

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 [X] Choice

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

Official School Name HCST County Prep High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 525 Montgomery Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Jersey City State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07302-3237

County Hudson County

Telephone (201) 631-6302 Fax (201) 432-3297

Web site/URL
<http://www.hcstonline.org/category/county-prep-high-school/> E-mail mcalabrese@hcstonline.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* Ms. Amy Lin-Rodriguez E-mail alinrodriguez@hcstonline.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Hudson County Schools of Technology Tel. (201) 662-6704

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. Craig Guy
(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)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 4 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. 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	77	181	258
10	85	150	235
11	83	163	246
12 or higher	81	141	222
Total Students	326	635	961

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 26 % Asian
 - 9 % Black or African American
 - 41 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 20 % White
 - 2 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	946
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57 %

Total number students who qualify: 545

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

109 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>14</u> Autism | <u>12</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>15</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>65</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 26

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	93
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	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 10:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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

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

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	221
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	85%
Enrolled in a community college	11%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	1%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

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

Yes No

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

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

The Hudson County Schools of Technology is a visionary community that inspires creative independent thinking through diverse learning opportunities.

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

At County Prep High School we look at a variety of factors including transcripts, test scores, grades, attendance, character development and teacher recommendation letters.

PART III - SUMMARY

The nurturing educational environment never ends at County Prep High School in Jersey City, New Jersey as it continues with additional programs, support services, and extracurricular activities for all our students and parents during after-school and evening hours. Our district provides access to LEAP classes whereby students can earn both high school and college credits in various academic areas not limited to English Composition, Intro to Psychology and advanced math classes. Students receive academic support through our tutoring program, homework club, and Bridge Program to help students succeed in high school and transition successfully upon graduation. These programs underscore the commitment of our teachers and the willingness of our students to support and strengthen the overall educational plan for all our students. Social and emotional topics are covered in the Social Skills Club and through Social Emotional Learning (SEL) experiences for staff and students.

Through the College Access program, our Guidance Counselors and Child Study team members work collaboratively to develop and deliver parental workshops at night to discuss topics relating to college procedures and credit requirements. Our wide-array of extracurricular activities and clubs are geared to the diversity of our exceptional student body and are reflective of the interests of 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

At County Prep High School, we focus first and foremost on instilling a love of learning within our students. When engaging young minds, who may not yet be familiar with devoting themselves entirely to a single career path, it is paramount to instill this mentality so that they maintain a growth mindset that will guide their future successes. One way we accomplish this is through inquiry-based instruction. While of course we cover the Common Core Standards in each subject area, we encourage our teachers to act as facilitators while students go through the cycle of inquiry based instruction:

Students & Teachers Uncover Real World Questions

Finding and Evaluating Resources

Interpreting Information

Reporting Findings

Following this framework of problem-based learning helps to create an environment where problem-solving skills are developed which will be an invaluable tool for students once they move on in their careers. This, paired with the philosophy of creating self-reflective learning practices, yields a student who values education and can apply what they have learned in the classroom to any number of fields. Furthermore, we encourage staff to create cross-curricular learning modules which solidifies and reinforces what they learn in one class in the corresponding classes. While this is resource intensive, the end result is absolutely worth it. Students yield a better understanding of course material and instructors work together which improves morale and camaraderie amongst the staff.

With respect to assessment we have a few things in place. Students are regularly assessed (both formative and summative) in their respective classes. Additionally, each academic instructor administers a comprehensive final at the end of the year. Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers administer their respective tests National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI, Licensure, etc). In terms of district wide assessments, we administer the LinkIT benchmark assessment to all ninth, tenth, and eleventh graders. This aids us in determining students in danger of performing below average.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Through exploring prose, poetry, and nonfiction, we take our language arts students through a journey of the human experience. While on this journey, our students develop the capability to express their thoughts, feelings, and aspirations in a structured and logical, yet creative and imaginative way. Balancing creativity within the framework of technical writing is how we develop our students' voices. This, perhaps, is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching language arts as one must be careful not to quiet student voices when teaching them to write within the parameters of good technical writing.

