

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 7001 South Highway 94  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City St. Charles State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 63304-2217

County St. Charles

Telephone (636) 851-4700 Fax (636) 851-4116

Web site/URL http://fhdsfhhs.sharpschool.net/ E-mail dave.wedlock@fhdschools.org

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Nathan Hoven E-mail nathan.hoven@fhdschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Francis Howell R-III Tel. (636) 851-4000

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mrs. Mary Lange  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 4 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 19 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	201	223	424
10	262	253	515
11	231	204	435
12 or higher	213	201	414
<b>Total Students</b>	907	881	1788

\*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
  - 3.8 % Asian
  - 5.6 % Black or African American
  - 2.6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 85.5 % White
  - 2.3 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 4%

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	19
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	56
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	75
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	1834
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

ELL learners are Arabic and Latvian with 30 languages represented as the home primary language. These include Afrikaans, Old English, Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Czech, Chinese, Danish, English, Faroese, Gujarati, Hindi, Igbo, Japanese, Komi, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malayalam, Mandingo, Panjabi, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Tamil, Telugu, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese.

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %

Total number students who qualify: 154

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

162 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>22</u> Autism                 | <u>4</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>63</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>37</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>18</u> Emotional Disturbance  | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>5</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: 8

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	7
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	82
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	11

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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	92%	92%	91%	91%	90%
High school graduation rate	97%	99%	98%	98%	97%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	448
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	58%
Enrolled in a community college	24%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	3%
Found employment	13%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

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

Yes  No

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

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

FHHS is committed to working in partnership with the community to provide quality learning environments that promote continuous improvement in student achievement, attachment, and awareness.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Francis Howell High School has grown, expanded, and thrived since its founding in 1915. With its genesis in the Francis Howell family's immigration to the rolling, rural, farming communities 30 miles west of St. Louis in 1800, the family assisted in the formation of 12 one room schools beginning in 1821, seven weeks after Missouri attained statehood. Their efforts culminated in the opening of the Howell Public School District and two year high school known as Francis Howell Institute in 1881. By 1915, consolidation with four schools created the new, four year Francis Howell High School. The small initial enrollment grew to 25 students in the Class of 1932, and today, 1,788 students attend in grades 9-12. With 30 of the world's languages spoken in student homes, the school rests in a rural community between the 8,398 acre Weldon Spring Conservation Area and the 6987 acre August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area in St. Charles County.

The 100 year long history of achievement in the Francis Howell community precipitates industriousness and innovation. Francis Howell High School received ACT's 2008 Red Quill Award for application of student data in improving student and staff performance; the Advanced Placement Honor Roll 2011-2019 for simultaneously increasing access to AP for underrepresented students while also increasing the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher; and in 2017, Francis Howell High School received National Model Professional Learning Communities School recognition from Missouri's Department of Education.

The core catalyst for the growth in schoolwide achievement stems from the learning community climate and culture established over the last 15 years at Francis Howell High School. With all faculty participating in small teams of 3-6 teachers that meet regularly, the consistent emphasis on constructing a shared purpose around the mission of the school; collaborating for the success of all students; seeking researched instructional practices to inform the work of the faculty; committing to continuous improvement; and measuring outcomes with tangible results empower teams to create high quality instructional experiences and forge improvements within the school. The consequence of this schoolwide process first appeared in Francis Howell High School's inclusion in Missouri's top 10 most improved schools in 2004 and 2005 and has spurred continued growth on state assessments since that time.

To build on the positive school climate and increase the time dedicated to learning for all students, the 9th grade Edge mentoring program intentionally provides opportunities to create positive rapport among students and teachers from a variety of backgrounds and instill an encouraging, supportive, and reassuring feeling of social emotional support within the school. Beginning with a full day of relationship building activities among incoming 9th grade students and their mentors prior to the beginning of the school year, the program continues through the fall semester with specific activities around academic skills such as study habits, exam preparation, and seeking academic support as well as social behaviors such as bullying and drug and alcohol use.

After a reexamination of the school's mission and vision to create opportunities for high levels of learning for all students in 2018, the learning community's focus shifted schoolwide attention to dignity and inclusion. More specifically, staff values transformed to prioritize the belief in the good intentions of others; fostering inclusive learning environments; accepting and providing meaningful feedback; and modeling ways of promoting physical and psychological safety. These values, in conjunction with other social emotional learning (SEL), prompted monthly, schoolwide concentrations on community building and fostering the sense of belonging in all students and staff. In addition, these community values signify principles upon which positive school climate can be built into the future.

