

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Prosser Career Academy High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2148 N Long Avenue  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Chicago State IL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 60639-2914

County Cook

Telephone (773) 534-3200 Fax (773) 534-3382

Web site/URL https://www.prosseracademy.org E-mail slshimon@cps.edu

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

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

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. Jose Torres E-mail ceo-torres@cps.edu  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

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

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

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Miguel Del Valle  
(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**

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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

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Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 421 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 92 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools

513 TOTAL

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

- 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

- 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	149	174	323
10	120	152	272
11	134	121	255
12 or higher	145	192	337
<b>Total Students</b>	548	639	1187

\*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
  - 0.3 % Asian
  - 21.2 % Black or African American
  - 76.4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 1.8 % White
  - 0 % 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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	1
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	28
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	29
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	1238
(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, French, Polish, Pilipino, Swahili, Cambodian, American Sign Language

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 9 %  
107 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 93 %

Total number students who qualify: 1101

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %

157 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.

12 Autism

25 Multiple Disabilities

7 Deafness

1 Orthopedic Impairment

0 Deaf-Blindness

23 Other Health Impaired

7 Developmental Delay

114 Specific Learning Disability

3 Emotional Disturbance

5 Speech or Language Impairment

9 Hearing Impairment

0 Traumatic Brain Injury

7 Intellectual Disability

1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1

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.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	61
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	18
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

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 31:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	91%	89%	89%	89%	89%
High school graduation rate	97%	90%	91%	97%	94%

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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	297
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	50%
Enrolled in a community college	28%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	13%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
Other	5%

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.

Our goal is to provide students with preparation for post-secondary options so they can choose college or career and experience success and happiness either way.

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.

We have been operating remotely for the majority of our students since March 2020. On January 11, 2021, students in our low incidence cluster program of Diverse Learners were given the opportunity to begin hybrid learning, and 5 out of 13 of them chose to do so. At the time of this writing, we are scheduled to begin hybrid instruction for the rest of our students who opt in on April 19th for the fourth quarter, and we anticipate just over 300 students will return to the building for instruction.

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

We are not a magnet, charter or choice school, but there is a district-wide access and enrollment policy that dictates how students are chosen to attend Prosser Career Academy. There are four pathways to enrollment. All are run through a district-wide high school application system which is a single-offer model. Students receive an offer from the highest ranked school/program on their application for which they qualify and for which there are available seats. Therefore, admissions parameters are largely dictated district-wide.

The first pathway is the Career and Technical Education (CTE) application. Students who meet the minimum 2.5 GPA requirement in the 7th grade are randomly selected by computerized lottery. The lottery is conducted in the following order: sibling, staff preference, proximity (2.5 miles), general. The second pathway is the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB) application. Students who meet the minimum district-wide IB requirements qualify. For general education and students with 504 plans, this is a

minimum percentile of 24 in both reading and math on NWEA MAP and minimum 2.5 GPA in 7th grade. For students with IEPs and English Learners, the requirement is a minimum combined percentile of 48 in reading and math on NWEA MAP and minimum 2.5 GPA in 7th grade. Eligible students are selected on a points system based on NWEA MAP scores and 7th grade GPA. Students who live within 2.5 miles of the school are given 50 additional points. The third pathway is through our Deaf/Hard of Hearing cluster program. Students currently in a cluster program are eligible to apply and are selected by a computerized lottery with final review by the district's Office of Diverse Learning Students & Supports for program eligibility and proximity. The fourth pathway is a significantly modified curriculum for students with low-incidence disabilities and more significant learning needs. Students in cluster programs are eligible to apply and are selected by computerized lottery. Final review is done by the district's Office of Diverse Learning Students & Supports for program eligibility and proximity.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Prosser provides a dynamic, supportive learning environment which prepares students to be fulfilled, productive, critical thinkers successful in an ever-changing society. As a Career & Technical Education (CTE) and International Baccalaureate (IB) school, we offer engaging instructional and extracurricular options to prepare students for a future in which they lead positive change in their own lives and the lives of others. A fundamental goal is that our students are able to make choices about how they will live because so many of them come from a place where choice is not a luxury that has been afforded their ancestors. Prosser is located in Belmont Cragin, a northwest side neighborhood of Chicago that is more than 80% Hispanic, more densely populated at approximately 20,800 people per square mile than Chicago's average neighborhood at approximately 11,800, and the average household size pre-COVID was 7 people. We share this because it is important to note that according to the Illinois Department of Public Health one of Belmont Cragin's zip codes has suffered the impact of COVID more dramatically than other parts of the city with 13,639 cases to date. That said, because we are a career academy, we draw students from all over the city and have over 100 feeder schools each year in our freshmen class of approximately 300 students. Our students and their families seek options and understand the importance of vocational education as a stepping stone to gainful employment and a future better than the past.