Through prose and poetry, our students learn to understand the complex, challenging, yet mysterious and wonderful world that surrounds them. They explore and analyze a whole range of fiction and non-fiction, from classics to modern pieces, in which they learn to develop a deeper understanding of the rich, complex realms of the literary world and what messages are left for future generations to uncover. All incoming freshmen start in World Literature (English I), where they sample a wide range of works from across the globe and throughout time. They progress during their sophomore year into American Literature I (English II) where they progress through the birth and development of America up to and including the beginning of the 19th century. As juniors, they progress through the American Literature II (English III) course where they focus on the 19th century and make their way into the 20th century. Senior year allows some flexibility.

Students on an advanced track will challenge themselves with Advanced Placement (AP) English Lit & Composition. There are also several electives including Philosophical Issues in Literature, Creative Writing, Multicultural Literature. However, a large percentage of seniors will progress through the British Literature (English IV) course.

Each course conducts a very similar inquiry (though using varying works and employing an increasing level of difficulty as they progress) which is the exploration of author's purpose. Throughout these courses, students draw insightful conclusions about the human condition and, thus, their relationship to the universal truths inherent in the human condition. Furthermore, each course explores elements of non-fiction where we frequently engage in discussions on relevant and current topics that plague our world and our lives. Here, students apply their command of the English language to assess problems and provide solutions through the art of rhetoric, logic, and argumentation. As well-read and articulate members of our community, these students will craft pieces of writing which are indicative of a high level of critical reading, critical thinking, and expository and persuasive writing.

1c. Mathematics

Mathematics is the cornerstone for science and engineering. As a vocational/technical school, County Prep High School has several majors which fall under the STEAM umbrella. As such, it is imperative that we employ a high degree of mathematical instruction to support our students in those majors. The mathematics program standard progression looks like this: freshmen take Algebra I, sophomores take Algebra II, juniors take Geometry, and seniors have the choice to take either Precalculus, Calculus, or Probability and Statistics. Students who wish to challenge themselves can take AP Calculus. The advanced track depends on whether or not incoming freshmen have completed an Algebra I course in 8th grade that is taught by a high school certified teacher. If that is the case, they must satisfy one other criteria to meet the requirements of the advanced track; that is to meet the requirements on the Algebra I New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA). If both of those criteria have been met, then incoming freshmen can take Algebra II freshmen year, Geometry sophomore year, and then electives for the next two years. While the state's requirements in mathematics may vary, County Prep High School requires all students to take four years or 20 credits of Mathematics.

Our math instructors follow the philosophy of inquiry and problem-based instruction when possible and feel that the best way to support our students, particularly in mathematics, is to get them to see the practical application of the material. There is a lot of data to support this ideal. Generally speaking, classes are lecture based. Of course, this does not describe what truly goes on in the classroom. More often than not, a "back-and-forth" conversation is happening where the instructor is presenting information but at the same time using the Socratic method of questioning to help facilitate the student discovery of the "big idea." Many of our teachers use technology to aid in their presentations every day. Smart boards, tablets, and specialized software (Geometer's sketchpad, Derive, and a TI-83 emulator) are all utilized. This is particularly helpful in mathematics where employing different learning styles helps students not fall behind as they progress through the mathematics curriculum. Unlike our Language Arts curriculum which is thematic, the math curriculum is more progressive where each unit must be mastered before moving on.

Mathematics is always an area where we seek to improve our students' abilities. We truly believe that the best way to achieve this is through our philosophy of differentiation, socratic questioning, and making material approachable and applicable. In an effort to do this, our school also has a Mathematics Honors Society. This club is available to our students who perform above average and involves community service opportunities as well. At County Prep High School, we pride ourselves in creating well rounded global citizens and the various community service based clubs (like the honors society) is one way we achieve this. Students progress is also tracked and supported with a computer-based assessment program which will be address later in this application.