Francis Howell's Response to Intervention (RTI) program identifies and adapts to the needs of all students through two primary programs. The first is the 9th grade reading program in which the results of a reading assessment for all incoming 9th grade students place students in a personalized reading supports. As students receive intervention, frequent measures of improvement create adjustments in levels of support and programming. The second program is the behavior support teams in which all students in the school are screened 8 times per year for academic, attendance, and behavior success. Collaborative teams of teachers,

counselors, and administrators analyze the results of the screenings and deliver specific, tiered, interventions based on the level and nature of each student's need.

In seeking to better prepare students in special education for transition to the competitive workforce after high school, a new transition classroom developed over the last four years. This classroom implements simulated work environments focused on job readiness skills for 196 jobs. The progressive nature of these jobs enables students and teachers to track accuracy and efficiency of job task completion as students transition among the variety of available activities. The embedded knowledge and skills align with individual needs of students as well as those of local employers and job site facilities.

Throughout its more than 100 year history, Francis Howell High School has adapted to the ever changing needs of the rural community it serves while always maintaining attention to the mission of fostering the success of every student.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Francis Howell High School’s approach to core curriculum, instruction, and assessment originates from the school’s mission, vision, values, and goals to prepare students today for success tomorrow. In seeking to achieve this mission, Francis Howell embraces continual improvement in academic achievement, as measured by local assessment and the Missouri School Improvement Plan’s Annual Performance Report, through a research based curriculum writing process and professional learning teams. The curriculum development process begins with a critical current reality phase that conducts a review of existing state and national standards to identify trends or shifts in emphasis; identifies four to six priority standards in vertical alignment with courses above and below; organizes the priority standards into a pacing guide; and establishes goals that delineate what students will know and be able to do at the end of the course. These goals also align with common formative and summative assessments in each course. As a result of this process, current curriculum contains the following concentrations: reading, writing, speaking, and listening with additional standards in the use of technology in English; conceptual and procedural fluency in math; citizenship through historical thinking in social studies; and recursive practices, connections among disciplines, and core concepts with broad application in science.

Teacher led learning community teams serve as the principle authority for transforming the written curriculum into student learning. All faculty participate in small teams of 3-6 teachers that meet frequently around a core course within their departments to assess the most important material to be mastered in the course, develop a series of 3 common assessments aligned with the curriculum per semester to measure learning in those areas, and enact intervention strategies to improve learning in specific standards of deficit. With specific, measurable goals for student performance each semester and analysis of performance by standard, sub-group, and individual achievement, teacher teams reflect on performance, celebrate success, and identify precise areas for improvement.

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

Francis Howell High School’s rigorous English Language Arts program spirals a clear focus on reading, writing, speaking, and listening through a four year sequence beginning in English I and continuing through a series of course electives, including Advanced Placement Language and Advanced Placement Literature, in the third and fourth years of study. In each of these courses, specific standards describe knowledge, skills, and vocabulary necessary for reading literature and informational texts; writing in descriptive, expository, narrative, persuasive, and argumentative modes; and speaking and listening in a variety of individual, collaborative, and performance contexts. In the first year course, all students participate in a nationally normed reading assessment to inform tier 1 instruction, place students in a specific tier 2 reading intervention, and identify students in need of further evaluation.

The department curricula unify the approach to instruction by identifying the course essential understandings and standards which align to Missouri standards; this is followed with a series of aligned performance tasks and sample learning activities. Drawing from an intentional focus on increasing the level of critical thinking required to achieve success and relating the assessments to circumstances familiar to students, this design closes the potential gap between the taught and assessed curriculum while providing teachers freedom to approach the standards in a variety of ways. Each course also provides a suggested pacing guide, sample learning activities, and resources to support the student success on the performance tasks and summative assessments for each unit.

In addition, the department curricula include a progressive focus on improving students’ technological skills. In the first year course, this includes the expectation that students are able to accept an active role in selecting specific technologies, demonstrating competency in learning goals through the use of technology, and implementing technological tools in efforts to revise and improve processes and products. In the second

year, these skills continue to provide a platform for student proficiency while increasing technological skills such as demonstrating the ability to insightfully select a series of sources to develop, construct, and present original contributions.