All students select a post-secondary pathway at the end of their freshman year. Options are: Auto Body Repair, Automotive Technology, Culinary Arts, Digital Media, Electricity, Game Programming, Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC), Machine Technology, and/or one of our two International Baccalaureate (IB) options: Diploma Programme and Career Programme. Though many of our students intend to work following graduation, we feel responsible to prepare them for college, as well, to ensure that if they pursue work it is their choice and not their only option.

As a CTE/IB school, several principles guide practice throughout the building. As educators, we recognize successful schools cannot concentrate on content alone. At Prosser, there is an instructional and extracurricular focus on the IB Learner Profile and the Measures for Human Achievement (MHA) Lab 21st Century Skills, which articulate what our students will be and what they will know how to do, independent of any particular content area, when they graduate. We strive for our students to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective, and to develop strengths in the following areas: personal mindset, planning for success, social awareness, verbal communication, collaboration, and problem solving. When Prosser students graduate with these attributes, as well as the content knowledge they accumulate in their classes, they are prepared for successful adulthood. Vocational education and academic coursework can seem incongruous in content and approach, but our focus on the Learner Profile and 21st Century Skills knits the two together. Nothing does this more than our Career Programme, which allows students to pursue a CTE pathway while taking several IB courses. Our commitment to providing these diverse options and opportunities to students is something that sets us apart from other vocational education programs in our city. In fact, our IB Career Programme was the first of its kind in Chicago.

Prosser's commitment to students' holistic growth is reflected in the programs we have in place to encourage and challenge all students to develop their full potential. Students hone leadership skills in a number of places, such as through participation in the Student Voice Committee, an open organization whose leaders are elected democratically and facilitate efforts to improve student life at Prosser or the National Honor Society, which promotes the values of character, service, leadership, and scholarship. Our Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), clubs, and athletic teams offer opportunities for leadership. We recognize students' holistic wellness includes physical health, so we work to build a culture that celebrates physical activity and friendly, team-based competition through athletics, dances, pep rallies, and a one-day festival in spring with tug-of-war, capture the flag, and other contests intermixed with the bestowal of academic awards. Prosser supports students' social-emotional health through wellness programs like the peer support group Sister to Sister, group counseling facilitated by social workers, and a restorative justice program that protects students' dignity and autonomous agency through mutual listening and understanding when a violation of conduct has occurred. Administrators support teachers and students through efforts to reduce stress and create intrinsic motivation by supporting autonomy, belonging, and self-efficacy.



One of Prosser's strengths is its implementation of reading and learning programs for teachers. This year, teachers are participating in a school-wide reading of *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain* by Zaretta Hammond. Weekly readings and discussions lead to observation, interpretation, and introspection of practice. As a result, teachers have implemented instructional practices in assessment and grading that uphold equity and empathy as driving values.

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

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

Students take four years of English and at least three years of math, science, and social science. Students meet a two-year secondary language requirement, pursue two years of arts education and physical education or JROTC, and pass Health, Financial Literacy, Driver's Education, and Civics. In addition, students are enrolled in either three years of career training or two years of International Baccalaureate (IB) college preparatory courses.

