

U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Darrin Paschke

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

Official School Name Fredonia High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 425 East Main Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Fredonia NY 14063-1496
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Chautauqua County

Telephone (716) 679-1581

Fax (716) 672-8687

Web site/URL https://www.fredonia.wnyric.org/

E-mail dpaschke@fcsd.wnyric.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Jeffrey Sortisio

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jsortisio@fcsd.wnyric.org

District Name Fredonia Central School District Tel. (716) 679-1581

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. Brian Aldrich

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	61	41	102
10	67	51	118
11	59	53	112
12 or higher	78	56	134
Total Students	265	201	466

*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
 - 2 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % White
 - 3 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 9%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	33
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	489
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%
8 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Urdu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 29%
Total number students who qualify: 134

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %
38 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism | <u>5</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	23
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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 21:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	97%	91%	90%	94%	89%

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 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	113
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	70%
Enrolled in a community college	25%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	15%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	2%

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.

A community partnership ensuring all children are valued, learn, and possess knowledge and attitudes needed to reach their full potential intellectually, personally, socially, and productively.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

The Fredonia community resides in a village of approximately 10,000 people. Often referred to as a college town, Fredonia is the home of the State University of New York (SUNY) at Fredonia, the first national gas well, the first meeting of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and gold medalist Jenn Suhr for the pole vault in the 2012 Olympic Games. The makeup of the village has changed in recent years as businesses have left the area. Most notable among the closures was the Carriage House in 2015. Starting in 1909 as Red Wing, the company employed over 250 people and manufactured, among other foods, peanut butter and tomato products. Most of the locals describe how the smell of the ketchup that permeated the village in late August and early September was inexorably linked to the back-to-school experience.

With jobs disappearing, families moving away, and more college students moving into newly expanded on-campus housing, many homes, apartments and trailers became available at lower prices. While the Carriage house closing was the most notable, the economic downturn over the past ten years is clear. In 2008, approximately 22% of the district’s students were eligible for free or reduced lunches. In 2018, approximately 40% of all students in the district were considered economically disadvantaged.

Despite the challenges of economic change, Fredonia has continued to provide high-quality education and produce highly-qualified global citizens. The school community is proud of its long-standing traditions and has been willing to embrace new ones in recent years. The school’s football field is uniquely not located on the main campus. It is nestled in the heart of the village at the base of a hill in the middle of town. The community turns out in orange and black for each of the home games and demonstrates great school and community spirit. The annual homecoming parade begins at the village hall and ends at the football field as the band plays, students march, and the community lines the streets to cheer the whole entourage. In some of the recent years, however, with area populations shrinking, Fredonia has welcomed two other neighboring districts to play on the football team while they were unable to field a team. During those years, the participating schools shared facilities and players so some of the home games were not located at the Fredonia field. The communities worked together to make the changes work for the students.

Other traditions include: celebrating academic accomplishments at Academic Awards Night, freshman orientation, the entire school clapping student athletes out of the school to the sound of the fight song when they earn a trip to compete at the state level, an annual decision day for seniors to show their choice of college or career, an annual musical, culture night, teachers writing PRIDE notes to students who demonstrate preparedness, respect, integrity, dedication, and/or excellence, a gratitude week for students to show gratitude to faculty and staff, Kids Escaping Drugs Face-2-Face program, ending the year with the graduating class walking through the student-lined halls of the elementary and middle schools on the last day of school to the cheers and applause of all faculty and students, and the beautiful graduation ceremony - with a keynote speaker who is a Fredonia High School graduate - held at King Concert Hall on the SUNY Fredonia campus.

The academic programming at Fredonia provides challenges to students at all levels. There are academic and social-emotional supports through special education services, a student assistance team, integrated co-teaching, academic intervention services, mentoring through check and connect study halls, and teacher availability after school each day for extra help. Students have opportunities to advance at their pace to take general level courses, Regents courses, advanced courses, college courses through two local colleges, and Advanced Placement courses. Juniors and seniors can explore hands-on careers in cosmetology, auto body, auto tech, construction, conservation, culinary arts, sports conditioning, health care, welding, small animal vet tech, or criminal justice through the local BOCES Career and Technical Education (CTE) program. Further real-life experience is available through internship programs that Fredonia sets up through partnerships with businesses in the surrounding community. Students can develop socially, emotionally, physically and culturally through the many clubs and athletic options offered at Fredonia. Whether it be through the newly-formed Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) club, Power Club (weight lifting), Game Club, National Honor Society, Rotary Interact Club, Tri-M Music National Honor Society, Student Council, Art National Honor Society, Model United Nations, Jazz Band, Madrigal Singers, High School Musical, the school newspaper (The Spectator), The Crucible literary magazine, or the English as a New Language

Culture Nights, Fredonia's students have access to rich programming with dedicated staff advisers and community volunteers. To further enrich student-student, teacher-student, and teacher-teacher relationships during the school day, Fredonia High School has begun developing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program that includes trauma-informed instruction, social-emotional learning, and restorative practices.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The department aligns curriculum to the Next Generation Standards and Common Core. Differentiated instruction manifests in the varied instructional strategies employed in advanced, Regents, and Academic Intervention Services (AIS) classrooms. The department also offers unique courses in journalism, creative writing, publications, and video.