Each teacher in the department teaches at least one of the core department classes and participates in the teacher learning community team for the core course. During frequent team time, teachers discuss curriculum and alignment; determine essential course outcomes; create specific, measurable goals for student performance on assessment; collaborate on instructional practices and lessons; create formative assessments, and plan for student interventions and enrichment. As an example, all core classes give at least two formatives a semester and use this data to examine how students are performing; this process leads to analysis of the data by student subgroups such as free/reduced lunch, ethnicity, and special education. From this data, teacher teams determine what standards need to be addressed and how to organize remediation or intervention. The teams' inquiries into best instructional practices inform this process through professional development on creating positive and participatory learning environments with features such as communicating clear, relevant, daily learning objectives; providing feedback that identifies what students did well, what should be corrected, and what the next steps will be; emphasizing effort to achieve success; and engaging students in cooperative activities.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Francis Howell High School's math program consistently offers experiences designed to illuminate mathematical proficiency and logical reasoning skills in all students. With the primary goals to foster effective problem solving skills and apply mathematical knowledge and reasoning in a variety of contexts, students have opportunities to complete an assortment of courses in algebra, geometry, statistics, and calculus. Each of these courses is available at varying degrees of scope, including traditional, special education supported, and accelerated to meet the needs of the individual learner; at the beginning level, an additional math specific study skills course provides support in attaining mastery of the most fundamental concepts. At the upper level, Advanced Placement Calculus and Statistics, as well as Pre-Calculus and Algebra 3, open the possibility of college level mathematics credit while in high school. Among these courses, the vertically aligned curriculum sequentially builds student understanding and mastery at the high school level while preparing them for post-secondary success.

Mathematical fluency, both conceptual and procedural, is a core feature of all Francis Howell math classes. From Algebra 1 to AP Calculus, curriculum and instruction consistently encourage progress in student fluency through the use of hands on activities, technology-based explorations, spiral review, and other meaningful instruction designed to engage their critical thinking skills. In Algebra 1, as an example, the course delivers the majority of the curriculum through problem-based learning and hands on activities with the goal of leading students to a greater conceptual understanding of mathematical content. There are consistent expectations that students apply their knowledge to both familiar and new contexts to cement understanding of current topics and extend mastery to unfamiliar scenarios. By having students attack these problems in cooperative group settings, students also learn and practice effective communication strategies and skills with peers. This includes learning to form arguments, facilitating varying roles within the group, and sharing ideas in both small and large group settings within the classroom. These critical skills engender learning at the Algebra I level and prepare students for the learning processes required for mastery of more complex content in the upper level courses that follow. This method of instruction is meant to teach, practice, and refine essential habits of learning in the first class in high school.

To ensure these habits grow and develop, formative and summative assessments guide both individual teacher and teacher learning teams' adjustments to instruction and intervention. In individual classrooms, mathematical standards are taught in activities that provide for opportunities to demonstrate knowledge followed by thoughtful and frequent feedback to students. This is accomplished through exit slips, quick polls, and multiple electronic means such as online calculators, programs, and other informal assessment tools. In teacher learning community teams, common formative and summative assessments measure student understanding, progress, and needs for future instruction. By giving common quarterly formative assessments within our core mathematical subject areas, teachers are able to analyze data related to specific essential course standards. Data from these assessments allow teachers to discuss teaching strategies, ideas,

and implementation techniques with the common goal of achieving student mastery. These assessments specifically serve as checkpoints for educators and students, allowing them to see how their understanding is progressing. These local assessments work in tandem with data from Missouri's End of Course Exams in Algebra I and Algebra II and Advanced Placement Calculus and Statistics to measure student learning, retention, and opportunities for expansion. These ongoing and recurrent assessment and feedback processes serve a significant role in student progress.

#### **1d. Science**

Francis Howell High School's science program builds on student interest and preparation from the first year course and offers a variety of class options with the unifying principles of engendering recursive, inquiry based practices; developing connections among disciplines; and identifying core concepts with board application across scientific fields. For example, students often begin their high school science careers in a physical science course or an upper level biology course. Each of these courses, among others in the department, is available at varying degrees of scope, including traditional, special education supported, and accelerated, to meet the needs of the individual learner, and at the beginning level, an additional science specific course provides support in attaining mastery of the most fundamental concepts. After these courses, students may enroll in a variety of courses that include environment science, earth science, genetics, or traditional, honors, or Advanced Placement Chemistry or Physics. Beyond the specific content within each of these courses, the primary learning goals delineate how students implement elements of scientific inquiry to resolve challenges, describe connections among current and previous learning in science; and are able to express the critical ideas in the content that illuminate principles across scientific disciplines.

