

***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) [ ] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

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

Official School Name North Kingstown Senior High School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 150 Fairway Drive  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City North Kingstown State RI Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 02852-6207

County Washington County

Telephone (401) 268-6236 Fax (401) 268-6210

Web site/URL https://nkhs.nksd.net/ E-mail Barbara\_Morse@nksd.net

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 Philip Auger E-mail Phil\_Auger@nksd.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name North Kingstown School District Tel. (401) 268-6200

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. Gregory Blasbalg  
(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.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 1 K-12 schools
- 9 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	176	181	357
10	206	173	379
11	169	210	379
12 or higher	192	167	359
<b>Total Students</b>	743	731	1474

\*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):
- 0.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1.5 % Asian
  - 1.4 % Black or African American
  - 5.3 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 88.8 % White
  - 2.8 % 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: 5%

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	28
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	41
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	69
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	1485
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Swahili, Russian, Tamil, French

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %

Total number students who qualify: 196

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %

118 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>20</u> Autism	<u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>30</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>51</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>9</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2

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	5
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	106
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	13

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 14:1

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	93%	95%	94%	95%	93%
High school graduation rate	95%	96%	93%	94%	93%

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	335
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	70%
Enrolled in a community college	16%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	6%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
Other	4%

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 mission is to educate students to become intellectually active adults, to inspire them to reach individual excellence, and to encourage them to become responsible members of society. North Kingstown High School is committed to providing students with a learning environment that fosters their growth as individuals and supports them in becoming effective communicators, problem solvers, independent thinkers, skillful collaborators, active citizens, and self-directed lifelong learners.

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.

In accordance with the Rhode Island Department of Health, we are restricted to 50% student capacity in the building in order to adhere to social distancing requirements. We have a hybrid model: students are divided into two cohorts (Groups A and B) with alternating in-person learning days. We are a one-to-one device school. All students have Chromebooks to use at home. Teachers have Chromebooks, desktop computers, projection devices, and document cameras. Students at home join instruction through Google Meets. About 25% of families chose full-time distance learning for their children. At the beginning of second semester, 100 of those students returned to the hybrid model. Students in our Life Skills program attend daily, as do several other students whom we determined to be at extreme social/emotional risk. This year, we changed from an eight-period/every-other-day to a semester schedule in which courses meet every day in order to reduce the number of courses students must juggle at one time with the hybrid model. The master schedule was adjusted so that lunch period is at the end of the day. At that time, students are released with take-home meals for that day and the following day of distance learning. We hope to have all students return full-time on April 26th, pending approval from the Rhode Island Department of Health. Families will have the option of full-distance learning but the hybrid model will be phased out.

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

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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North Kingstown is a picturesque seaside community with a population of around 22,000 in North Kingstown proper and approximately another 4,100 residents in the hamlets of Slocum and Saunderstown. Students attending NKHS include those from the Saunderstown area, Jamestown, and CTE students from other surrounding communities. Our town's median income statistics mask the economic diversity of the town. Housing ranges from affluent coastal homes to affordable or subsidized units created from former Quonset Point military housing. A strong military tradition in the community still exists through the National Guard facility. In 2018, IRS.gov listed 29% of our town's incomes at less than \$25,000 while another 30% earned over \$100,000.

With students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, our challenge is to provide a curriculum that encompasses the needs of all learners by closing gaps and allowing for maximum growth while creating a variety of learning opportunities.

Our students are highly competitive in academics, athletics, fine arts, and Career/Technical Student Organization challenges. This year we have five national merit scholarship finalists. School leaders recognize that students need to balance competition with healthy perspectives and a priority on integrity and respect. Advanced level students attend classes as Peer Partners in adaptive classes. Unified sports bring together students from all skills levels. College readiness is a strong focus, but care is used to engage a variety of learners and facilitate alternative goals with hands-on programs and quality school-to-career options.

Extracurricular programs meet the diverse needs of our student body. In addition to athletics, we offer roughly thirty clubs and activities which are overseen by the Student Services Office. Drama and music productions earn statewide notoriety, including recognition of our many all-state musicians. Our Student Union is composed of aspiring community leaders who partner with school administration to provide perspective and inspire change. The school leadership club also plays a role in shaping our school climate. Interested applicants endure a rigorous selection process. Through their work in this club, members refine their leadership potential in order to maximize their contributions to our school environment.

