reflection. Using templates outlining guiding questions, state standards, assessments, and essential course texts, all staff work individually and in departments through both horizontal and vertical team discussions to construct scope and sequence maps for each of their individual courses. Dedicated professional development time is provided for further horizontal and vertical alignment of all curriculum.

Each course has its own scope and sequence and/or curriculum map that defines, among other things, the standards that students are expected to demonstrate mastery of by the time they complete the class. For each course, including but not limited to those assessed by the state or through AP exams, faculty annually review the scope and sequence to ensure it reflects the most recent and appropriately rigorous standards as well as the skills required for students to demonstrate mastery of said standards. Because this process extends beyond state-tested courses, it is not explicitly structured to make sure certain standards are addressed prior to testing, but it does ensure the scope and sequence of each course reflects the most essential and rigorous standards defined by leading state and/or national organizations.

Students participate in formal and informal assessments throughout the year. Assessments are given that are both formative and summative in nature. In addition to mid-semester benchmark exams in all courses, students take NWEA in reading and math in the fall and in the spring. NWEA data is used to inform support decisions, monitor student progress, target classroom instruction, and monitor student growth. Data analysis is provided through robust professional development. Teachers are provided with a cognitive framework and best practice tools designed for developing, adapting, and presenting curriculum that reflects a classical ethic and approach.

### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

English 9-12 courses are based on Indiana’s Academic Standards for English/Language Arts and the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts. The English Department curriculum focuses on the analysis and communication skills necessary for success academically, as well as success in all areas of life. Skills that are developed in the study of language and literature are transferable to other areas of life requiring reading, critical thinking, analysis, and communication. We believe that the study of literature is not only about skills, but about artistic appreciation. A world-class citizen is one who can appreciate literature of all kinds and times and that literature's influence on and reflection of society.

We emphasize the reading of full texts, encouraging and instructing students in the skills and strategies necessary for reading complex texts. Each year students read classic literature ranging from ancient to modern and apply them to a guiding question.

Writing and composition assignments emphasize rhetorical writing strategies of narration, description, exposition, and persuasion. Using the writing process, students demonstrate a command of vocabulary, English language conventions, research and organizational skills, an awareness of the audience, the purpose for writing, and style. Students write a variety of types of compositions with a focus on fictional narratives, reflective compositions, academic essays, and responses to literature.

As part of our commitment to Classical instruction, every student is challenged to commit passages of literature to memory and recite them in front of their English class, developing their skills in public speaking, poise, and character. Socratic Dialogue is a regular part of our teaching technique to encourage the development of questioning and evidence-based argument. Socratic Dialogue is simply teaching and learning through questions and dialogue, rather than a teacher-centered classroom

Students may take standard College Prep grade-specific English courses, such as Advanced Placement courses (including Pre-AP English 10), Dual Credit college courses, as well as rigorous electives like Critical Inquiry, Speech, Debate, and Journalism. All English classes offer an Honors component.

Remedial English classes are offered concurrently with grade-level English classes for students with skill gaps. Remediation work may also be required for those students during Summer Academy. Formative and summative assessments such as benchmark exams and NWEA provide student-level data to inform teachers of individual gaps in learning. Differentiated instruction is a regular component in every course.

### **1c. Mathematics**

All math curriculum is based on Indiana State Standards as well as those determined by College Board for AP math courses. We also ensure that our curriculum is aligned to support students on standardized assessments such as ISTEP, SAT, and ACT. The math department uses placement test data from incoming freshmen and transfer students to determine the appropriate math course placement for each student.

Students performing below grade-level are recommended for a summer course to help fill gaps in understanding before they start freshman year. Students in need of support classes such as ALEKS, a web-based adaptive learning platform that helps support Algebra 1 skills, will take both classes concurrently during the school year.

As students progress in the math sequence, data from NWEA, ISTEP, and course exams identify students who need more support. Sophomores may be scheduled to take Math 10 concurrently with Geometry. Math 10 is designed as a bridge between Algebra I and Algebra 2 and is designed to better prepare students for standardized exams such as ISTEP, SAT, or ACT. Juniors and Seniors who have not passed ISTEP or need ongoing support take Algebra Foundations which also helps prepare them for standardized testing and also supports their current math course (generally Algebra II or Pre-Calculus).

Results from NWEA and CogAT also help identify students for honors-level work, Pre-AP, or AP math courses. Students who wish to engage in advanced math courses but who do not have the necessary prerequisites are provided the opportunity to take independent study math courses over the summer to fulfill prerequisites.