In addition to these courses, Francis Howell offers a four year sequence of classes in the biomedical field. These courses advance from a first year course centered on determining why a fictitious person introduced on the first day of class has passed away through assimilation of all the scientific knowledge required to form an accurate determination to a fourth year course in which students determine, design, and present original solutions to address the most vital needs in the healthcare field.

Each course curriculum is composed by a teacher team of writers under the direction of the district; this includes specific essential understandings and standards align to the core principles; a suggested course map to pace the delivery of information; learning activities; resources; and common performance tasks and summative assessments. As in the other core departments, all science teachers teach a core class, participate in a teacher learning community team to implement assessments, analyze data, and create adjustments in instruction and intervention based on the standards based data.

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

Francis Howell High School's social studies department infuses critical thinking and knowledge acquisition through the following primary goal: students independently use their learning to develop the ability to make informed decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Prioritizing the historical thinking process in classroom instruction forges student growth and development toward this goal. This includes the abilities to read primary and secondary sources; think chronologically through sequences of events; comprehend the causes and implications of those events; analyze and interpret events and their connections to other information; and compose coherent, logical, convincing arguments which accurately elucidate the author's perspective.

The knowledge and skills embedded in historical thinking spiral upward from the first year course in United States History and continue through the second year in World History and third year in United States Government. Each of these courses is offered at traditional, special education supported, and accelerated levels and three courses completes Missouri graduation requirements, students also have the option to enroll in six Advanced Placement classes that include World History, Psychology, Human Geography, United States Government, European History and United States History as well as elective choices in contemporary issue, sociology, psychology, and modern American culture. The majority of the school's nearly 700 AP

exams at 73% 3 or better annual performance may be found in social studies.

The primary instructional vehicle for mastering connect is document based questions (DBQ). These activities provide primary and secondary source material teachers may connect with essential understanding within each course; embed instruction on requisite reading and writing skills; and draw series of formative assessments aligned to Missouri Learning Standards and district curriculum to measure student understanding. Each course's performance tasks and sample learning activities also are inspired by the Document based question format to deepen student critical thinking skills and ensure clear connections to actual historical events and perspectives.

The department organizes teacher learning community teams around the three required courses for graduation as each teacher teaches at least one of these courses. Teachers develop, implement, and analyze standards based data from six common assessments throughout the year. This assessment data forms the basis for adjustments in instruction and intervention as professional development in researched instructional practices guides the selection of strategies in the classroom.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

Francis Howell establishes a clear goal to support students' post-secondary plans. Students are introduced to a wide range of college and career options through the counseling office's curriculum and planning, delineation of capstone course work, and opportunities to explore college and career options during the school day.

The counseling staff meets annually with each student to revise the individual, four-year, college and career plan. To emphasize and support this effort, counselors plan and present a week-long, college and career curriculum-based learning experience to all junior level students. This event culminates in a college fair with more than 100 universities, community colleges, trade schools, and military recruiters from across the nation during the school day. The sophomore class also participates in a week-long exploration of career information during the school day. In conjunction with these activities, the counseling office offers several evening events for families such as the Construction Expo, Trades Fair, Military Week, College Admission Process, Financial Aid 101, FAFSA Frenzy, Myths about Public vs Private Colleges, and Elite College Admission. Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in other area college fairs.

As students select courses through their four years of high school, counselors guide students to reach the capstone courses in the areas they are most interested in pursuing after high school. Departments offer capstone courses that allow students to earn college credit through advanced courses and Advanced Placement and/or achieve Industry Recognized Credentials (IRC) that certify mastery. All students are encouraged to participate in job shadowing, and counselors sponsor a series of guidance groups specifically focused on 1st generation college students as well as students from underrepresented groups.

Students have the opportunity to extend their learning at several off site programs as well. Approximately 90 students take advantage of the Early College Program and earn both college and high school credit by attending classes at a local community college. Sixty students participate in the Lewis and Clark Tech School or the Center for Advanced Professional Studies during the school day to develop a deeper understanding of the career pathway they are exploring.

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Francis Howell offers a wide variety of courses in which students explore areas of interest in fine and performing arts, physical education, foreign languages, and technology. Course sequences are designed to enable students to access their passion and interests during all four years of high school.