1d. Science

There are two main science pathways for students to pursue. All students (regardless of their major selection) start out with Biology during freshman year and chemistry during sophomore year. However, the

pathways diverge greatly after that. The school requires three years (or fifteen credits) of science courses. We encourage all juniors to take physics if they possess a strong scientific foundation. For students who may struggle mathematically there are several options including: environmental science, aquaculture, hydroponics, botany, and zoology. For students who wish to challenge themselves and are interested in pursuing a career in medicine or healthcare, we strongly recommend AP Biology and AP Chemistry. This is an area where many students are interested in pursuing an accelerated track so we made these AP classes available after school in order to accommodate students who wish to pursue the vast catalogue of science classes available at County Prep High School. In terms of students who choose science majors, there are really two options: Medical Science and General Science. The Medical Science major is perhaps the most demanding major we offer. Students are able to obtain college credits as well as prepare to become emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or other certifications within the healthcare field. Some of the electives available to them are: Emergency Medical Tech, Healthcare, Pharmacology, Food Science/Bromatology, and Anatomy and Physiology. General science majors pursue the ideas, research, and problem solving tackled by scientists in various fields. Their electives include: Aquaculture, Astronomy, Botany, Zoology, and Hydroponics. We are currently in the process of revamping our Hydroponics lab.

There is a plethora of courses and opportunities to appease the scientifically curious minds of our students and prepare them for the rigor they will encounter should they pursue a science major in college.

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

The County Prep High School social studies department works closely together as they lesson plan. The progression of the social studies curriculum is as follows: Freshmen start out in World History (regardless of what history class they took in 8th grade) then progress to U.S. History I during sophomore year, then U.S. History II during junior year. Seniors have a few elective options to take including: History Through Film, The History of Rock & Roll, Women's History, and Law. For our most rigorous students who wish to challenge themselves there are two Advanced Placement classes available: AP Human Geography and AP U.S. History. The history curriculum strives to connect our students to the rich history of the world as well as the birth, development, and progress of the United States of America. Teachers and students progress through the four cornerstones of the humanities: Through inquiry-based instruction and qualitative research, our instructors seek to achieve the following objectives: to grow civic-minded citizens (civic ideals and practices are main themes in social studies content), creating cultural competence, generating geography and globe knowledge, and understanding economics, production, and consumption.

Furthermore, there are eight common themes that are embedded in each of the courses (no matter what level): conflicts and change throughout society, culture (art, religion, government, language, dress, traditions, and food), governance, human environmental interaction, movement and migration, and production, distribution, and consumption of goods. Instructors strive to pursue this while being cognizant of differing opinions and beliefs. We have also encouraged cross-curricular learning (especially between language arts, history, and science). This movement has helped improve student performance on the NJSLA research simulation tasks.

1f. For secondary schools:

One of the things that sets County Prep High School apart from other high schools in the area is our dedication to college and career readiness. First and foremost, we are a vocational/technical school. Each of our students selects a major to pursue during their four years of high school. Each major is taught by instructors who have real world experience in those fields. Students explore state-of-the-art equipment and technology related to their field, and receive a certificate upon completion of the major. This will position many students to enter into those fields should they decide to forego college and pursue work immediately. However, the vast majority of our students do pursue a four-year college degree. Some programs, such as cosmetology or computer networking, provide the opportunity to obtain licensure or additional certificates which would give them a head start in the related career field.