English Language Arts (ELA) courses include English I, II, III, Transitional English, Dual Credit English, and IB Language & Literature. Using Common Core and IB standards, ELA teachers teach and assess skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing via authentic formative assessments of annotations, discussion, presentations, and student writing. Students demonstrate knowledge via summative assessments (multimodal projects and written texts) that develop transfer skills: creativity, communication, collaboration, and meaning-making. Electives in ELA include Creative Writing and Media Literacy.

Math programming at Prosser is driven by IB and Common Core standards, and courses include Algebra 1, Geometry, Advanced Algebra Trigonometry, Dual Credit Pre-Calculus, Financial Algebra, and IB Mathematical Application & Interpretations. Only three years of mathematics are required, but we encourage students to take four in order to effectively prepare for post-secondary opportunities. Our math teachers have been leaders in exploring competency-based grading and innovations in formative assessment have aligned their practice to a process in which students are periodically quizzed using one problem which serves as a snapshot of their process, and, because all quizzes throughout the unit are taken in the same document, it becomes a record of their progress.

Science teachers implement IB and Next Generation Science Standards, and course offerings include Physics, followed by Chemistry, and then Biology, IB Biology, or IB Environmental Systems. Science electives include Anatomy & Physiology, Astronomy, and IB Information Technology in a Global Society. Department members sponsors thriving clubs dedicated to hiking, astronomy, and conservation. Most notably, our students engage in experiential learning in our 2-acre community garden, a place where ecology and science become authentic problem-solving opportunities. This ecosystem, which includes a fruit tree orchard, a flock of chickens, and a bee colony among other things, is a true community garden, so our students interact with each other, the content and local gardeners.

All students take World History, United States History and Civics at Prosser and some students go on to take IB History of the Americas, IB Psychology, Advanced Placement (AP) Psychology, AP United States Government, and/or IB Theory of Knowledge. Targeting both IB and Illinois Social Science standards, our teachers take seriously their responsibility to help students develop research skills and critically evaluate sources. To that end, a department requirement is that all students participate in the Chicago History Fair so they have an authentic experience engaging in historical research.

In addition to content-specific standards and practices, teachers embed WIDA standards in their lesson planning to support English language learners and are responsible for appropriate accommodations and modifications for students with Individualized Education Plans. Core teachers also work to meet College Readiness Standards and utilize Khan Academy, in addition to providing direct instruction to prepare students for the SAT.

While there is no question this has been the most difficult year, our practices have changed for the better as a result of the struggle to overcome recent challenges. Department chairs meet weekly for Teacher Instructional Leadership Team (TILT) meetings, so there is consensus and cohesion in school-wide practices, which was particularly important during Remote Learning because of the major shift in expectations and the need to change instructional approaches. In all content areas, standards were reduced to only those most critical, and we encouraged depth over breadth. Teachers host class daily via Google Meets, utilizing the same schedule we did in person, and students participate using video, audio or chat box communication. Metaphorically holding class in students' homes afforded teachers profound insight into

their students' lived experience and shone a light on obstacles our students face and, more importantly, obstacles we create for them. This forced a year-long conversation about solutions which resulted in more honesty, more reflection, and more innovation than we have known before. Our TILT led powerful discussions with content and course teams about instructional planning, definitions of mastery, grading practices, the law of diminishing averages, tiered interventions, and routinely provides data with analysis protocols to improve assessment strategies and instruction. Teachers ultimately developed a set of Remote Learning Best Practices organized by content, process, product, and affect focusing on affirming cultural identity, encouraging classroom belonging, providing meaningful work, feedback for growth, and prioritizing student voice. During Remote Learning, teachers have used this language to engage in collaborative planning and consultancy protocols to offer one another critical feedback. They are currently adapting the tool to look at student work and engage in peer observations. While COVID created physical separation, our teachers have never been more closely aligned in their thinking and have implemented changes that will benefit students for years to come, long after we return to our classrooms.

