

U.S. Department of Education
2021 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. Dawn Mawhinney
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 550 Bonnie Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Rohnert Park State CA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 94928-3897

County Sonoma County

Telephone (707) 792-4825 Fax (707) 782-4727

Web site/URL https://ths.crpUSD.org/ E-mail Michelle.Spencer@CRPUSD.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. Mayra Perez E-mail Mayra_Perez@CRPUSD.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District Tel. (707) 792-4700

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 Chrissa Gillies
(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, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

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	60	24	84
10	55	33	88
11	47	48	95
12 or higher	54	17	71
Total Students	216	122	338

*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):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 10 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 23 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 50 % White
 - 12 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 2%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	322
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Spanish, Chinese (various), Thai, Korean, Hindi, Persian, Portuguese, Arabic

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
2 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17 %

Total number students who qualify: 59

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %
5 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	1
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	98%	96%	97%	97%	95%
High school graduation rate	93%	100%	98%	99%	98%

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 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	71
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	43%
Enrolled in a community college	54%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	3%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

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

Yes No

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

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

Technology High strives to encourage students to become thoughtful members of an increasingly technological society through an integrated project-based curriculum.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Technology High School has been educating students through a distance learning online model for the 2020-2021 school year. The county of Sonoma in California has been in the most restrictive tier for over 200 days. The County office of education and the health department required secondary schools to remain closed. The county has since moved into a less restrictive tier, and we are now preparing to open in late April.

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

Students that choose to attend Technology High School apply. Students that wish to attend during their Freshman year fill out the application answer questions about why they would like to attend, participate in a group project/task, and take a math algebra readiness assessment. The staff assesses the applicant's package and chooses up to 100 students to attend each year. Roughly 85% of students are accepted annually. Students that live in the Cotati Rohnert Park Unified School District are given priority, and the remaining students are from other districts.

PART III - SUMMARY

Technology High School (THS) is located in Rohnert Park, California, approximately 50 miles north of San Francisco. Rohnert Park is a diverse, middle-class community in the reasonably wealthy rural county of Sonoma. The majority of families commute to work and are employed in a wide range of occupations, including construction, public service, such as police officers, engineers, etc. The community is focused on families and was initially planned with a park in the middle of each neighborhood. In a county that often focuses on adult activities in the wine industry, Rohnert Park is unique with kid and family activities. Youth sports and clubs are the heart of the city. The city is relatively new, but the sense of pride and belonging is strong. Many multigenerational families live in Rohnert Park. If they grew up here, they want their children here.

Technology High School is a small school of choice in the Cotati Rohnert Park School District. The district is also home to a much larger comprehensive high school. All students seeking a cross-curricular, project-based learning curriculum that focuses on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) are encouraged to apply to Technology High School. The school does outreach at each of the district middle schools to encourage students to apply. Technology High School accepts students from inside and outside the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District, which creates a diverse student population from communities around Rohnert Park. The two most active parent organizations are the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and Sports Boosters. There is also a Robotics Boosters parent organization that supports the school's Robotics Team. The most well-attended family/student meetings are guidance nights, information nights, principal meetings, and financial aid nights. Student events are very well attended by the whole school and their families. Those nights include plays, music concerts, sporting events, Rube Goldberg exhibitions, and a senior event called CAPA (corrective and preventive action) Night that explores root cause analysis studies.

Because of the academic rigor and expectations of Technology High School students, the school recognizes the importance of culture and support within the student body. Student government was expanded to include more students that were a better representation of the wider community. The principal, staff, and students identified critical elements of the desired culture and set goals to create the desired environment. There was consensus that unhealthy academic competition, exclusiveness, gender bias, and bullying needed to be addressed. Goals to create an environment that focused on healthy risk-taking, support for all students equally, service, community, and relationships were set. Character Strong offers a service leadership curriculum that we invested in for both the ASB (Associated Student Body) and the Freshman Essentials class. Character Strong was invited to give a presentation and training to kick off the initiative. The annual surveys provided to families and students showed a sharp increase in the number of students who felt connected and a sense of belonging and decreased the number of students who felt bullied after the plan was implemented. The PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) sponsored a presentation and anti-bullying training for students and staff from The Listen Initiative. These two programs were also supported by a local peer support program that also trains students to be allies and combat many forms of bullying through safe intervention strategies.

Although Technology High School focuses on STEAM, students have a wide variety of interests. Students are encouraged to explore other interests or expand on STEAM through creating clubs. The clubs at Technology High School tend to change year to year based on student interest. Clubs include Engineering, Robotics, Medical, Art, Environmental, Journalism, and more.