Math instruction is based on engaging students with frequent checks for understanding. Each class period ends with a formative skill check that allows teachers to plan the next lesson. The skill check might indicate that a skill needs to be retaught to the whole class, identifies targeted students who need more support, or it might highlight the need to increase the rigor.

All non-AP math courses use standards-based grading with a common department rubric on interim assessments. With a quick glance at the gradebook, students, parents, and teachers can see exactly which standards the student needs more work on in order to achieve mastery. Teachers use data from these assessments to determine what standards need to be retaught and reassessed. Students can opt to retake up to two skills per quarter to demonstrate mastery of the content.

These assessments also contain critical thinking questions to ensure that students know how to apply multiple standards in application problems. Our tests are designed to be a mix of both procedural and conceptual problems.

The department uses collective data from the Benchmark and Final Exams to come up with both course and department goals for the future. If a course team has diagnosed a weak area for a group of students, we share that information so that the following course can help provide reinforcements where necessary. We also come up with common teaching methods so that our courses are aligned and that we present materials in the same way.

## **1d. Science**

The Science Department at Herron/Riverside High school is built on the Physics First curriculum. We teach physics, then chemistry, then biology. Each subject builds on previous subjects. It assists students to develop by understanding the science rather than just memorizing it.

The physics that we teach are based on tangible physics that students can see and interact with, such as inclined planes and springs. It is also algebra-based, so students can see how algebra is applied and get additional practice in algebra.

Chemistry then builds on physics, so students understand terms such as 'energy' or 'the electromagnetic spectrum'. Students also are far better prepared for the math in chemistry since they have had a year's worth of experience with applied math from physics.

The Indiana State Standards for biology include biochemistry and genetics. Students who enter the course with a strong background in chemistry have a far deeper understanding of these topics.

We are proud that 100% of our faculty have undergraduate degrees in science, and many faculty hold Master's Degrees with research experience, as well as Master's Degrees in education. We also have faculty with prior experience in the workforce in the area that they teach.

The Classical Curriculum is followed through the use of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric in our course planning. Literacy and an understanding of the history of science is an additional important component of the curriculum.

We offer Robotics, Introduction to Computer Science and AP Computer Science A as well. These electives are designed to help prepare our students for the 21st-century workforce while maintaining our classical focus.

Four AP courses are offered in science: AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, and AP Environmental Science. Non-AP courses include ecology, anatomy, and integrated chemistry-physics. Students can double up in science starting their junior year if they wish to do so.

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

The Social Studies department focuses on fostering critical thinking skills that support meaningful and active civic engagement. We believe the skills developed in the study of history, government, and economics are transferable to other areas of life that require critical thinking, analysis, and communication of ideas.

We emphasize the close reading of both primary and secondary sources, encouraging and instructing all students in the skills and strategies necessary for reading complex texts. Students are encouraged to become active members of their community through activities such as voter registration drives. Extra-curricular club offerings provide many opportunities for civic engagement.

We practice Socratic Dialogue as a regular part of our teaching technique to encourage the development of questioning and evidence-based argument. Socratic Dialogue is simply teaching and learning through questions and dialogue, rather than a teacher-centered classroom approach.

All Social Studies courses focus on college preparation and incorporate a challenging and rigorous curriculum. All courses offer an Honors component. Students may elect to take Advanced Placement and dual-credit courses during all four years as a way to challenge themselves and earn early college credit.

## **1f. For secondary schools:**

As a college preparatory school, Herron High School's goal is to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in a college environment. Herron High School simulates college environments in many ways: through rigorous course content, 23 Advanced Placement courses, dual credit courses, structured Office Hours, and high expectations for intellectual engagement. All students are expected to graduate on time and attend a four-year university or college.

Individualized college planning begins in the freshman year and continues throughout a student's high school career. Beginning as freshmen, each Herron High School student begins working with an academic advisor to develop a four-year academic plan. The advising team coordinates five college guidance nights every year, two for eleventh-grade family members and one for family members with students in each of the remaining grades, respectively. A cornerstone of Herron High School's college advising efforts is its college visit program. A Director of College and Career Readiness guides senior students and families through the college selection and application process. Students also engage in career exploration and matching through third-party surveys that help identify individual interests, abilities, personality, and other traits resulting in a list of corresponding careers the student might explore.