The visual arts program serves approximately 700 students each year at all grade levels. All students choosing art start with a full year Introduction to Art course that introduces them to many styles, functions,

and modes offered in future courses. Students explore all areas of art including 2D, 3D, and digital graphic design in elective course work. Advanced Placement Studio 1 and 2 and Art History serve as the three capstone classes. Throughout the courses in art, variety of artists and approaches to art develop student background knowledge as students learn to use sketches to plan and explore different artistic techniques and media. After students complete projects, written artist statements communicate the purpose and intention within their art pieces. The visual art program actively seeks public audiences for the student work by participating in 2-3 local art shows a year and producing one large scale project in the school each year.

The performing arts program includes band, choir, and theater in which students may engage in courses throughout four years of high school. Each program hosts 2 or 3 formal shows yearly and several extracurricular opportunities including marching band, winter drum line, winter guard, one act plays, and musicals. Each program participates in state and national competitions. These curricula are designed to gradually release control to the students. As students progress through the program, they gain independence and have the opportunity to direct and lead performances or portions of the performances.

Francis Howell offers five sequential, yearlong courses in each of the following three languages: German, French, and Spanish. Students often begin their study in middle school and may complete their study in the Advanced Placement (AP) course senior year. Students also may earn college credit in all language classes beginning in the third year of study. Additionally, students receive the opportunity to earn the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy. The seal offers recognition of proficiency in a language as measured by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' assessment.

The physical education department offers extensive courses to all grade levels and annually enroll nearly 1000 seats in the department. The course offerings start with Health and Personal Lifetime Fitness. These courses provide students with an understanding of proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices and an in-depth understanding of the exercise sciences. This understanding is embedded into student goals and projects which are tracked throughout the courses and seek to improve student overall fitness. Following freshman year, students enhance their understanding and skill by selecting from a series of seven courses ranging from specific sport focused enhancement activities to in-depth understandings of health and wellness. Students are also offered the option to take courses in outdoor education and classes more focused on maintaining a healthy lifestyle into adulthood.

Within technology, Francis Howell offers nineteen different courses aligned to three career pathways offering college credit. Computer science, engineering and biomedical sciences courses develop students' understanding of the information within the STEM courses designed to enhance their collaborative skills. Students develop solutions to problems as they engage in the content. There are opportunities to earn college credit and a high percentage of students achieve this goal. Two of the programs have capstone courses that ask students to research and design solutions to real world problems. Students present their ideas to an expert panel and are given feedback and an assessment of their products. With an annual enrollment of more than 400, learning in these courses is also supported by a co-curricular club as students further develop their skills in the areas of presentation, collaboration, teamwork, and leadership. Students have the opportunity to participate in curriculum-based competitions and advance through local, state, and national level events.

To enhance technological literacy, Francis Howell offers 8 courses with a clear focus on the development and enhancement of the skills needed to navigate and utilize technology. These courses prepare students to use all the Microsoft applications, web page design, publishing software, and multimedia development products. Students in the multimedia and publishing classes are able to obtain Industry Recognized Certifications (IRC). Each semester more than 200 students complete one or more of these courses.

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

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

Francis Howell High School values the learning and achievement of every student. This is evident through the implementation of researched-based instructional strategies, individualized student interventions, and high quality assessments used to monitor student learning.

Ten years ago, Francis Howell High School created a new English course for students reading below grade level, pioneering this initiative at the high school level. Students are administered a nationally-normed reading assessment at the end of their 8th grade year, and students reading below grade level are identified and placed in the RTI (Response to Intervention) program. These identified students are placed in a regular freshman English course with a teacher trained on incorporating reading strategies within the existing curriculum focused on making reading gains throughout the year. Students are progress monitored bi-weekly through formative assessments, and students track their own achievement, motivating them for success.

Francis Howell High School addresses students performing below grade level in core classes with the Success program. Students enrolled in core classes such as Physical Science, Algebra I, and English I are identified as needing intervention based on past performance, assessments, and teacher recommendation. These students take the regular course with their peers as well as a Success course with the same teacher. Teachers focus on researched-based instructional practices to teach concepts prior to students learning in the regular course and adapt instruction based on individual student needs.

Howell Time is Francis Howell High School's homeroom time which provides opportunities for students to receive tutoring and one-on-one instructional time with their teachers. During this forty-five minute weekly block of time, students may choose to visit a teacher to receive extra help or a teacher may assign a struggling student to their room for intervention. Also, there is a math tutor on staff three days a week available during this time, the school day, and before and after school.