Athletically, we compete in the highest division in our state for almost every sport we offer. Our success is due not only to the ability of our athletes, but also the positive culture and spirit of our school. Our boosters club and class council play an integral role in bringing stakeholders together. Additionally, we provide a year-round strength and conditioning program to support all student-athletes. Ours is a proud tradition of athletic excellence.

In addition to a school-wide move to restorative practices, we offer multiple avenues for students to have an impact on social-emotional learning. The list includes: Varsity Athletes Against Substance Abuse, NK buddies, SAGA (gender awareness), Choose Love, as well as small groups led by our mental health team.

We believe that what sets us apart from other schools is our willingness to innovate and adapt to the needs of our students. We encourage students to explore their interests, understand their strengths, and purposefully design their own pathways. It is our mission to provide the means for students to realize their goals. NKHS provides an online platform called Xello to develop and maintain an ILP (Individual Learning Plan) with guidance by school counselors. At the start of each year, students write SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) then revisit and reflect on those goals throughout the year. Students take part in interest inventories, skills inventories, career searches, and college searches to help develop their post high school plans. In addition to our extensive Program of Studies, students can access courses in the All Course Network (ACN) and PrepareRI dual enrollment courses to further their career exploration and preparation. We allow students to have flexible scheduling of their school day in order to facilitate off-campus courses and internships. This year, nine seniors will graduate with welding certifications from New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) as a result of a collaboration between NKHS, NEIT, Electric Boat Industries, and RealJobsRI.



Our bond as a community has always been one of NKHS' greatest strengths. The restrictions placed on student socialization, clubs, and athletics have been especially difficult on our student population. Our hybrid synchronous schedule allows students to be in school together albeit with some on the screen instead of in the same room. We were one of the few schools in our state that allowed music (including band, orchestra, and chorus) to continue by providing areas where students could maintain more than fourteen feet of distance, utilizing specialized masks, and instrument covers. We created pods for athletic teams to practice even if there were no competitions, and some clubs were able to meet virtually.

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

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

NKHS is a one-to-one device district in which all students use Chromebooks. Graduation requirements include four years in math and English, three years in Social Studies and Science, and additional credits in democracy, technology, and financial literacy. Mathematics, English, and Social Studies follow the state and district adopted Common Core Curriculum, Social Studies aligns to the GSEs, and Science classes are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. Across disciplines, the standards are assessed by the state via PSAT, SAT, and NGSE exams. The school analyzes data to identify curriculum needs and subgroup gaps, and to track individual progress toward the RI Commissioner’s seal of proficiency. NKHS offers fifteen Advanced Placement courses which follow the College Board’s course and exam descriptions, and an additional twenty courses which are eligible for concurrent college credit. All courses utilize common unit assessments by content, and Comprehensive Course Assessments (CCAs) are part of our Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR).

In English, Introduction to Literature and American Literature form the two foundational years at the college preparatory (CP) and honors level. Juniors may choose between World Literature, British Literature (a concurrent college course), or A.P. English Language and Composition. Seniors can take Topics in Literature or A.P. Literature and Composition. Students may also choose electives in writing and journalism.

Mathematics follows a traditional Algebra 1 to Calculus curriculum. CP Statistics and CP Calculus follow the same basic sequence as the A.P. courses, but with a reduced scope and rigor appropriate to a college preparatory level.

The Science course sequence offers students a well-rounded exposure to the different science disciplines of: Earth and Space Sciences, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences. College preparatory courses emphasize the conceptual content of the course with some mathematical reasoning involved. Honors courses offer more in-depth content and utilize a higher level of mathematical reasoning than college preparatory courses. Elective courses include Forensics, Pharmacology, Horticulture and Landscaping.

Social Studies courses encompass World History and U.S. History I and II as well as a required course in Democracy. Social studies elective courses include Rhode Island History, Contemporary History, Psychology, Current Issues, History Through Film I and II, Economics, Law, and Sociology.

In our current operating schedule, high school teachers balance simultaneous instruction for both in-person and distance learners. Administration is committed to working with teachers at their level of expertise and comfort to help them make these instructional adjustments while maintaining the highest level of academic rigor and aiming to complete the curriculum to the extent possible. Teachers had the opportunity to engage in professional development for seven school days to prepare for opening day. In June 2020, each curriculum area identified learning gaps from lost instructional time since March and evaluated the curriculum prior to the start of the 2020/2021 COVID year in an effort to prioritize essential learning standards. All teachers utilize a synchronous learning model through Google Meets to include distance and in-person learners in the same instructional time.