Students have the opportunity to participate in numerous internships within their field of interest. The formalized program requires students to complete an application, including an essay and recommendation letters, in order to be considered for the opportunity. If accepted, students volunteer a minimum of six to eight hours a week for one or two semesters, depending on their placement organization's needs. Herron High School staff collect feedback about student interns' punctuality, professionalism, and contributions from their placement organizations. Herron High School staff then meet with student interns individually to share and reflect on their placement organization's feedback, including their greatest attributes and opportunities for growth.

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

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

All students are required to engage four years of a foreign language. In particular, all students are required to take a minimum of two years of Latin. As foundations for the culture of much of Europe and the Western Hemisphere, the Latin language and literature make effective lenses through which other cultures can be learned and better understood, and Latin serves a gateway to many different areas of study. Latin and Greek supply roughly 70% of English vocabulary and even a passing knowledge of Latin gives a student a marked advantage on the verbal portions of standardized tests. However, it is the logic and mental discipline required to master Latin that benefits students in ways that they usually never realize.

The study of Latin serves to strengthen a student's cognitive processes and critical thinking skills. In essence, a foundation in Latin serves as an intensive course in logic and logical processes, thereby creating a graduate who is much stronger in their critical thinking abilities and able to tackle more complex questions posed in a college classroom.

Freshman and Sophomores are required to take two years of Latin as a foundation in World Languages. Juniors and Seniors may continue to progress in Latin or they may take either Spanish or French. For students who entered with previous Latin credits, AP Latin and Greek are also available.

Because Herron High School's graduation requirements include engagement in four years of core academic subjects, there are fewer electives offered than at many other schools; however, those offered are rich in a STEAM focus. Herron High School believes that to build foundations for success, the classical learning experience must include a rigorous curriculum, rich historical perspective, deep exposure to the arts, and a cultural atmosphere that emphasizes high expectations. The school's holistic approach to course offerings integrates academics with art involvement to create higher motivation in students, increase retention, and instill greater self-confidence. The school places the importance of exposure to the arts and the joy of creating on par with academic achievement in core subjects. All students graduate with experiences in the

visual and performing arts. At a time when other schools are cutting art programs to cope with shrinking budgets, Herron High School is fully committed to increasing the impact art has on our students.

Technology offerings include a robust Robotics Design and Innovation, Introduction to Computer Science, AP Computer Science, and a cornerstone offering, Student Help Desk, where students have the opportunity to learn about building and repairing computers and other technological devices. Help Desk students assist faculty and students with tech issues and repairs, setting up computer labs, and recycling of computer components to help keep the school's classroom computers functioning. In addition to these courses, many extra-curricular clubs offer students the opportunity to explore topics in technology, computer programming, and compete in regional and national robotics competitions.

Herron High School offers twenty-three Advanced Placement courses, and all students are expected to take at least one AP course. In order to prepare students for the rigor, the school offers five pre-AP courses in English, math, and sciences.

Physical Education, Health, and Economics are state-required courses. Students have the option to take these courses during the two sessions of Summer Academy as a way to "get ahead" in order to allow for more elective choices during the regular school year, or the addition of higher math or language course offerings later in their high school years.

Course offerings such as Critical Inquiry, Ethics, and Debate offer students the opportunity to hone their critical thinking skills, improve persuasive articulation, and expand their philosophical perspective. Critical Inquiry is based loosely on Aristotle's theory of causality, in which he argues that there are four causes: four kinds of answers to the question 'why?'

Herron High School also offers remedial courses in English and math for students with missing skill gaps. In some cases, students are required to engage in Mandatory Remediation during the Summer Academy programming before they enter 9th grade. Students who fail to score a minimum of 70% in a required Core40 course are also required to repeat it, often by attending Summer Academy. In this way, even struggling students are kept on track for successful graduation.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

A significant percentage of students arrive at Herron High School performing significantly below grade level. These students make tremendous gains as a result of the school's dedicated focus on performance improvement. Students who began 9th grade reading at a 4th-grade level, or performing math at the 5th-grade level, for example, receive intensive remediation alongside their grade-level courses.