Beyond these programs, the counseling staff and the administrative staff meets with students struggling academically eight times a year (after each grading cycle). The team works with the student, teachers, and parents to create strategies to ensure the academic success of the student.

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

Through the school improvement process, the learning community team at Francis Howell set a goal to see every student complete an Advanced Placement (AP) course by the end of their high school career. The Associate Principal uses assessment data and a grit survey to identify students who have not completed an upper-level course, but have the potential and grit to be successful. The administrative and counseling teams work with these identified students and families to gain an understanding of the expectations of an AP course through an AP family night with teachers and guidance counselors. Four years ago, a new course was created to support these identified students and their success, AP Foundations. This course focuses on skills, test-taking strategies, and emotional support for students enrolled in their first AP course. Also, identified students are given the opportunity to participate in an AP camp over the summer with the AP Foundations teacher, the Associate Principal, and the Educational Support Counselor to prepare them for the course prior to the start of the school year. These programs have pushed students to challenge themselves in rigorous courses with the support needed to be academically successful.

Assessments are used to identify students for Francis Howell High School's gifted program, Spectra. In an effort to continue to improve the program and challenge these students, Francis Howell High School implemented a new course, AP Seminar, for these students. This course aligns with the curriculum but also provides students with the opportunity to receive college credit.

For other students performing above grade level, Francis Howell High School provides a variety of AP, Honors, and challenging courses in each department to prepare students for transition post-high school.

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

Francis Howell High School continues to work diligently to close the achievement gap with the special education population. One tool that has led to this success is the implementation of curriculum based measurements (CBM) in core classes. These weekly assessments progress monitor the essential skills special education students need to be successful in the areas of math, reading, and writing. Teachers use

flexible grouping, differentiation, and remediation lessons determined by the CBM data to close the achievement gap.

Francis Howell High School is innovative in the programming of the special education department; these intentional choices provide special education students the opportunity to perform at the same level as their peers. In an effort to encourage special education students to attend college and technical schools, Francis Howell High School partners with Saint Charles Community College to offer a dual enrollment course, College 101. This course's curriculum aligns with a college level course, and the purpose is to provide students with the tools and skills to be successful in their first year of college. Along with this course, for the 19-20 school year the special education department introduced a Transition course. This course allows students to explore all areas of their transition plan of their individualized education plan (IEP). The teacher directly supports this effort through exploration of college and careers, soft skills lessons, student-led IEPs and field trips connected to transition. These courses provide special education students the skills and opportunities needed to compete post-high school with their peers.

For the 19-20 school year, Francis Howell High School introduced a Studies course which serves approximately sixty-five special education students. This course's curriculum is focused on instruction in executive functioning skills and monitoring grades and assessments in other courses. Also, this school year FHHS implemented a sanctuary room for students with emotional disturbance paired with our social skills classes and teacher. This program has given special education students who struggle emotionally a system of supports and instruction on regulation strategies to ensure their success in their other classes. This intentional special education programming levels the academic playing field for special education students and directly impacts closing the achievement gap.

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

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

Francis Howell High School continues to be diligent in examining the data of our underrepresented populations and searching for solutions in closing the achievement gap with this group. Two years ago, the Multicultural Achievement Committee (MAC Scholars) began with the goal of improving the academic achievement of African Americans and other students from historically underrepresented groups. This organization provides students with opportunities such as tutoring, job shadowing, mentoring, coaching, and enrichment activities. The program's goal is to ensure college and career readiness for each and every student. MAC Scholars provides these students with a support system to aid in their academic success.

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

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

Francis Howell processes for engaging students begin in the classrooms with a schoolwide instructional approach that involves consistent student cognitive engagement, rich curricular experiences, and frequent formative assessment with accompanying feedback. Cognitive engagement appears with strategies like implementing advanced organizers, communicating authentic examples, and relating content to students' lives before deepening thinking through response activities such as mixed pair share and cooperative learning. These engagement strategies complement curricular experiences by providing students multiple opportunities to learn a concept, view it from multiple perspectives, and communicate connections among current, previous, and future learning standards. Student input and feedback provides teachers with frequent opportunities to monitor student learning through formative assessment and feedback. On-the-spot assessments may be seamlessly integrated into instruction to ensure accurate understanding and continued growth for all students.