At County Prep High School we have a dedicated School to Careers team who seeks out partnerships with local businesses who provide apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs. This is a way to get our

students involved in various trades while also supporting our local community. This is certainly a win-win for all parties involved. Internships, job shadowing, and other field experience opportunities grant levels of career enrichment that can help students narrow down a specific career path to follow. As previously stated, many of our students do end up pursuing a college degree and many of them move on to achieve advanced degrees. We provide free PSAT testing to all freshmen, sophomores, and juniors as well as offer SAT and ACT test preparation classes to support our students in their pursuit of college admissions and scholarships.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Arts:

While the state only requires one class or five credits in Visual and Performing Arts, there are quite a few options available for creative students who wish to pursue a career in the arts. We have a Studio Art major where students will receive instruction on a number of elements of artistic expression and technical ability. For gifted arts high school students, the district offers advanced training through the Jersey City Arts High School Program. The Jersey City Arts High School Program is a conservatory model for students advanced in the visual and performing arts. The program facilitates the development of artistic excellence by surpassing the norm and attaining college acceptances and merit scholarships. This four-year program is open to all highly talented college bound arts students residing in Jersey City and attending a Jersey City Public Schools District High School or HCST County Prep.

All Jersey City (JC) arts, and Visual Arts, candidates must meet rigorous standards evident in portfolio review and audition processes. Once accepted, JC Arts students participate in a sequential student learning standards based arts curricula, incorporating the four major strands of a comprehensive arts education: aesthetics, arts criticism, creation/ performance, and historical / social/ cultural contexts.

We also offer in-house majors in Music, Theatre, Dance, Photography, Video Production, and Graphic Design.

Physical Education/Wellness:

County Prep Students are required to take four years (or 20 credits) of Physical Education & Wellness. The physical education classes take place in our newly built, state-of-the-art gymnasium while the wellness classes take place in a newly designed fitness studio with plenty of equipment to accommodate any exercise you can think of. Additionally, students receive one year of Driver's Education where they prepare for and take the state test as well as three years of Health Education which may include a popular baby project which informs students about the realities of caring for a child. The fitness center is also available in the morning and after school for any interested students. Tied into the physical fitness environment of County Prep High School is the Intramural Sports Program where students can compete in a variety of sports and tournaments including basketball, volleyball, and soccer.

Foreign Language:

In our pursuit of creating worldly and knowledgeable global citizens, County Prep High School's World Languages program seeks to steep students in the linguistic and cultural substance of one of five foreign language courses: Chinese, French, American Sign Language (ASL), Spanish, and Spanish for Native Speakers. The Chinese, French, and Spanish programs explore language, grammar, and culture while being taught in the respective course's native tongue. This approach of fully immersing students, by surrounding them with the language aids in their understanding and speaking abilities. American Sign Language is a comprehensive course where students will learn to communicate using the language as well as understand the history of ASL as well as some of the difficulties which deaf and mute people have had to deal with. Finally, Spanish for Native speakers is designed for students who are already fluent in Spanish but wish to learn more about the country, culture, and literature. It focuses less on grammar and vocabulary and more on reading native works and writing at a higher level. AP Spanish is also available for our most rigorous

students.

Technology:

In terms of technology, we are a one-to-one school where each student receives a Chromebook and much of the coursework is available online via Google Educational software, Pearson eTexts, and other resources. Furthermore, our CTE program has several major options for the technologically inclined: Computer System Support/Internetworking (where students learn about the internal hardware of a computer, work with routers, switches, and wiring, and are taught how to create and manage networks) and Computer Science (which focuses more on software such as programming and web design). In fact, some of our advanced students in the Computer System Support major work with their instructor on repairing student Chromebooks in the event they break.

Other:

All of our students during freshman and sophomore years go through a rotational course which changes with each marking period. These courses include a language arts and mathematics test proficiency class, a class on library science and research, financial literacy, career explorations, and a number of other life-skills/basic skills courses. Throughout these courses and during homeroom is where any school-wide initiative regarding character building is likely to take place (for instance, we have a few events planned during the week of respect).