The school leadership and staff see our roles as student support. Restorative practices are used in conflict resolution and discipline matters. The principal and teachers walk the campus, talk to students, join activities to engage with students in multiple ways. Students are always welcome to discuss matters with the teachers, the counselor, or the principal. They do not need to make an appointment. If the adult is available, they will chat with them. If conflicts arise, the principal or counselor will ask if they can help facilitate a resolution as a first step. The effort put forth to support student's social and emotional health has shown positive results. After these efforts, which seem directed away from academic rigor, were in place, standardized test scores, Advanced Placement Exam scores, and grades increased.

Technology High School also employs a grading structure to support student learning. The majority of teachers on campus use a no-zero policy. In place of zero, students receive 50%. That score is still an F, but it does not inhibit the student from recovering their overall grade. Some teachers use test/score replacement strategies that allow students to recover by showing understanding or mastery of the subject. Once again, standardized test scores, AP exam scores, and grades all increased. Teachers were concerned about grade inflation or a lack in student accountability, but that has not happened. Rather, the policy increased achievement and understanding, as evidenced by the standard measures.

What sets Technology High School apart is the unique, academically rigorous, cross-curricular, project-based learning, STEAM-focused curriculum coupled with social and emotional support. The school always makes decisions based on its vision and what is in the students' best interest. High academic standards are never compromised and only enhanced by the supportive and family-like culture the school strives to create. Technology High School uses programs such as Project Lead the Way, Advanced Placement, and Character Strong to ensure we stay grounded and focused.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

After the first few months of distance learning at the end of 2020, we spent the summer setting goals and reimagining strategies to make digital learning more effective and engaging. Engagement, consistency, and ease of access, balanced with appropriate rigor were identified as areas of focus. Teachers had ample time to meet and plan together to focus the curriculum on its most essential components and rethink how to engage students. The Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District ensured every student was issued a computer and hotspot to access online learning.

Just like in-person learning, students are assessed in a variety of ways. Assessment strategies such as authentic assessments through virtual and real projects, essays, traditional online assessments taken while the teacher was monitoring screens have been used. Teachers focused more on mastery than on assessment. Many teachers offered corrections, retakes, grade replacement, etc.

Our current distance learning model is unrecognizable from last Spring. All teachers use the same distance learning platforms, enhanced with tools that work for each discipline, regular office hours, consistent communication tools, and parent communication. Teachers share their weekly lessons for their classes, which are then shared with families along with the weekly newsletter. Hence, students and their families are aware of assignments, topics, assessments, and projects students worked on each week. These Week-at-a-Glance documents are very popular.

THS has a very clear curriculum. It is aligned with California Common Core standards, Advanced Placement, and Project Lead the Way. During distance learning, the curriculum was streamlined and laser-focused on the essential components. Maintaining Technology High School's cross-curricular project-based learning STEAM focus was a challenge during distance learning. The students picked up science lab, engineering, band, and other materials to enable a hands-on learning environment from home. In addition to regularly scheduled classes, all teachers offered small group instruction during daily office hours. Students could drop in on the office hour Google Meet as needed. Teachers used Google Chat if a student was more comfortable with a chat versus a video meeting. The counselor set up peer tutoring and met with struggling students weekly. When students disengaged and missed classes, office staff, administration, and library staff called home. Teachers shared best practices during staff meetings and PLCs weekly, and the special education teacher offered strategies to help teachers make their lessons clearer and more effective for all students.

The teachers assess students at regular intervals to identify areas of strength and weakness in understanding the curriculum. Teachers use multiple formative assessment methods, such as small group discussions, short daily quizzes, essays, feedback forms, direct questioning, demonstrations, projects, and classwork. The information was analyzed either by the teacher alone (we are a small school and there are subjects taught by only one teacher) or with the department, and decisions were made on how to move forward based on the data. Does a topic or a skill need reteaching to the class as a whole while moving forward, are there only a small group of students that need support, and how to ensure they receive it, or is there a solid understanding?