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

Prosser offers a range of opportunities to prepare students for college and career readiness. Students pursue either a Career & Technical Education (CTE) or a college preparatory pathway through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). IBDP students are enrolled in 2 years of standard and higher-level course work culminating in internal and external assessments and comprehensive exams. CTE students engage in a 3-year, 5-course curriculum in one of nine career preparation pathways. Between CTE and IBDP, all Prosser students have the possibility of earning early college and career credits, as well as the opportunity for job shadowing, pre-apprenticeship, industry experience, and campus visits. Prosser also offers Advanced Placement courses in World Language and Social Sciences, Dual Credit courses in Math, English, and CTE, and a Transitional English course, which guarantees a student's placement in a credit-bearing course in college. We offer OneGoal, a program in which a teacher supports a cohort of students through their junior and senior years in high school and their freshman year in college to bolster college enrollment and persistence, and we recently partnered with TheDiversity.org to expose our students to more information about achieving high-income careers. For students enrolled in our low-incidence Cluster Program whose learning needs are more profound and whose post-secondary transition plans may include employment in sheltered workshops, we are revising our occupational prep curriculum to better support growth in job, independent living, and functional skills. Chicago Public Schools uses a School Quality Rating system that values students earning early college and career credits, and Prosser has earned the maximum number of points available each year for the last 5 years. To support student success, Prosser has a full-time IB Coordinator, a part-time CTE Academy Coordinator, and a part-time College & Career Counselor. Because civic life is as important as college and career, we have Service Learning coaches who work with students to explore their community impact and support students' in planning, implementing, and reflecting on service as it relates to their future endeavors.

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Prosser offers curricular options that support acquisition of holistic and essential skills and knowledge. To graduate, students must earn fine arts credit in visual art, drama, or music; physical education (PE) credit in PE or JROTC; world language credits in Spanish language and literature; a computer science credit, and three elective course credits, in addition to civics, service learning, driver education, Constitution (Public Law 195 test), and financial education. Under our current operating schedule, all classes meet virtually for a period of 50 minutes Monday through Thursday and 38 minutes on Friday.

Students often begin earning fine arts credits during freshman year. Prosser offers Art I and II, IB Visual Arts, Sound Engineering Music, Modern and Advanced Modern Band, and Drama I and II. Prosser's arts courses support students' acquisition of skills and knowledge by meeting or exceeding Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Fine Arts standards and supporting their essential skills and knowledge of critical

interpretation, creative production, and social expression, and collaboration. Students perform authentically via public arts displays, concerts, and school plays. All courses continued through COVID; when necessary teachers packed supplies for students to pick up to continue their art production from home, but students were also encouraged to broaden their thinking about the materials and media they had on hand which could be used to make art, and they learned on a new level how transforming and transformative art can be.

Students also begin earning PE and health credits freshman year and often complete the requirement during sophomore year. Students may fulfill PE requirements with PE I (health) and PE II (gym), PE Team Sports, PE Indv/Lifetime Activity, or enrollment in the JROTC program, which includes Drum & Bugle Corp, Drill, and Archery. Prosser targets standards and supports skills of lifelong health and fitness, leadership, collaborative teamwork, and personal resilience.

Prosser offers two Spanish tracks: one for new speakers, and one for intermediate, advanced, or native speakers. Additionally, Prosser offers AP Spanish for students who wish to continue language acquisition. World language teachers recently transitioned to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) standards and support mastery of these standards through process-based practice in communication, comparative translation, building knowledge of Hispanic and Latin cultures, community-building through language, and practicing skills of comprehension, interpretation, and analysis of Spanish literature.