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

As instructors and educational leaders, it's important to provide students who are struggling to meet performance indicators with support and guidance. First and foremost, we strive to prevent these situations from arising in a number of ways. Each student is assigned a guidance counselor who regularly checks in with them and guides their transition from 8th grade to high school. If students perform poorly on assessments or are struggling in class, instructors have a few available options. We have a tutoring program for our academic classes which are free, available after school, and are led by our instructors. Students may volunteer for academic assistance or be recommended by their instructor. Once guidance counselors are notified, they will meet with the student regularly to identify any hindrances to academic progress. Also, being that County Prep High School is a one-to-one school (every student has a Google Chromebook) instructors can answer questions from home, students can collaborate and support one another, and students can access online resources, such as Khan Academy or other programs to enhance their classroom learning and provide additional practice for students.

Furthermore, an effort to identify students who may fall into this category is made through the use of two technological assessment tools: LinkIt and Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces (ALEKS). LinkIt can identify students based on their performance on a NJSLA-like benchmark. Instructors can also identify the specific standards and questions with which these students are struggling. ALEKS is an adaptive mathematics platform where students are given questions based on their performance on digital assessments. The questions they receive coincide with the areas in which they demonstrate a weakness.

Any student who does not meet the exit test requirements in NJ receives a tutor, access to a Google Classroom where they will receive additional resources, and either take an alternate test (such as the Accuplacer) or undergoes the portfolio process with a specific instructor.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Students performing above grade level have several avenues described above to pursue depending upon the course. To recap, students can pursue college credit and rigorous instruction through Advanced Placement classes, can pursue an advanced track depending upon their fulfillment of various requirements, and have a plethora of electives available to them to study. Independent growth is always encouraged and made

available through technological resources. However, there are two additional avenues that have not been previously discussed.

The first of which is the extended day program. It is clear that many students desire to take more than four courses of a particular discipline. They also wish to accelerate their progress so that they may take AP courses earlier (which would maximize the amount of AP classes they can take by the time they graduate). The same goes for our Career and Technical Education program. Students can only choose one major, but may be interested in exploring the space, equipment, and expertise in another major. For this reason, several of our CTE courses are available after school so that students can be exposed to the enriching experiences provided therein.

In addition to the extended day program, County Prep High School has partnered with Hudson County Community College through the LEAP program. This program allows our students to gain college credit while at the same time checking off their state high school requirements in after school classes taught by college professors. In addition to college credits, the enriching experience of being in a college level class helps prepare our students for the future and pushes the college and career readiness agenda.

3c. Special education

At County Prep High School, our special needs student population thrives. From an academic standpoint, our teachers are trained on how to handle numerous special needs issues. From the first day of school, teachers have access to their students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans so that they can prepare to address the students' needs, whether it's a specific seating arrangement, using a particular name, providing support for visual/auditory impairments, etc. We want to make sure that these students do not stand out and are safe and comfortable in their respective learning environments. Special needs students may be assigned to departmentalized classes where the instructors hold them to high standards of rigor while making sure to work within the students' abilities or inclusion classes where our instructors work together seamlessly to address the needs of both regular education and special needs students. If you were to walk into any inclusion classroom, you would not necessarily be able to identify the inclusion teacher from the regular ed teacher. We strive to make sure the special needs students are not singled out. The child study team works very closely with teachers and parents to make sure that all student needs are being met.

From a social and emotional learning standpoint our special needs students are thriving. There have been many proms where our special need students are welcomed as prom king and queen without any protest or complaints from the student body. The students are very supportive of one another and watch out for each other in a collegiate way. This is a safe place that prides itself in honoring individuality and where bullying is not a problem.

Special needs students are also encouraged to participate in the wide range of extracurricular activities available at our school.

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

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

County Prep, through its Student Council program, has decided to focus on building positive school spirit and positively contributing to the school climate. The Student Council operates similarly to the programs of other schools with an additional focus on our mission statement's section goal on "embracing change through meaningful activities in a student centered environment." The Student Council, along with other clubs and programs in the school, are able to do this through planned events occurring throughout the school year. These events are coordinated by the students in cooperation with administration. County Prep has developed a reputation of pride despite the lack of an athletic sports program through events such as: Battle of the Classes, Lock-In, annual Basketball and Volleyball Tournaments, Movie Nights, Game Nights, and Animefest. The Student Council also contributes to school wide events such as Freshmen Orientation, 8th Grade Open House, Back-to-School Night, and Graduation.