In AIS classes, close reading and vocabulary development (essential to college/career readiness) are key elements of daily lesson activities. In AIS classes, a great deal of explicit instruction occurs, students receive constant one-on-one teacher assistance during scaffolding activities, and direct consultant special education teachers provide differentiated instruction (even beyond what the lead teacher provides) for students with disabilities.

In contrast, in an advanced class, teachers provide less explicit instruction and more group-work wherein students help each other accomplish increasingly complex tasks (reading critically, presenting, writing) that surpass the standards of the Regents Exam and prepare students for college and beyond.

While teachers differentiate instruction in response to the skill levels of students in these courses, a summative assessment (final exam) ensures that students are on-track to tackle the Regents Exam at the end of the junior year, and if not, students may be moved from one level to another (in either direction). Teachers create writing and reading tasks and assessments that center on Common Core texts, but that also parallel Regents Exam tasks. Student performance on assessments guides teacher recommendations for moving students into AIS, Advanced or Regents level classes where the pacing matches the students' needs.

Elective courses including Creative Writing, Journalism, Video Production and Communications & Publications offer a variety of opportunities for students to explore their creative sides with the possibility of publication in one of our printed pieces: Creative Writing, The Crucible, Journalism, The Spectator and Communications & Publications, Folio, our yearbook. The Spectator has consistently received awards from various scholastic journalism organizations for Best Newspaper from the New York Press Association, The Empire State School Press Association (Syracuse University), The Columbia Scholastic Press Association (Columbia University), Quill and Scroll (University of Iowa) and The Western New York School Press Association. Communications & Publications provides the students with project based learning opportunities to plan, develop, edit, and publish a final product that is then sold to students and staff. Students also develop their writing and presentation skills for effective communication across a variety of diverse mediums. Video Production allows students the opportunity to apply the traditional English skills in a project based learning environment. Students collaborate to produce and edit visual media including Public Service Announcements (PSAs), short film, and commercials.

1b. Mathematics:

The courses in Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II are all based on the New York State Common Core Curriculum. Fredonia chooses to address the standards using the modules created by New York State because the modules are aligned to the standards. However, teachers supplement or adapt the modules to meet the needs of their specific students. Continual teacher review of each course is necessary to ensure that the standards are not only covered, but are instructed in meaningful ways to students. Differentiated instruction and blended learning (a mixture of direct/explicit instruction and digital tools) are practiced by all department members. Two weeks before midterm and final exams, the members of the math department offer free nighttime review sessions to students in the school library. New York Regents exams are given for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. After these exams are given, teachers analyze each exam question and student data to adjust learning outcomes, strategies or interventions, tools, plans and/or assessment practices to ensure greater student understanding and to verify alignment to standards.

Students at Fredonia are offered several ways to complete their math requirements. One path leads them through Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II. Since Fredonia has alternate-day block scheduling, students are provided with a unique opportunity to choose from two different scenarios. One option allows students to take math every other day for 84 minutes. Students who take this route are typically stronger in math. For students who may find math more challenging, Fredonia is able to provide them courses that meet every day with 50% more class time in a year than those students choosing the first option. A student will have class one day for the full 84 minute block and the next day have class for 40 minutes. Students enrolled in the every-day class learn the same material and are given the same assessments, but are provided more time to process and develop the mathematical concepts. For students with more extreme struggles in math, a third path is provided. These students can take Algebra I over the course of two years. This class breaks down content into smaller chunks and provides more opportunities for differentiation. After students complete this two-year course they may choose to go on to Geometry and Algebra II or they may take Applied Math.

After students have completed Algebra II, they can enroll in either Senior Survey of Mathematics or Analysis of Functions/Differential Calculus. Both of these courses offer students exposure to material they will encounter in college mathematical courses. Students who were accelerated as middle school students may take Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus in their senior year. Students can also enroll in an AP Statistics course that prepares them for college-level statistics.

1c. Science:

Science courses taught at Fredonia High School include Regents level Earth Science, Living Environment, Chemistry, and Physics. We also offer an Academic Intervention Service (AIS) Bioscience, Biology A Molecular Approach, General Chemistry, AP Physics, and Active Physics. These courses follow the NYS standards and core curriculum, but the classes are designed to go beyond the core curriculum. Some of our students with weaker skills and abilities normally take an AIS class as freshman (Bioscience and formerly Geoscience). The AIS courses are designed to prepare students for the Regents level classes while giving them a science credit.