Incoming freshmen students take a placement exam as part of the enrollment process. This allows school counselors to schedule appropriate courses that meet the student's needs. Students performing significantly below grade-level must enroll in remedial courses offered in Summer Academy prior to the start of their freshman year. Identifying and addressing academic deficiencies early in the student's high school career ultimately helps set the student up for success in subsequent years

Mandatory remediation is required for any student who is working below grade level in reading or math, or any student who did not earn a 70% or higher in any core academic class required for graduation. Students in need of remediation take remedial classes concurrently with their grade-level math or English class. All faculty hold Office Hours twice a week to provide individualized assistance to struggling students. Additionally, students who are not passing two or more of their classes are required to attend periodically scheduled Saturday school sessions to receive additional individualized instruction and catch up on missing assignments. Advisory periods are held four days a week to provide dedicated time for student-advisor meetings, academic progress reviews, and academic support.

While historically underserved student subgroups might perform below their peers based on I-STEP scores,

they significantly out-perform their peers both at Indianapolis Public Schools and at the state level. Additionally, Herron High School is significantly outperforming both local and state results for graduation among all subgroups, with a greater than 20% increase in graduation rates for black students compared to their peers both locally and statewide.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Herron High School is committed to identifying and providing an enriching curriculum for students who perform at, or show the potential to perform at, an outstanding level of achievement in the core academic areas of math and language arts. The Indianapolis Classical Schools High Ability Committee systematically uses identification procedures that assess students' achievement and ability and also incorporate teacher/parent observations and student work. This program is overseen by the school's High Ability Coordinator and the High Ability committee.

A High Ability Student is one who demonstrates advanced potential in one of the following areas of norm-referenced assessment: achievement, ability, or observable data when compared with students of the same age, experience, or environment. This advanced potential is characterized by exceptional gifts, talents, motivation, or interests.

All freshmen are screened for High Ability services. This screening process includes the NWEA, a norm-referenced achievement test, and the CogAT, a norm-referenced aptitude test. Transfer students are also assessed for High Ability needs. Students not identified in the initial screening process may be nominated for additional assessment by the student's teacher, advisor, or parents at any time during their high school years.

Herron High School offers twenty-three Advanced Placement courses as well as dual credit courses in partnership with Indiana University and Ivy Tech Community College. Additionally, all courses offer an Honors component. Students engaged in Honors-level coursework receive additional differentiated assignments from their classroom peers.

Students identified as High Ability may also have special and specific social and emotional concerns. In addition to challenging academics, the HA Coordinator works with the Advising department and Resource team (if appropriate) to evaluate high ability the student's social and emotional health, and to create individualized enrichment opportunities to encourage strong leadership skills and social skill development.

### **3c. Special education**

The faculty and staff at Herron High School are committed to serving students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws. The special education team observes state and federal laws that require our organization to locate, identify, and evaluate all students with disabilities that impact their learning. In addition, the team follows the proper protocol for initiating an evaluation and determining edibility for special education services. The SPED department, classroom teachers, parents, and the advising department collaborate to identify students who may be in need of services. After identifying students who may need services, all necessary evaluations are completed at no cost to parents.

Herron High School has developed community partnerships to better serve its special needs population. Meridian Psychological Associates is a community of mental health professionals with a breadth of training and experience dedicated to excellence in providing a wide range of diagnostic, therapeutic, and consultative services to schools in Indianapolis. Progressive Therapy Services is a privately owned company that provides our speech and language services as well as our occupational therapy.

Herron High School believes that students with disabilities should be educated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible; therefore, students are educated in the least restrictive environment. Students with IEPs and 504s have daily access to the Resource Department and receive accommodations in all classes. Teachers are notified of all accommodations for individual students and are held accountable by the Director of Special Education. Professional development training is provided to all faculty on the

identification and delivery of services. In addition to licensed special education teachers, the Resource department includes paraprofessionals as classroom assistants.

Related services such as Speech-language and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, occupational and physical therapy, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, and orientation and mobility assistance are delivered by qualified providers.

Except in rare cases, most students receiving special education services will earn a Core40 diploma.

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

Support for all students, including students with special needs, English learners, high ability students, and struggling students begins with high quality differentiated classroom instruction. Our Classical Model which focuses curriculum on the Trivium ensures that students gain the knowledge needed to excel in school. The model allows content to be delivered in a differentiated way to meet a wide variety of student needs. Small group instruction, individual conferences, and whole group instruction informed by observation and immediate checks for understanding provide differentiation and responsiveness from the start for special populations.