We plan on using the state testing and local measures as data points to understand any learning loss while moving forward to next year. The staff has been researching best practices to address any learning gaps. Is it best to reteach certain skills, spiral back while introducing new material, or move forward? There is research to show that the spiraling back technique is an effective approach for all students.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

All students take engineering courses that are both college prep and CTE (Career Technical Education). We offer nine AP (Advanced Placement) courses. There are no barriers or gatekeeping for students to choose an AP course. The Counselor shares a weekly newsletter outlining college and career exploration options. The counselor also offers counseling education, college, and interest exploration through a program called

Naviance. Students use the program to explore careers that connect with their interests, create four to six year education plans, virtually visit colleges and apply to colleges. Industry partners visit CTE classes for student presentations and evaluations. Students have attended field trips to technology companies in San Francisco, including Uber and a few smaller start-up companies.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

A small school needs to be very specific about the electives they offer. Students have a wide variety of interests. It is essential to provide a well-rounded experience for students. Visual and performing arts are offered through drama, band, digital video, and digital photography. Digital photography also houses Yearbook class which provides students the opportunity to create and publish.

Students can study Spanish I, II, III, and AP Spanish Language and Culture at Technology High School. Although we don't have the capacity to offer other languages, students are encouraged to take classes at the local junior college if they would like to pursue a world language other than Spanish.

Students take two years of physical education over their four years of high school. All Freshman take physical education and Freshman essentials. Physical education focuses on team building, lifelong activity, and health. Freshman Essentials is a class that was developed to support students in their transition to high school. The class offers support with high school skills, character building, internet citizenship, online safety, academic support, study skills, life/career skills, career exploration, and sexual education. It also uses the Character Strong curriculum to build resiliency, empathy, and service leadership.

Other electives offered include Robotics, Advanced Placement Computer Science Principles, Associated Student Body (Student Government), and three years of mandatory Engineering electives.

Technology High School partnered with a local credit union to offer financial literacy to juniors and seniors. It is a day where students can learn from professionals in the industry about loans, taxes, and careers that feel more authentic. Our students enjoy building the skills in this interactive financial literacy program, and it builds bridges with our greater community.

3. Academic Supports:

There is a tiered intervention system in place to meet the needs of struggling students. All students participate in the tier one supports. All students attend a weekly support class called ASC (Academic Support and Clubs). Students can use this time to ask questions, get additional instructional support, work with their peers, retake/ make up assessments, or enjoy much needed quiet time to refocus. All Freshman take the Freshman Essentials class as an academic, transition, and social-emotional support, that was already mentioned.

Students that need tier two supports may meet with the academic counselor on an agreed upon schedule, attend more formal peer tutoring sessions, or work with teachers during office hours. Teachers informally or formally by calling a student study team, will check in with students or parents to evaluate if a student needs flexible due dates or other modifications. Annual meetings are scheduled for Students with 504 plans to evaluate any changes to their supports.

Students that fall farther behind and need tier three supports can take credit recovery classes, or opt to repeat a class. Both the credit recovery class and the repeated class can still be college preparatory classes.

Special Education students have a fully qualified educational specialist that writes, evaluates, and

communicates their Individualized Education Plan. Students all attend college preparatory classes and have an additional support study skills class with their education specialist to support, assess, and monitor their progress.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Each year, Technology High School prides itself on the relationships between staff and students. We are a unique school--a small school where students and staff get to know each other as people, not just as students and teachers. And while the school closure and distance learning for the past year was difficult, our school community continues to be engaging and motivating. From the onset of the year, staff committed to connecting with students and fostering the connection between students. Whether it is the Freshman Essentials Chat Roulette random question that creates bonds between students, allowing students to choose their own “seating charts” for breakout sessions so they can continue to work with their friends as if they were working together in the classroom, or the Associated Student Body events that continued to happen throughout the year, Technology High School continues to emulate a positive environment.

In the academic setting, staff continues to be innovative in the collaborative learning process. Students work together on projects throughout the school year, as we are a project-based school. We encourage communication, collaboration, and cooperation amongst group members. And while students have been unable to meet in person for most of the year, we have created ways for them to work together digitally through the Google Suite (Docs, Slides, Chat, meet, Jamboard, etc.) and apps like FlipGrid or Kahoot.

Socially and emotionally, our Associated Student Body/Student Government class uses the Character Strong curriculum. There is an overall focus on the character of our students and focusing on the eight character traits - Patience, Kindness, Humility, Respect, Selflessness, Forgiveness, Honesty, and Commitment. And while it may seem like focusing this incredibly important social-emotional learning on one small group of students is not impacting the school as a whole, it truly does. Our student leaders take what they learn and implement it into student activities and into their daily classes. Whether it is greeting each student by name when they enter the Google Meet, encouraging their friends to make To-Be Lists instead of To-Do Lists when they're feeling overwhelmed, attending 9th-grade classes to build our THS culture into the 9th-grade community who has never stepped foot on our campus or spreading kindness through Shoutouts on our social media, our community continues to be strong despite not being together in person.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

It has certainly been challenging to stay connected to our school community this past year. Yet, student success and support has remained at the forefront of all that we have done to connect and engage with our students and families.