The sports tournaments, in particular, provide healthy athletic competition while giving many students a chance to be a part of team dynamic.

Once a year, the students engage in the Battle of the Classes, a fun and lighthearted event filled with relay races, a tug of war, a banner contest, and a coordinated dance competition. The winner of the event receives a cash prize that goes towards that class's activities account that may be used for class trips, prom, and other various class events.

Each year a "Lock-in" event takes place. This event takes place overnight and provides food, activities, and a safe place for students to hang out with their peers, while under the school's supervision. The money raised also goes towards the class accounts.

All of these events positively contribute to the school culture at County Prep while also providing the student body with a safe environment to socially interact with their peers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At County Prep High School we host a myriad of parent workshops including, Social Media Navigation/Education, Drug Awareness, College and Financial Aid, and Career Fairs to name a few. We invite our parents and community to attend student showcases such as FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of Community), SkillsUSA, Talent Shows, Open Mic Nights, Music Fests, Musical Theater and Productions. Our students also participate in Model UN, Mock Trials, and Model Government which are held at our local colleges such as St. Peter's University and Princeton.

We also have a strong community of alumni that sit on our yearly alumni panel. This panel includes alumni who now have successful business ties to the community, are involved in local politics, and/or are able to provide insight into college planning and beyond. We host alumni nights where these former students can come to network and speak to our current students to share experiences and advise. Our Dance instructor also connects our school community with the Jersey City Cultural Affairs and brings together students, community members, and alumni to perform on the pier for the Jersey City community.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

At County Prep High School, the principal who has an open door policy for all staff and teachers, is always open to new ideas and different methods of instruction. Teachers are often consulted when the district is looking to implement new curriculum, classes and even small decisions such as what our new mascot will be. At Hudson County Schools of Technology our district is continuously asking for submissions of student and staff accomplishments to highlight on our district website. Our district makes teachers feel valued and supported by offering a Wellness Program where teachers are invited to try new methods of stress relief, such as yoga, cross fit, etc.

With respect to professional development (PD), we have two approaches. Each year, the district chooses a topic or theme to be the macro lens of our professional development plan. These are sort of the big picture

items that the administrators would like us to focus on throughout the year. Some years we've focused on team building and getting to know one another while other years have been more about respect and inclusion in the workplace. These are typically based on the needs of a school climate survey or comprehensive needs assessment survey. In terms of a more individualized micro focus, each department will usually get together to arrange for a speaker or presenter to come in and conduct a workshop on whatever initiatives each department feels are relevant and necessary. Furthermore, there has been a big focus on technology professional development opportunities in recent years. When we became a one-to-one school, we needed to train staff extensively in the use of Google apps for education. Whenever a new piece of technology is introduced, such as interactive white boards, SMART notebook, etc., we are usually trained in small groups. Lastly, our district typically leverages the ability of our instructors to convey information by having them turn-key it to their colleagues. This is perhaps the most useful and effective way of disseminating valuable PD information as it relies on collaboration and the collegial bond that exists between our excellent staff.

4. School Leadership:

At Hudson County Schools of Technology, every few years we have district-wide Vision meetings with all of the schools. The Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent facilitate these meetings with the schools, so that we have the opportunity to reflect on our vision, mission and beliefs. We are asked to bring a team of stakeholders per school, including but not limited to, our school's administrators, teachers, community members, parents and students. This takes at least one full day with several follow-up meetings while the principal leads the exercise for each school, paying close attention to the feedback from all members. Once the mission, vision and beliefs are updated, they are distributed school-wide. That serves as the backbone of the school and when making decisions, we always refer to our philosophy, mission, vision and beliefs. This exercise helps bring our community together and keep us focused as far as policies, programs, relationships, and resources.