Francis Howell dedicates significant attention to the student social emotional development through a series of programs. Chief among these is the 9th grade transition program in which selected junior and senior mentors lead incoming students through a series of activities designed to familiarize students with the school, provide insight into choices that lead to success at the high school, and most importantly, develop positive rapport and friendship among the students. This begins with a full day of activities prior to the start of the school year to ensure new students already know friendly peers before school begins and are ready to begin the year building toward success. As part of this day, an activity fair invites all students to join a club, activity, or sport of interest and this effort supports the nearly 75% of all students who participate in at least one club, activity, or sport each year.

Student voice and choice serve as critical lighthouses in student climate and culture activities. Over the last 3 years, as students have become involved in small trainings related to restorative practices, dignity, and inclusion, and their voices led to the schoolwide expansion of related activities. This began with conversations with students, staff, and parents about these topics and their functions in our learning community; continued with a 100% faculty commitment to the principals of dignity in our mission, vision, values, and goals; led to training of more than 300 peer identified student leaders; and created the current schoolwide conversations intended to support feelings of community and teach the essential elements of a strong sense of belonging in the school environment. As part of this activity, all students had the opportunity to design and vote on their favorite symbols of the FHHS school family. The most frequently identified symbols then became designs posted on school walls and materials to signify unity and the significance of belonging. Ongoing schoolwide surveys, along with feedback from a variety of student groups, serve as assessments of school culture and climate programming; this data supplies the requisite clarity and insight to engender further student growth and engagement.

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

Francis Howell uses the R.I.S.E. core values to engage all students with common expectations. These values are deeply rooted in the communication and expectations for extracurricular activities. The R.I.S.E values in the activities area are Respect, Integrity, Sportsmanship and Excellence. The Viking Leadership Academy (VLA) meets monthly to develop students' leadership skills and improve the building climate. Additionally, VLA focuses on giving back to the community. All club and activities are expected to participate in community service. As a result, Francis Howell clubs and activities have raised over \$200,000 and provided over 15,000 hours of service to local, state and national organizations in the past six years. During this time over 75 organizations and causes have benefited from this outreach. The engagement with our community partners helps students develop a deeper connection to the world outside of FHHS and develops soft skills needed post high-school.

Several other leadership opportunities exist for students to work on the overall well being of the FHHS community. Central among these are parent clubs at each of the four grade levels which meet monthly to

discuss school progress, provide feedback, and plan events that involve parents and community in support of the school's activities and goals. In addition, Francis Howell has an active multicultural leadership team, and students participate in the Diversity Awareness Partnership (DAP) sponsored by and run through regional businesses. These programs provide training and leadership experiences for students around topics of multiculturalism and bias. The ultimate focus is to honor the dignity of all members of the FHHS community.

The school commitment to family engagement also involves a series of electronic communications. These include a daily email of school announcements, a monthly newsletter of academic achievements and updates, a weekly newsletter of activities related updates and achievements, and countless daily posts to social media accounts with updates, recognition, opportunities to participate. In total, more than 10,000 students, parents, and community members receive daily school communications.

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

The administrative team at Francis Howell High School works diligently to provide a positive climate and welcoming community for staff. These efforts are evident in the data from the staff climate survey given in both the fall and the spring in which nearly 90% of staff positively respond to questions about pride in the school, clear direction for learning, high expectations, open communication, shared decision making. For new faculty, each school year the Associate Principal and Dean of Students run monthly meetings for new faculty to help support them and acclimate them to the Francis Howell community. This provides a network of support for new teachers. Part of these meetings include discussing FHHS's core values, known as R.I.S.E. (respect, integrity, scholarship, empathy). Two years ago, the faculty participated in circle discussions to revise the staff values that would guide FHHS's mission and vision. Through this process, staff determined how these four core values would reflect in their interactions with each other, students, parents, and community. .

Francis Howell High School prides itself in its value and approach with professional learning. To build leadership capacity, eight years ago a staff Professional Development Committee was created. A staff member from each academic department serves on the committee as the voice for the department, as well as gathering feedback from their colleagues to aid in making the best decisions for the FHHS staff. The committee uses survey data and feedback from staff, students, and families to create and implement a professional learning plan that supports the academic achievement of all Francis Howell High School students.