Communication has been the key to staying connected. The most helpful tool we have been using this year has been our weekly newsletters that are emailed to parents and students, posted on our private Facebook page, as well as on Minga, our social media platform for current students. The Principal sends out the Titan Weekly with important updates and weekly summaries from our teachers so parents can stay informed about what their students are learning. Our School Counselor also sends out counseling updates in the weekly counseling newsletter, which includes mental health support, volunteer opportunities, virtual events happening in the community for high school students, virtual college representative visits, college fairs, career fairs and webinars, scholarship information for seniors and much more.

We have also continued to communicate and engage parents by providing morning and evening zoom sessions with the Principal and School Counselor to provide important information and answer questions parents may have. We have continued to visit classes virtually to give students important information about graduation requirements, A-G requirements, Naviance lessons, choosing courses for next year, AP exam updates, and much more.

We have still held parent meetings to problem solve and design plans to support students that have struggled this year. Reaching out by phone, email, and google chat has been effective in communicating with students. Virtual one-on-one student meetings have also been a successful tool in staying connected to our students.

Our ASB class has done a fantastic job creating virtual activities and events for students to participate in. It has been difficult, especially for our freshmen, to really feel connected to the Tech High family and understand our school's culture because they have never been able to set foot on our campus. ASB has done a wonderful job encouraging and fostering that engagement that is missing for so many of our students while distance learning.

We love working with our community partners to support our students. We have worked closely with Team Success and SOS Counseling to provide mental health services to our students struggling this year with anxiety and depression. Many local businesses have given our seniors opportunities to apply for local scholarships to help pay for college next year. We have also been able to provide college rep visits virtually for our students so that they have the chance to hear from different colleges.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

During the spring of 2020, in anticipation of beginning the 20-21 school year in a distance learning format, multiple discussions were held among the staff. These discussions led to decisions about best practices for the upcoming school year. At Tech High, site leadership encouraged staff to determine what strategy or combination of strategies would best work for the staff as well as for individual teachers. As every teacher has their own comfort level with incorporating technology into their distance learning instructional practices, it was critical to give teachers the individual authority to implement technology as they saw fit. Site administration also collaborated with district-level administration to access technology and funding to provide teachers with the training and equipment they needed to effectively instruct students via distance learning and to assist with the transition to a hybrid model.

As to be expected, the initial transition to distance learning due to COVID was met with anxiety by staff at Tech High. In anticipation of 2020-21 being 100% distance learning, the district, and site invested heavily in summer staff training. Several staff attended Google Education Suite training. Those individuals then held site-level training to support the rest of the staff in the intricacies of Google Classroom, Meet, and other Google applications. In addition, staff meeting time was dedicated to having staff share and demonstrate other applications to enhance or streamline distance learning. Apps such as Flipgrid, Pear Deck, Pivot, and Edpuzzle were demoed by staff who had already incorporated them in their teaching methods. Staff also made themselves available on an individual basis to further support teachers trying to implement various apps into their curriculum.

To support the hands-on nature of instruction at Tech High while in a distance learning format, the site and district invested significant funds in purchasing additional materials for the PLTW Engineering classes, ensuring students had access to critical instructional materials at home. A full grade-level set of Erector Set kits was purchased for the freshman class (83 students), along with class sets of programmable microcontrollers for the robotics/programming class. Multiple "material pickup days" were scheduled at the beginning of the year to distribute materials to students throughout the year. In addition, the district IT staff worked to provide staff with the IT resources and infrastructure needed to teach in a distance learning environment effectively. Equipment such as additional monitors, updated laptops, site licenses for requested apps were all provided to staff. In support of the transition to hybrid learning, the Information and Technology Department has purchased wide-angle webcams which will permit staff to use whiteboards and TVs to present instruction while simultaneously remaining in camera view to the distance learning students.

What it comes down to is the site and district administration have treated the staff as professionals, and they trust the staff to implement instructional methods and technologies they believe to be the most effective.

4. School Leadership:

Because Technology High School is a small school, the leadership responsibilities are shared among many. The school only has one Principal. The principal relies heavily on the one office manager, one counselor, athletic director, and teacher leaders. One of the benefits of having such a small staff is that issues and decisions are often discussed and shared at whole staff meetings. There is open communication and

discussion. Ideas are solicited by all stakeholders. There is an open-door policy for staff, students, and parents.