Our CTE programs demand students utilize learning from other curricular areas: for instance, students in Digital Media, Machine Technology, and Game Programming need the visual arts and sound engineering skills taught in Fine Arts and Culinary students need a deep knowledge of nutrition and health. An important CTE partnership is with the Chicago Police and Fire Training Academy (CPFTA); students enrolled in this career coursework spend a half day at Prosser and half at CPFTA. This partnership supports the acquisition of essential skills and knowledge by providing training and opportunities for earning career-related credentials through licensing agencies.

AS a CTE/IB school, all students qualify for a Computer Science waiver; however, we offer several courses that would satisfy the requirement, including Fundamentals of Information Technology and IB Information Technology in a Global Society.

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

At Prosser, we set universal goals and target our supports to meet them. Data reveals our black students lag behind overall scores for achievement metrics, and we recognize a need to scaffold, modify, and accommodate for students with Diverse Learning (DL) needs.

We prioritized staff meeting time this year to focus on targeted supports: attendance interventions, English Language Learning (ELL), Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS), DL Best Practices, and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). Further, we encouraged teachers to focus on critical standards, minimize homework, and bolster belonging and connection. To foster growth mindset and safeguard against failure, we applied a generous late-work policy and an assessment retake policy, extending both to meet the needs of students with IEPs.

We have students with low-incidence disabilities and deafness or hard of hearing. Transitioning to Remote Learning, we quickly provided closed captioning and interpreter windows within virtual classrooms. Teachers incorporated educational software to accommodate students. Our Case Manager reopened IEPs to include Remote Learning goals. Some students struggled with technology, so we provided materials for pick up or by mail. Recognizing they were among the most marginalized by Remote Learning, students with low-incidence disabilities returned to in-person learning in January 2021.

Our homeless students did not have wifi; we distributed hotspots, so they could access classes from

anywhere. For students at risk of failure, we instituted Prosser After School Support (PASS), a study hall proctored by core teachers available for tutoring. Because students increased their work hours to support their families during the pandemic, our school policy is to record all classes and make them available. To better serve our African-American males, we established a Black Student Union and an invitational group called Affinity Achievers. One of our assistant principals, a black male, mentors this group of 11th grade males and focuses on academics, identity, leadership, and SAT preparation.

These strategies, supports and programs have been an anchor for Prosser students throughout Remote Learning and we look forward to continuing them when school resumes fully in person.

For students achieving above grade level, our goal is to provide authentic opportunities that extend learning and leadership. Examples include National Honor Society induction, officer positions on the IB Student Council, and externships. These students are eligible for IB, AP and Dual Credit, and earning early college and career credits. Our IB Diploma Programme allows students to enroll in seven advanced-level courses in 11th and 12th grade. These students conduct independent research, working with a school-based supervisor throughout the process. Similarly, the IB Career Programme allows high-achieving students in our CTE program to enroll in two IB Diploma Programme courses and requires a Reflective Project that investigates an ethical dilemma related to their career pathway. Both IB programs require students to extend themselves in the areas of service, language acquisition, creativity, and activity. Our programs prepare students for success at selective universities, and we have expanded access to these programs by doubling our Diploma Programme size while maintaining high subject scores and adding the Career Programme. This has enabled our students to receive prestigious scholarships such as Questbridge and Posse and to match and succeed at highly selective institutions such as the University of Chicago, Northwestern, and Brown University.

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

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

Prosser recognizes that students will feel engaged and motivated when their environment offers accessible, meaningful, and rigorous instruction for academic, social, and emotional growth, and rich and diverse opportunities in preparation for college and career.