Services for English Language Learners are based on data from WIDA, the most widely used resource hub for educators supporting multilingual learners. Herron High School creates individualized learning plans (ILPs) for each of our English language learners. These plans include specific support tailored to that student's needs and outline the supports to be provided across both instruction and assessment. English learners receive support from their classroom teacher through the ILP and the classroom teachers receive support in the implementation of the ILP from the ELL Coordinator. This support includes professional development throughout the year as well as meetings to discuss best practices in implementing each student's ILP. English learners also receive support through push-in services during class time with a focus on reading and writing. The ILP and support plan for each student is shared with families. Herron High Schools provides support to families by translating communications as well as providing translators during events such as back to school nights, conferences, and school-sponsored social gatherings.

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

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

---

### **1. Engaging Students:**

In addition to the host of academic supports previously noted throughout this narrative, Herron High School features multiple structures designed to increase student engagement in the life of the school. Herron High School believes that student achievement rises when students feel fully integrated into the academic and social fabric of the school community.

Herron High School is justifiably proud of its welcoming school culture. Visitors to the campus often remark on the palpable sense of belonging to a caring community of learners. Students and parents consistently rank school culture among the top reasons they chose Herron High School. Each year on the first day of school, senior students provide a welcome convocation to new students. Freshmen students hear firsthand what it means to be an Achaean, and what they can expect in the coming years.

Freshmen also spend a special day in “Herron 101,” a program designed to instill the school’s cultural and Core Values, as well as providing new students with the information they need to successfully navigate their high school years.

Achaean 80 is a student leadership club. Achaean 80 members are diverse students from each grade level who exemplify the school’s culture and values. While studious habits are required, membership is open to qualifying students with various GPA’s. Achaean 80 members are chosen to serve as role models and as volunteers and ambassadors to the wider community. In collaboration with the student government, Achaean 80 members help school leadership keep informed on student needs.

Small class sizes allow teachers to forge trusting relationships with students, and between students and their peers. Students consistently report in school climate surveys that they “feel known” by at least one teacher.

The daily advisory programming provides school-wide learning opportunities on student well-being and safety, and private weekly grade checks with their Advisory teacher encourages students to stay on track with their academics.

Extra-curricular offerings at Herron High School include over 30 faculty-sponsored special interest clubs and a dozen athletic sports. All students are encouraged to participate in at least one extra-curricular. A club fair is held each year to allow students to highlight their clubs and attract new members. Many clubs engage in regional competitions.

Embedded in the Core Values is the idea that community engagement is an essential aspect of learning. Herron High School partners with local nonprofits and businesses to provide students with internships to explore their interests and provide a valuable service to their community.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Herron High School was created by parents to provide a new urban educational opportunity. From its founding in 2006, parent engagement has been an integral part of the school’s success. The network’s bylaws require that parents are included as members on the board of directors. At any given time, there are three or more parents of students or alumni serving on the board. Parents also serve as Committee volunteers. Parents serve in leadership roles for the school’s special events, as chaperones at student events and field trips, and as community liaisons for student recruitment. Parents also organize student celebrations such as student recognition breakfasts. Parents serve as coaches and assistant coaches for athletic events.

Multiple parent information nights are conducted each year. Parent College Information nights are held for each grade-level to help parents guide their student’s college planning process. Events such as Meet the Teacher Nights, Meet the Advisors, Meet the SPED Team Nights are held to forge relationships with students’ families. Periodic parent surveys are conducted to provide parents with a forum to express their

perspectives. Parent-driven booster clubs help support school-related activities. Parents engage in focus groups to help hold the school accountable to its mission. Parents also serve as liaisons for community partnerships.

Families are kept informed of news and events through the school's weekly newsletters and social media accounts. Herron High School also sends important alerts by text, phone, and email.

Parents are provided with a login to view their student's academic progress and attendance records. Parents also receive regular student progress reports by email. Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year, and teachers regularly reach out to parents with concerns or praise for student performance.

Herron High School's administrators are active in the community. They participate in leadership roles in community-wide educational organizations and initiatives, provide testimony on important matters in the State House, and build strong relationships with philanthropic foundations.

Herron High School also serves as a regular host to national and global educational groups who want to better understand Herron High School's achievements and how they might be applied in other school systems. The school also partners with local colleges and universities to host student teachers and educator observation groups.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

A robust program of professional development is a cornerstone of the school's ongoing success. Like the school's curriculum, professional development is created largely in-house by the school and network leadership teams and faculty. Topics are identified by a data-driven analysis of student achievement and school needs. Professional Development focuses on teacher support, school culture, and best practices in the classroom. Student performance data is reviewed regularly. It also serves as an avenue for building relationships and celebrating exemplary teaching by individual staff members. The program consists of over 200 hours of professional development each year, including a weekly 1 ½ hour session on Fridays. All professional development meetings begin with a sharing of the personal and professional achievements of staff.