The principal communicates with families and students weekly. The principal finds parents are most satisfied with decisions when they are informed of the process at every step. Stakeholders are asked for their input in a variety of ways and through multiple communication tools that include email, newsletters, Google Chat, and school social media accounts. The principal, along with the counselor and teachers, hold grade level virtual parent meetings, attend the Parent Teacher Student Association and Sports Boosters meetings, and conduct surveys to gather feedback. It is very important to the principal to answer questions, return calls and emails and ensure that students and their families know their voice is heard. Distance learning and hybrid decision-making have been difficult, but most parents and students have been flexible, positive, and supportive. As we move forward into a hybrid learning model at the end of April, more plans are being created and recreated. The principal is impressed and appreciative of the entire school community and their support. The principal and teachers have done everything to support the students in this ever-changing environment.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The diverse needs and backgrounds are addressed by encouraging an inviting and accepting environment. From the moment students step on campus, they are met with a community that respects individuality. Students connect across grade level and older students often reach out and mentor younger students. In addition, students feel free to express their identities and backgrounds through clubs like the Gay-Straight Alliance or the Christian club, while others share their personal experiences in classroom discussions. One of the hallmarks of the school is an atmosphere of acceptance. Students and staff embrace the diversity and uniqueness of each individual and provide a place where everyone feels like they belong.

Technology High School strives to maintain and continually develop a culturally responsive curriculum that is inclusive and representative of the vast diversity of the human experience. New full-length texts have recently been added that feature important viewpoints, such as *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot and *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson. In addition, teachers use a variety of types of texts such as news articles, podcasts, videos, poetry, and excerpts to showcase the perspectives of people from various economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Not only does this allow all students to see themselves in the curriculum, but it also ensures that all students have the opportunity to acknowledge and understand different perspectives than their own.

Our faculty and staff see themselves as guides for our students and are genuinely interested in their ideas and experiences. Students are empowered to be an important part of every aspect of the classroom and are consulted often through surveys and informal discussions to ensure they feel connected to the curriculum and understand the purpose behind it.

Classrooms provide a safe forum where students can discuss controversial topics such as current events and social movements. Students learn to evaluate texts for points of view and bias. Teachers use strategies such as Socratic seminars to provide students with practice expressing their opinions and disagreeing respectfully. Students are encouraged to keep an open mind and be willing to change their own views as they further analyze and develop their understanding of these complex topics. Students are encouraged to develop ways to take action in response to what they learn, such as letters to elected officials or proposals for policy change. Through research, discussion and action, students develop deeper understandings of themselves and the world around them.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our success to educate and support students since the onset of distance learning in Spring 2020 was due to what has become a defining characteristic of our staff's educational practice; that our academic expectations of our students are matched by our support of our students. Our motivation is that this attitude is not unique; that it should be the norm that stretches across education. An unwritten expectation across the staff that is present from the custodial through the administration- we are humans first, educators second. Every new person that joins our staff immediately is encouraged to recognize the integral piece of our campus culture that necessitates genuine relationships. That effort is first modeled to the student body in the way that staff interacts with each other, alumni, current, and prospective students. Students then reciprocate this attitude of authenticity in kind. In a way that seems organic to the outside observer, the culture of Tech High is one of honesty, trust, support, and respect; however, it has been an intentional, ongoing process spearheaded by the student leadership team.

A few years ago, our ASB (Associated Student Body) underwent an evolution that centered on a change of focus. The students came to the realization that true leadership was rooted in service to others, and not the wants of their individual selves. Instead of a group of students planning events, this group transformed into one rooted in character development and peer accountability. Since that time, their efforts have transformed campus culture so strongly that it was able to translate to an online environment, as necessitated in the Spring of 2020.

What the aforementioned produces is a student body that feels safe in all respects. It is this safety that allows them to take risks in their learning. Sounds simple, and in a way, it is; safety in all its forms is the bedrock of learning. The authentic character of the staff, the respect the staff presents to the students at all times, and the constant concern we have for the well-being of our students creates a trust between us that transpires the traditional cat-and-mouse nature of some school cultures. The trust the students have for the staff also prevents what is likely the most fatal quality for the academics of any institution, and that is the devaluing of education itself. Teachers are the representatives of the curriculum they deliver and if students witness and feel the safety, trust, and respect coming from those representatives, then it is almost guaranteed that they develop an intrinsic motivation, fed by a perpetual growth mindset; achievement predictably follows.