The most challenging aspect of teaching during the pandemic has been assessments. Prior to the pandemic, the CCAs which were designed to include both content level skills and performance-based tasks needed modification to reflect more performance and/or project-based formats. Frequent shorter assessments are now administered while reducing the number of longer assessments. Teachers use a variety of online resources to proctor assessments, such as Delta Math, Formative, New Quizzes (in Canvas), CK12 and Gizmo. Recognizing the challenges students face, most teachers are also allowing more flexibility for submissions. As one faculty member noted, grades “should reflect achievement, not adherence to a deadline.”

In a typical year, after review of first quarter grades, students and parents/guardians are notified of a failing

grade via a letter sent home by the students' school counselor. The letter also encourages students, parents, and guardians to reach out to the teacher, and students are also encouraged to attend the Academic Resource Center after school for extra help and support. This year, a meeting was held with each student who failed a course in the first quarter. These meetings included the parent/guardian, school counselor, and an administrator. A plan was developed to support each of these students and was shared with the student's family and teachers. Passing rates rose from 83% at the end of Quarter 1 to 86% by the end of Quarter 2.

In a review of student performance data at the end of first semester, we noticed that students in our Success Academy were not doing as well as other populations. Many of the students in this population were not actively engaged on their distance learning day. After reviewing class sizes and working to solve transportation issues, we were able to invite these students to attend school every day starting in February in order to meet their need for in-person learning.

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

NKHS prides itself on giving students the opportunity to choose courses and pathways that are relevant to their individual interests and career goals. Several years ago, the faculty and administration collaborated to expand our seven-period schedule to eight blocks of instructional time to provide more time for electives, dual enrollment courses, internships, and work-based learning. The concessions made by the faculty demonstrate our commitment to increasing student opportunities.

Recognizing that our traditional college-bound focus did not meet the needs of all students, we created four approved Career and Technical Education Programs: Pre-Engineering/Robotics, Business/Finance, Information Technology/Computer Science, and Music Performance/Music Education. All students in the CTE programs obtain work-based learning skills upon completion of their program in the form of an internship, industry-based projects, job shadowing, and/or state and national Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) competitions. Students also have the opportunity to earn industry-level certifications such as National Academy of Finance. This year, we added Cybersecurity to our Computer Science sequence, creating a four-sequence course eligible for Project Lead the Way credentials and 12 university credits. Next year, we will add Computer Integrated Manufacturing to our engineering curriculum. Our long range goal is to allow students to develop student-run enterprises in which students design, manufacture, and market their products.

Our students have excelled in Career and Technical Student Organizations. Recently, twenty of our DECA students were awarded medals at the state level and will advance to international competition. In the past three years, our Engineering/Robotics students won the state FIRST robotics competition and twice advanced to compete at the national level.

All students are encouraged to take leadership roles within our school. Opportunities include membership on committees, the Leadership Team, and the Student Union, which sends two representatives to the School Committee.

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

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

Our Fine Arts, Career, Physical Education/Health, World Language, Media, and Special Education Departments provide courses that are essential to student academic, social-emotional, and physical development. At the heart of these programs is our belief in heterogeneous grouping and inclusion.

The Fine Arts Department provides classes in visual arts and media, theater, and music. Courses range from entrance level, which requires no prior experience, to college credit concurrent enrollment. Courses present concepts in aural, visual, physical, and symbolic ways to maximize the learning potential of each student. Students grow as artists and acquire skills in the areas of creativity, communication, collaboration, problem

solving, time management and perseverance.

Our Visual Arts Department shifted instruction to home-based art projects. For example, the Digital Arts teacher found free software that can be used on Chromebooks. The department worked with the principal to order basic art supplies, create care packages and offer them to students working from home. Choral and instrumental classes are held within Covid guidelines for music instruction by keeping 14 feet apart, singing with masks on, and using instrument covers. Teachers use technology such as SmartMusic, MusicTheory.net and Sight Singing Factory to keep students engaged while in-class playing time is limited. There is less emphasis on cooperative learning and a greater focus on independent responsibility.

Students in PE/ Health classes have the flexibility to complete assignments online as needed throughout each quarter of the academic year. Students complete workouts and submit them through recordings or pictures uploaded at the end of each required workout. Health lessons are completed via Google Classroom and discussions continue on Google Meets throughout the year.