Teachers, counselors, and staff create an accessible and motivating environment by ensuring all students have spaces to find social engagement, including classes, clubs, and athletic programs. Prosser has extracurricular clubs based on shared cultural, social, or academic interests, including a Black Student Union, Safe School Ambassadors, Meditation Club, K-Pop Club, Anime Club, Prosser Players Theatrical Ensemble, and Girls Who Code. Sports teams include track, volleyball, baseball, softball, swimming, water polo, soccer, football, basketball, sideline and competitive cheer. Participation provides students with a feeling of purpose and belonging. Clubs and sports have adapted to remote learning by holding meetings via Google Meet and staying in contact on Google Classroom. Prosser's Advisory provides opportunities for students to interact socially during student-led discussions and receive news about upcoming college and career-related opportunities. Social engagement helps students to feel connected with teachers and peers in ways that motivate academic achievement while fostering community. During COVID, we transitioned from traditional awards assemblies to livestreamed events to celebrate students' academic and attendance achievements. We also sponsor competitions between cohorts to motivate the completion of academic and graduation milestones. The largest of our social engagement efforts was a virtual prom and drive-through graduation ceremony in the spring, both of which we will repeat this year. Our mascot visits a lot of virtual classes, as well.

Prosser teachers have adapted to remote learning by ensuring that all students have access to learning materials through Google Classroom and use knowledge of students to choose learning materials that they know students will find engaging, such as texts and examples that relate to student interests and videos from YouTube and TikTok that involve course skills and concepts. Teachers have further adapted with tools such as Desmos, Google Scholar, YouTube, FlipGrid, and Peardeck to engage students. Teachers use Remind with guardians' permission to safely send text messages that encourage academic performance. In core classes, students engage with and create a variety of media types to enact conceptual and procedural understanding: film, visual art, music, creative writing, and website design. Multimodal instruction supports students' college and career readiness by providing transfer skills that students can use to learn and navigate their own career plans. Students' creative expression permeates daily life at Prosser, even online, through student-designed informational presentations and talent show performances.

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

Parents and community are instrumental at Prosser as they represent a majority of our governing body, the Local School Council. This group of 4 parents, 2 community members, 2 teachers, 1 staff member, 1 student, and the principal meets monthly to approve expenditures, develop and implement the Continuous Improvement Work Plan, and evaluate the principal and decide on contract renewal. The council chair is always a parent representative. Related organizations include the Parent Advisory Council and the Bilingual Advisory Council, which are chaired by parents and meet monthly to discuss opportunities to benefit families and their students' scholastic success. Often partner organizations, like Heartland Alliance, are also present.

Many Prosser students are the first to attend college, and we partner with colleges and universities to support students and their families with postsecondary planning. Through Chicago's City Colleges, we offer students dual credit math and English, as well as transitional English to guarantee credit-bearing placement in college. Students participate in a range of summer programming like UIC's Medicina Academy, DePaul's Actuarial Science Camp and Northwestern Academy. We host Family Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Nights to ensure seniors who can apply for federal aid do so, and we support family members in the same endeavor. Our partnership with Introspect Youth Services and Illinois Student Assistance

Commission helps to staff these nights with knowledgeable, bilingual individuals. Our partner, OneGoal, allows us to offer a three-year college-preparation pathway each year and trains our teachers to work with students to ensure college admissions, enrollment, and persistence.

As a Career and Technical Education Academy, we have industry partners that support each of our CTE pathways, but the most notable is our connection to International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 134 for Solar Renewable Energy, as well as Design B&B for Digital Media. Both provide career exposure through speaking engagements, job shadows, internships, and work site visits.

Our most important community partnerships support the physical and mental health of our students and their families: Planned Parenthood provides sexual education in our health courses; Humboldt Park Health Services and Norwegian American Hospital send mobile care vans providing physical exams, vaccinations and other health services. Metro Family Services provides counseling. The pandemic has resulted in the most important community outreach we have done: from March 2020 until November 2020, we were a food distribution site, with our culinary staff preparing and passing out nine meals per day per child with no identification required to partake. Since November 2020, our property has served as a drive-through COVID testing site for the City of Chicago Department of Public Health.

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

Valuing and supporting teachers are paramount. The abrupt transition to Remote Learning in the spring was difficult, and increased instructional requirements when we returned in the fall created new challenges; Prosser provided supports to ease this burden and support growth. Prosser recognized that: teachers needed technological tools and training; they needed to shift instructional plans to focus on critical standards; local, national and world events heightened awareness of systemic racism and inequalities; teachers were as traumatized by the pandemic and social isolation as were students; many people needed better coping mechanisms. Our response was holistic.