The structure of County Prep High School consists of a building principal, an Assistant Principal and three supervisors, along with support staff. The administration meets daily. Meeting daily and being on the same page is the reason why we work so well together and why we have tremendous buy in from the staff, students, and parents. Through our collaborative approach, we are able to focus on best practices to ensure student achievement. Every member of the team has their own strengths. The principal delegates responsibilities to the team members based on their strengths, from who can articulate our vision best, to who can focus on student achievement best, to who can work best with our students who have challenges.

We are fortunate enough to have the support of our Superintendent, the Board of Education members, and Central Office team members to assist us along the way. For example, we are currently building a new, state-of-the-art music studio. As a Career and Technical Education (CTE) high school, our goal is to make sure our students are not only college ready but also career ready. We have a very large population interested in music, from vocal, to instrumental to audio technology. The CTE supervisor brought it to the team's attention for the need, through not only his experience as an audio technology teacher at school but also as an professional audio engineer. With an updated industry grade studio, our students can be well ahead of most high school students and prepared for either a college program or a career right out of high school. One of our local and prestigious colleges, Stevens Institute of Technology, has an excellent reputation for the Audio Engineering Program. Working with them as partners, they helped advise as to what equipment and curriculum would make our students far more marketable than others when it comes to application time. We also worked closely with several professional audio engineers. When the CTE supervisor pitched this idea to the team, when weighing the pros and cons, the team decided this is what we would like to spend our Perkins money on this project as it is one of the most successful programs at County Prep HS. With the Superintendent's support, in September, this state-of-the-art studio will be open for the students.

On the academic side, when our academic supervisor looked closely at our NJSLA and PSAT/SAT scores they researched several programs, including LinkIt. We now give LinkIt benchmark exams three times a year to help pinpoint our students strengths and weaknesses. Because our Principal is thoughtful in her approach and surrounds herself with a team who all have various strengths needed to make us a well rounded school, we have found that our collaborative approach keeps us aligned with our mission, vision and beliefs, and most importantly keeps our students engaged, happy, and competitive.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

“We are a dynamic, diverse and compassionate learning community that encourages growth and embraces change through meaningful activities in a student centered environment.” This mission statement of County Prep High School is truly reflective of our commitment to academic success. To ensure the success of every student, we offer a wide range of diverse academic and technical programs that provide challenging but supportive educational experiences. The Medical Science dual enrollment program, the Early Access College Program, and AP courses provide students with academic rigor designed to prepare them for competitive post-secondary options.

County Prep’s faculty, administration, and support staff strive to have our students pursue courses and activities to help them explore and achieve their future aspirations. Nonetheless, the final course selection, after careful consultation with academic advisors, is student-driven and aligned with their probable career trajectories. Students have the latitude to explore elective courses to assist them in defining their interests, identifying their strengths, and planning an individualized program of studies. The Academy of Technology and Design (ATD) and Special Education programs provide students with alternative instructional methods to help them realize their full potential in an environment conducive to their respective needs. Students enrolled in our Medical Science vocational program are afforded the opportunity to participate in the selective Rutgers Health Science Careers Program in which students can earn both high school and college credits. The program is designed to provide a solid foundation in the health sciences, which aids in the retention in their chosen health professions, and enhances academic skill development. In collaboration with Hudson County Community College, students can enroll in college level courses through the Early College Access program while currently enrolled in high school to jump-start their educational aspirations and to explore potential areas of interest. County Prep offers Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Calculus, English, Biology, Chemistry, and US Government and Politics, to name a few, to challenge students academically and provide another avenue for college credit accrual.

The summation of their work has allowed our students to be prepared for the “real” world. Whether they attend a college/university of their choice, enter into post secondary training program or the work environment, they go on to lead fulfilling careers. Many of our students credit County Prep for helping them to overcome challenges and accomplish their goals through meaningful activities in a student centered environment.