The World Languages Department utilizes the World Readiness Standards and the proficiency-based model provided by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to develop curriculum and assessments. Students are assessed in all three modes of communication - interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational - which are rated using the ACTFL performance descriptors. Cultural competencies are also taught and assessed. Because the department has always employed proficiency-based assessments, the current operating schedule has not changed the way students are assessed. Only the delivery method has changed. For example, presentational or interpersonal speaking may now be assessed via a Google Meet or recorded performance instead of in person.

The library/media program supports acquisition of essential skills and knowledge by ensuring that students use ideas and information effectively and ethically. Students are empowered to think critically, read enthusiastically, and research skillfully. During the pandemic, our media staff also provides technical support for students' devices.

Our Life Skills program offers academic classes designed to meet the needs of eligible students with Individualized Education Programs whose curriculum is aligned to Essential Elements and whose IEP team may have determined that they will participate in the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Alternate Assessment. Transitional needs are met through academic, vocational, and/or daily living skills and experiences both in school and in the community.

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

NKHS has a diverse range of learners, due in part to the socio-economic factors discussed in our Part III Summary. While the latest available accountability data lists no subgroups as performing below expectations, NKHS recognizes that equity gaps exist for students of color, students of low socio-economic status, and students who are differently abled. Recent data also indicates that English Language Learners are lagging on ACCESS tests. Any such gaps are unacceptable to us. Our district has begun to develop a greater understanding of the implicit barriers for students by learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion through cultural competency workshops, curriculum review, and related reading on these critical topics.

Our philosophy is that traditional remediation programs which move slowly through reduced standards do not help close achievement gaps. Grade-level standards are fixed for all students, thus time is the variable factor. This approach helps close achievement gaps and allows for the accelerated learning of advanced students. For example, in order to achieve grade-level expectations, the Success Academy (SA) provides extra instructional and practice time for students struggling in math and literacy. Split courses such as Algebra 1/Geometry meet every day for a semester, thus completing both CP curricula in one year. If freshmen fail Algebra 1 CP, the Algebra 1/Geometry course allows for them to be back on grade level by the end of sophomore

year. The variable time approach is also used for students achieving at an advanced level. Geometry/Algebra 2 allows for students who enrolled in Algebra 1 as freshmen to accelerate their sequence. Next year, we will add accelerated Statistics/Calculus CP.

We routinely use STAR progress monitoring, IXL diagnostic data, course assessments, and data from other testing such as PSAT 10, and SAT School Day to make course recommendations that offer varied levels of support and intervention. When indicated by the data, more intensive support is provided through a Response to Intervention (RtI), a 504 Plan, or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Offering many collaborative classes across all grade levels helps to support academic diversity in the regular classroom and provides access to the state curriculum. Students who have an IEP in collaborative classes receive support and services embedded in their regular education classes. Additionally, NKHS has a Life Skills Program and a Transition Academy. The Life Skills Program offers academic classes designed to meet the needs of eligible students, placing emphasis on exploring transition opportunities and everyday life skills. The Transition Academy is for students who have met their academic requirements but need additional transition programs.

English Language Learners (ELL) or multi language learners at NKHS are offered specialized instruction in either a separate ELL class or as part of an inclusion model during English class, and all other courses are within integrated classes. When possible, materials are provided in both the students' preferred language and in English. Students receive support to improve their social use of English as well as in their academic work. NKHS values our ELL students whom we regard as an asset. We encourage their participation in the Seal of Biliteracy program. Last year, 40 students earned the seal.

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

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

At North Kingstown High School (NKHS), we engage students by offering them a hybrid schedule that allows for in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, a robust program of studies, multiple pathways and multi-level classes, and access to social-emotional support.

In adapting to requirements for social distancing, we reduced the daily number of students in the building by 50%. To meet the needs of families and the logistics of transportation, we created two cohorts, Group A and Group B, based on alphabetical surnames. Students can choose to follow either a hybrid model (alternating in-person and distance learning days every other day) or a distance learning model. To encourage student engagement, we have revised our RtI process to include new attendance protocols and increased family outreach that aligns with the hybrid model. Our RtI process includes students, parents, school administrators, counselors, and mental health specialists so that all vital stakeholders are involved in a team approach to maximizing student success.

Multiple levels of classes ranging from Life Skills to Advanced Placement are offered to students based on ability. Students demonstrate proficiency through project-based learning. Comprehensive course assessments also measure student learning. NKHS offers four CTE programs: 1) Engineering & Robotics, 2) Academy of Music Education and Performance, 3) Academy of Business and Finance, and 4) Information Technology and Computer Engineering. We provide social and emotional support for students through restorative practices, social-emotional learning embedded in instruction, the PASS program, and a mental health team that includes a school psychologist, a school social worker, our guidance counselors, and a student assistance counselor.