In the spring, each of the 60 school days our building was closed, teachers received a morning email including student updates, instructional considerations, self-care strategies, and encouragements to bolster connectedness, normalcy, and drive. To combat isolation, we created daily virtual spaces for 15 minutes of informal togetherness for faculty members, and we continued department meetings and all-staff meetings routinely for the remainder of the year, but their focus was the social emotional needs of our faculty. This served as support for our educators, and modeled for them how to do the same for their students, because people's basic social and emotional needs must be met before they can teach or learn. Concurrently, we built collective documents to share resources and developed teachers teaching teachers videos covering topics such as incorporating closed captioning in Google Meets and the implications of pandemic grading policies.

When we returned in the fall for a more rigorous remote learning experience, our teams capitalized on teachers' recognition of the barriers to educational opportunities revealed in the spring and increased opportunities to address these issues in department, course team, and equity initiative meetings. The meeting cadence for the year focused on collaboration despite distance, instructional alignment and culturally responsive teaching to build intellectual capacity. To that end, teachers were organized into cross-curricular teams to read and make meaning of Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain. To support teaching and learning success, the Senior Leadership Team established Remote Learning Expectations at the beginning of the year, then created platforms for teachers to contribute to the development of a Remote Learning Best Practices tool that guided unit tuning protocols and peer observations. Encouraging teacher and student voice helped to ensure stakeholders felt respected and valued, an important part of our mission, particularly in the face of separation and stress. Finally, because we lost the ability to offer the occasional bagel as a thank you for the hard work our teachers do, we send periodic mailings home to acknowledge our deep appreciation.

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

Prosser administration is in its first year and executing a strategic vision for long term improvement. In the face of COVID, we remain committed to growth and focus on instructional alignment to create equitable

educational experiences for all students, more systematic and effective tiered supports, and a widespread understanding of restorative practice. That said, democratic and distributed leadership guides daily practice. A foundational belief is that in our classrooms there are as many teachers as there are learners, and we believe that our decisions are best made when informed by those people the decisions will impact and that we all rise as the leadership capacity of each of us rises.

The principal and three assistant principals are each responsible for the leadership development of instructional, operational and behavioral teams that support student attainment, growth, and health. Administration meets formally twice a week to set expectations for new and continuing work, debrief progress, brainstorm solutions, and celebrate achievements. As often as weekly depending on the efficacy and goals of the team, each administrator meets with their respective leads to do the same, and they represent the following teams: Instructional Leadership, Post-Secondary, Diverse Learning, MTSS, Service Learning, Advisory, Attendance, IB, Career & Technical Education, Mathematics, Science, Social Science, English, English Acquisition, Arts, World Language, PE, JROTC, Counseling, Security, Culture & Climate, Behavioral Health, Technology, Facilities, Admissions, Purchasing, Payroll, and Athletics. Administration meets monthly with the Professional Problems Committee about contractual issues, the Professional Personnel Leadership Committee about non-contractual issues, and the Local School Council, which advises on budget and curriculum. This organizational system has increased leadership opportunities in our building so that 38 of 79 teachers (or 48%) and 47 of 116 total staff members (or 40.5%) serve in some leadership or representative capacity.

At Prosser, we open meetings with our mission and vision, statements which place students at the center of decision making and commit to shifting and growing our practice to serve the needs of those in our charge, even when their needs change drastically. Additionally, four questions guide the practice of our Instructional Leadership Team and they push us to remain student-centered, growth-oriented, non-complacent, and equitable in our decision making and actions.