In addition to the weekly meetings, staff participate in a full week of pre-school professional development and several full days of professional development during the school year, including a daylong Faculty Symposium in the spring. These more intensive professional development opportunities are collaborative efforts that focus on internalizing the Core Values, articulating the meaning and value of classical education, improving school-wide programs and procedures, and encouraging a spirit of team-building.

Faculty members are encouraged and provided with leadership opportunities both within their departments as well as the wider educational community. Teachers are also encouraged to share their passions through sponsorship of extra-curricular clubs, sports, and community activities.

Faculty and Department Chairs work closely within their departments through collaborative meetings, student data analyses, lesson plan critiques, and peer observations. The leadership team also supports teachers through a series of formal and informal observations followed by formative feedback. Additionally, the Head of School hosts weekly Office Hours where he is accessible to provide guidance, address concerns, and offer support to faculty.

### **4. School Leadership:**

Herron High School's senior leadership team consists of network administrators and school-level leaders. This includes the President, a Vice President, Academics, a Vice President, Operations, a Vice President, CFO, as well as the Heads of School at both of the network's campuses.

Herron High School also has a dedicated Director of Academic Accountability whose responsibilities are to analyze student data to provide periodic reports to senior leadership regarding students' individual progress

as well as the school's accountability. The DAA works closely with Department Chairs and individual faculty members to assess student-level data and to develop strategies to improve student performance.

The senior leadership team and school counselors review weekly data reports on individual student achievement levels to ensure that no student "slips through the cracks" at Herron High School.

The network President reports to the Board of Directors and to the network's Charter Authorizer, and provides data on the success and challenges of both campuses. Network-level Department Chairs, the Director of Special Education, the Director of Counseling, and the Heads of School report to the Vice President, Academics.

Herron High School's Head of School has a leadership team consisting of Assistant Heads of School, School Counselors, and a Director of Enrollment. The Head of School also oversees teachers. The Assistant Heads of School oversee student life and discipline issues.

The network's Core Values statement serves as the foundation for all decision-making and serves as its guiding philosophy. All staff members with a leadership role work collaboratively to address challenges, set policies, and ensure overall accountability to students and all stakeholders.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

---

As the school's philosophical foundation, the network's Core Values statement could be considered the one overarching practice that has led to the school's success. The Core Values central ideas state that:

HERRON HIGH SCHOOL:

BELIEVES THAT EVERY STUDENT IS A SCHOLAR

ENGAGES IN AN URBAN COMMUNITY

ADVANCES TIMELESS IDEAS AND CONTENT

BUILDS A CULTURE OF RESPECT AND TRUST THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE AND IDEAS

SERVES AS A CATALYST FOR RENEWAL

Herron High School's leadership and staff understand that students must trust their teachers before they are prepared to learn from them. Central to the Core Values is a shared belief that all students are capable of reflective dialogue, critical reasoning, and engaging in meaningful interactions that promote a lifetime of learning. Adherence to the tenant embedded in the Core Values creates an atmosphere of respect and trust between students and teachers, and between teachers, administrators, and parents. This trust fosters a spirit of high expectations where all students can achieve their personal best.

Herron High School graduates are expected to be able to write analytically, think critically, and speak articulately. They are expected to be able to work collaboratively but act independently. They are expected to possess the ability to persevere and solve problems creatively. These expectations are rooted in the combined effect of Herron High School's unique blending of Classical understanding and purpose, Liberal Arts interconnectedness, and college-preparedness.

The Core Values helps maintain a school culture where students feel valued, diversity is celebrated, differences are cherished, and all are welcome. Students are viewed as meaningful contributors to the educational process, not products to be processed.

The Core Values embraces the value of community engagement and civic responsibility. Students, as beneficiaries of high expectations, a classical, liberal-arts curriculum, and caring relationships, will mature into informed citizens who are prepared to contribute to their community and succeed in their endeavors.

Finally, the Core Values statement provides continuity. Serving as the launching point to measure success, and the lens through which any future changes will be examined and considered, Core Values keep the school community centered firmly in the mission regardless of inevitable changes in leadership. Like the school's simple but comprehensive Universal Behavior Policies and Academic Habits, the Core Values provides a framework for continuity of expectations and academic achievement on the cultural level.