Students have access to the online platform Xello which helps them to develop and manage their individualized learning plan. Through Xello students are able to explore career interests and aptitudes. Counselors counsel students on courses which connect to those explorations. Each year our guidance department holds an assembly to describe how students can create their own pathways or join one of our established CTE programs. In addition to the 21st century workplace skills embedded in our Senior Project and Comprehensive Course Assessments, all students are required to take a technology course to learn workplace communication and presentation skills. Juniors and seniors and their families are invited to attend college planning events with admissions representatives to help guide students as they consider their future academic and career pursuits.

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

Working with families, business and industry partners, and mentors is a vital part of the success of our students and our school improvement at North Kingstown High School (NKHS).

These stakeholders, including students, are part of our School Improvement Team (SIT). Parents, community business members, industry leaders, and representatives from higher education are invited to attend our monthly SIT meetings at which we examine the vision of the graduate to ensure that it aligns with our vision, mission, and goals for students.

To maintain regular and open communication with students' families, we send weekly newsletters that provide pertinent information about the upcoming week. This connection between school and home reinforces our vision of families as a vital part of student success.

NKHS prides itself on our partnership with the North Kingstown Prevention Coalition, a group that focuses on youth substance abuse prevention. The mission of this group is to raise awareness, provide education, and advocate for community change. An on-site School Assistance Counselor is available to students who seek confidential help. NKHS hosts family nights including showings of the documentary film Screenagers which was created to assist parents and students navigate the issues of a digital world, informational sessions

on the dangers of vaping, and various parenting workshops. Such events keep families informed while also opening up the opportunity for meaningful conversations between parents and students on serious topics.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, Parents Night, Open House, and eighth-grade orientation for incoming freshmen were held as virtual events to ensure public health and safety. Our food service staff has implemented a program to provide students with breakfast, lunch, and food to get them through the weekend. This program supports students regardless of economic status.

NKHS partners with area colleges and universities to offer students the opportunity to earn concurrent credit. Last year, we formed a partnership with the New England Institute of Technology and General Dynamics Electric Boat to allow students to enroll in welding apprenticeships that offer employment opportunities upon completion of the program and graduation. This program provides students with hands-on experience

in vocational areas of interest to them while also allowing them to earn credit toward graduation.

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

Our professional development model is goal-oriented and forward thinking. Faculty and staff input is important, as is recognition. Each week, the Skipper Award is presented to a deserving member of the faculty or staff, accompanied by a note about why that individual is worthy of special recognition. The honoree is then asked to select the next recipient of the award. Administration meets weekly with the faculty association representative and with the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). The ILT represents the faculty voice in decision making and planning for future professional development. To ensure that we create meaningful professional development, we focus on curriculum, instruction, assessment, community engagement, and social-emotional support.

Periodically throughout the year, administrators partner with stakeholders in our learning community to review and revise our school improvement plan. In addition, common planning time (CPT) is embedded in our block schedule. Teachers who share content areas are scheduled accordingly so they can plan collaboratively and align curriculum. Our primary goal is to ensure that all students have access to consistent, equitable instruction and curriculum. Such collaboration is an essential component of our professional culture.

This year, Covid-19 has posed significant challenges when it comes to maintaining our usual CPT format. Teachers have been provided with technology upgrades needed in order to teach in the hybrid virtual model, including document cameras and upgraded desktop computers. Chromebooks and tablets have also been provided to staff and students as needed to support Google Suite skills and use. Additionally, the district purchased a new learning management system which serves as an upgraded communication vehicle for teachers, students, and parents. A primary focus this year has been to provide professional development time to assist stakeholders in adopting new technologies. In addition to districtwide instructional sessions, the high school has created a team of “Canvas Cafe” faculty leaders to host drop-in sessions for teachers.

Beyond our adjustments to teaching and learning during the pandemic, several schoolwide committees have been formed to address school culture and climate, grading policies, and building-based revitalization of our SIT. The result is a professional environment based on participation and collaboration.