In these ways, we remain focused on students while providing leaders the coaching they need to support their teams. COVID has presented a great many challenges, but overcoming those challenges has forced our focus, and we have been able to move forward with strong and meaningful work.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

Our mission is to keep pace with an ever-changing society and meet students' social and emotional needs in the same way we meet their academic needs. These are not disparate goals. We serve students holistically when we recognize larger context and approach our craft in a culturally responsive manner. The murder of George Floyd heightened the national response to racial injustice in America, but the murder of Laquan McDonald had already raised tensions in Chicago, and we knew we must make space to discuss our students' lived experiences. As the VanDyke trial closed, we let families know our educators held a special position to create safe spaces in their classrooms for students to engage in meaningful inquiry with their peers around issues connected to the verdict. We curated classroom resources and had our counseling team ready for students triggered by local events. The trial passed more peacefully than our community anticipated, but it prepared us for the future and pushed us to think critically about what school is for and how to build students' civic engagement while attending their emotional needs. We had to acknowledge that our own systems may be creating racial barriers for students. Our response was myriad.

Our Continuous Improvement Work Plan focuses on three primary goals: instructional alignment, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, and equitable approaches to discipline; each of these supports a larger commitment to dismantling racial barriers in our building and each targets the support of our African-American male students.

We introduced Advisory, a weekly 38-minute class addressing academic behaviors, social-



emotional learning, post-secondary planning, and critical thinking. In non-emergency circumstances, Advisory is a place for students to process their intellectual and emotional responses to local, national, and global events. When a more immediate response is necessary, as it was during the insurrection at the Capitol Building, we advise teachers to allow students to explore their feelings in class, counselors have open office hours, and we curate resources immediately.

We sponsor a school-wide book study of Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain*. It is important that our commitment to equity is primary rather than ancillary. For that reason, our faculty meets weekly in mixed-content groups for these book discussions. The work includes recognizing inherent biases and systems that do not serve our most marginalized populations. This is hard, slow work, but we persevere. Concurrently, at the student level, we have established a Black Student Union, whose motto is #weareone to be inclusive of all voices and to welcome allies.

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

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When our school building closed in March 2020, we knew that students would be at a loss for their learning space and the interactions that transpire within it. Staff voted to continue the Advisory Program initiated in 2019 so that all students could engage in a common curriculum that, in the absence of a physical space, would provide a shared virtual experience coherent with Prosser's mission and vision.

In 2019, the Advisory Program implemented weekly interactive lectures on three strands: Academic/Executive Skills, Social-Emotional Learning, and College and Career Readiness. One of the Advisory Program's strengths in successfully educating and supporting students has been its policy of having students stay with their Advisory Leader during all four years of their high school career. This has allowed our students to form supportive relationships with teachers on the basis of students' well-being outside of academics.

Sociopolitical tumult of May and June 2020 led us to understand that our practice must be culturally responsive. In our redesign of Advisory this year, teachers sought to create a format that would invite students into a common epistemic space as mutual learners and makers of meaning. We developed a discussion protocol that combined the Question Formulation Technique, in which students generate questions in response to a stimulus (such as a video or work of art), and Killer Mike's (June 17, 2020) formula for conscious and caring social action: plot, plan, strategize, organize, and mobilize. Instead of receiving lectures, students would construct understanding in a discussion apprenticeship model. Most importantly, each week students are able to provide feedback and make suggestions about the content they would like to explore.

As implemented in September 2020, Advisory created these spaces for discussion and preserved a shared virtual experience for all Prosser students through broadcasting announcements and information about school-community events and policies, extracurricular activities, colleges and apprenticeships, and enrichment programs. Students have formed friendships through learning shared interests and have asked Advisory leaders for help in navigating online systems. Advisory's format has allowed students and teachers to engage with values of freedom, belonging, and self-efficacy through its shared space.

Importantly, though in ways that we could not have anticipated, Advisory has provided a space that adults have used to support students as they work through events of national trauma, and it has also allowed us time and space to process the loss of members of our immediate school community. We will return to a different school, but Advisory has allowed us to experience this difference together.