In the last two years, staff professional development has focused on ensuring Francis Howell High School students have a sense of belonging to the Howell community. Through this work, it was important for not only students to have a sense of belonging, but also staff members. In order for staff to feel connected to the community, students and staff participated in community building circles with each other in discussions at faculty meetings, and they participated in dignity activities aimed at connecting and understanding others. This prospective sharing created empathy within each group as a greater understanding of the mission of the school, and its vision for success motivated students and faculty to work in collaboration toward our collective goals.

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

At Francis Howell High School, successful implementation and institutionalization of a continuously improving professional learning community depends upon the sharing and distribution of leadership among the staff. This requires the transformation of traditional principal and teacher roles to one in which all school leaders place learning and community at the center. With leadership organized into roles of teacher, teacher leader, department chair, dean of students, assistant principal and principal, fundamental elements of the leadership process include collaborating to resolve questions; sparking conversation on the current reality of student performance and the best instructional practices from previous years; and engaging discourse to decipher the most effective ideas and practices that forge progress toward team and school goals. Through these tenets, teachers seek personal and collective expertise to discover solutions to the challenges facing them as they each participate in a small learning community team of 3-6 teachers focused on a core course

within their department.

To develop teachers and principals in these shared leadership roles, Francis Howell provides clear priorities, identifies limiting factors, furnishes specific team time during the school day to complete the activities, and asks small learning community teams to develop, implement, monitor, and evaluate solutions to address the identified priorities. For example, teacher learning community teams follow an improvement cycle that asks them to develop answers to the following questions. 1) What are the most essential items students know and be able to do at the end of the course? 2) What common assessments will communicate if students have mastered this material? 3) What interventions will assist students who have not yet reached mastery at the time of the assessment? As the team answers these questions, they establish specific goals for student performance on the critical standards. This structure involves teams in the collaborative effort to create the instructional resources and products required to meet the needs of all students and increases the ability of each individual to lead students toward meeting the team's goals.

In supporting effective leadership development, Francis Howell also provides ongoing professional development for teacher leaders, department chairs, and administrators. For teacher leaders, this ongoing training includes specific information on the learning community products, such as lists of essential standards and common assessments, each team creates; how to manage meetings; how to create norms; and options for decision-making processes. For department chairs and administrators, professional reading, visits to effective schools, and classroom visits outline core activities to serve as catalysts for collaboration, decision-making, and improvement. These small and large learning community team processes mirror the schoolwide improvement process and development of the schoolwide improvement plan.

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

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Over the 100 year history of Francis Howell High School, many excellent programs and individuals have performed with distinction. As the school has established significant improvement in academic achievement over the last 15 years, the most crucial hallmark of this journey has been a collective, continuous inquiry into best practices. This commitment can be found in Francis Howell's adoption of three essential principles: the regular examination of student work to determine the effectiveness of instruction and consider development of new instructional techniques; the frequent and shared study of educational and/or relevant research; and participation in action research and reflective learning activities.

The regular examination of student work to determine the effectiveness of instruction and consider development of new instructional techniques occurs continuously in the small learning community teams as teams evaluate common assessment data and student products. This process spurs full faculty discussions of expectations, prompts, scoring guides, and teaching techniques while also providing time for thorough examination of topics such as how writing processes and standards function in subjects, such as math and science, that may appear to be focused only on numerical computation. In math, review of student work and expertise also has prompted an exploration of the instructional balance between procedural and conceptual knowledge.

The frequent and shared study of educational and/or relevant research evolves on an annual basis given the academic, social, and emotional progress of the Francis Howell students and staff. Over the last two years, the school anecdotal and quantitative data identified a need to deepen the understanding of dignity and inclusion, and full faculty participation in researched practices provided the knowledge and experiential basis for implementation of strategies in support of this need.

Closely tying participation in action research and reflective learning activities also serves as a significant leverage point for staff in the implementation of staff learning to meet school goals. As one example, teachers recently engaged in dignity related action research projects in which they selected an area of the recently agreed to staff values; developed a project in conjunction with a small team of colleagues; and implemented, monitored, evaluated the plan before sharing results with the staff. These projects focused on fostering inclusive environments; implementing feedback as a means of growth; building necessary life skills including citizenship and character; and modeling ways of validating others perspectives to create spaces where everyone belongs.

This celebration of learning and sharing of identified, researched, and implemented practices in a collective effort to meet the needs of students and staff symbolizes Francis Howell High School's long-term commitment to improvement and leading all learning community stakeholders to grasp their greatest promise.