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

The Administrative team believes in a shared leadership model in which stakeholder input is vital. Our team consists of six administrators: Principal, Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning, Assistant Principal of Student Services, Athletic Director, and two Deans. This year, one dean position has been vacant. In addition to our Administrative team, several teachers have a leadership role, including Department Chairs, CTE/Internship Coordinator, Special Education Coordinator, Head of Guidance, and three mental health support staff. This structure allows us to focus on our philosophy and core values while supporting one another as leaders within the school community. The Principal meets weekly with individual faculty leaders

and also with the Student Union and their advisor.

In addition, we partner with our PTSO and School Improvement Team (SIT) to monitor progress toward our goals. This allows us to remain focused and to adapt and adjust in response to input from community stakeholders. This partnership also allows us to provide feedback to our internal leaders. SIT goals are adjusted to meet the needs of our students. The established leadership structure enables our students and our school to continue to be successful.

Our school's leadership ensures that policies, programs, relationships, and resources focus on student achievement. Our most recent ILT meeting focused on the plan for a successful return of all of our students from the hybrid model to full in-person instruction. We discussed the ways this transition will impact all stakeholders and the necessary steps we must take to ensure clear communication during the transition.

Our collaborative structure has supported the transformation of our school into a semi-virtual high school where the safety of in-person students adheres to CDC guidelines. Our attention to detail with regard to attendance, mental health support, and flexibility have resulted in a reduced failure rate.

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

NKHS addresses the diverse needs of our students through regular ongoing review of our curriculum for efficacy, social-emotional support, and equal access. Together, these three elements reflect the strength of our school.

In order to address certain aspects of our Social Studies and English curricula, we formed a partnership with a professor at the University of Rhode Island who specializes in Multicultural Education and Professional and Community Education. She provides our leadership team with powerful insight about what we teach with regard to race and equity. The result was the beginning of a revised curriculum across multiple courses. For example, we have reshaped our approach to teaching the history of slavery in America with a much different lens. We purchased texts suggested by the professor and plan to hold follow-up workshops to continue to address the need for curriculum revision. We have also joined a project with the XQ Institute and Rhode Island Department of Education's Office of Innovation to engage in an Educational Opportunity Assessment to identify inequities that need to be addressed. Our school will participate in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiative set by the School Committee.

We want to embed social-emotional learning in our instruction as well as our classroom culture. Approximately 30 staff members are trained in restorative practices. We plan to continue this work through our School Culture and Climate Committee with a focus on the art of questioning, utilizing Restorative Practice circles, and being trauma informed. A growing number of staff members are able to provide an environment of support, empathy, and understanding for all students.

These measures, together with our Positive Alternative to School Suspension (PASS) program and our mental health supports, help us to meet the diverse needs of all students. The Assistant Principals of Teaching and Learning and Student Services play a significant role in facilitating these multi-faceted supports.



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

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Creating a schedule that leveraged our technology has been the core of our continued success. We are fortunate to be a one-to-one device district. Our students and teachers were already equipped for distance learning when we left the building in March 2020.

At first, we created an asynchronous schedule to provide time for students and teachers to meet virtually via Google Meets. Some teachers posted assignments on Google Classroom and used their meet time to answer questions while other teachers used their meet time to provide instruction. We initially believed this schedule would be short-term so we focused on the mental health of students traumatized by the sudden shutdown. However, as it became apparent that the shutdown was going to be long-term, we realized adjustments were needed.

As we prepared to return to school in September, community feedback, including input from mental health experts, indicated that the schedule needed to include strong academic and social emotional components while maximizing in-person student/teacher interaction. Our first change was to create a synchronous schedule in which both in-person and distance learners receive simultaneous instruction.

We have a large student population in a building that is near capacity, so only half of our students can attend in-person in order to allow for social distancing. For grade-specific courses, dividing students by grade level would have created either overloaded or empty classrooms. Instead, we created an “A/B” schedule dividing students alphabetically by surname. Traditionally, the schedule has eight blocks with a Day 1/Day 2 rotation. We realized rotating both A/B cohorts with Day 1/Day 2 would create confusion. The solution was to convert to semester courses. Doing so allows students to focus on four courses at a time instead of eight, which especially benefits our students with special needs. Because there are no full-year courses, second semester allows for remediation of first semester courses as needed.

Maintaining continuity has been the key to our success. Students who are unable to attend in person can attend virtually. Healthy teachers who are required to quarantine are able to teach from home while a substitute monitors students in school. While teaching during Covid-19 means teachers cannot cover the full curriculum they would in a normal year, we have minimized academic loss and our failure rates are lower than initially anticipated.