Our schedule with the larger blocks of time gives the science classes more opportunity to cover materials and subject matter in greater depth and detail and in different styles. It allows the science teachers to incorporate different teaching styles and methodologies including direct instruction, laboratory, problem-based learning, and differentiated instruction. We can provide opportunities to show how science is applied to their daily lives and real-world concepts by incorporating labs and activities with higher levels of rigor and relevance. The longer blocks allow teachers to introduce a topic and discuss the topic or present materials covering the curriculum concepts, then students apply the concepts in laboratory work and critical analysis. This gives our students a better understanding of the concepts and how they are applied, which is the reason why our students are more prepared for college-level science courses and why many of our students go on to study science in college.

The science department's collegiality, common planning time, and collaboration allow its members to discuss and analyze trends in our students and assessments. We often sit and look at the trends in our exam and laboratory results and discuss methods to improve student performance and reasons why students are under-performing on specific tasks or with specific concepts.

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

Fredonia uses New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies to guide instruction, ensuring that teaching practices focus on specific learning targets. Social Studies curriculum is four years: Global 9, Global 10, US History 11, Government and Economics. Regents exams are given after Global 10 and US History. Additionally, we offer electives that appeal to students of all abilities. Offering AP Psychology, AP US History and AP Government, we are on the 9th Annual AP District Honor Roll. Other electives include Child Psychology, Evolution of Sports, Military History, and Leadership Development.

Learning expectations are clearly communicated between teachers and students. We utilize a standards-NBRS 2019

based learning model in instruction and assessment as a realistic approach to measure student performance. Our curricular practices incorporate inquiry-based learning with an emphasis on document analysis, critical thinking, chronology, and defending an argument. Additional approaches include project-based learning. Our Global 10 students interview community members about their life experiences in global travel or military service. Government classes include about fifteen speakers from local, county, and state levels of government that promote civic awareness and responsibility.

Chromebooks, Google Classroom, productivity apps, and other internet resources, are incorporated into daily lessons. Lessons include explicit instruction and student-centered, inquiry-based activities. Students analyze source materials and write historical claims at the appropriate developmental level to sharpen critical thinking skills. Students needing additional support receive this through AIS services, smaller classes, direct consultant teachers, and modified curricular materials.

Student progress is assessed in several ways. Formative assessments (graphic organizers, strategic questioning, and technology) garner detailed information used to improve instruction/student learning throughout the lesson, allowing students to critically think and analyze. Summative assessments (essays, primary source analysis, and projects) are used to evaluate learning within state standards and in accordance with district benchmarks. Based on the data accumulated through these assessments, teachers modify future instruction for higher achievement.

1e. For secondary schools:

Fredonia High School participates in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program with the local Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) called the LoGuidice Center. Juniors and seniors who participate in this program can obtain certificates or credentials in cosmetology, auto body, auto tech, construction, conservation, culinary arts, sports conditioning, health care, welding, small animal vet tech, or criminal justice.

Fredonia High School also partners with the State University of New York (SUNY) Fredonia to offer the 3-1-3 Program in which high school students complete their first three years of high school as usual, use their senior year to take both some high school classes and some classes at SUNY Fredonia, and then have the opportunity to finish their Bachelor degree at SUNY Fredonia in three years.

In a similar fashion, Fredonia partners with Jamestown Community College to allow students to take JCC classes taught by Fredonia teachers at Fredonia High School free of charge. This allows students to obtain several college credits before leaving high school.

Lastly, Fredonia offers a credit-bearing internship program in which students are matched with local businesses to gain relevant work experience.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Fredonia High School provides opportunities for students to develop their individual interests, goals and skills. The Fredonia High School supports student character development through our Preparedness, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, Excellence (P.R.I.D.E) initiative organized through our School Services department to enhance school climate and student character. Each department throughout Fredonia High School bases their curriculum on New York State Standards and uses best practice in the development of their courses and lessons. The range of courses throughout the high school are designed to be accessible to all students throughout their high school careers and allow students to engage in curriculum that matches their interests. Each department offers a diverse range of courses that build on basic knowledge and skills, the rigor of these courses grows with the knowledge and grade level of the students and include college credit and Advanced Placement opportunities.

earned a number of awards recognizing our students and programs. The music program provides instruction in a variety of courses including Band, Chorus and Orchestra, Music in Our Lives as well as our college level courses; Music History and Music Theory. Fredonia band, orchestra and chorus programs represents more than a third of Fredonia High School students. These students are provided with opportunities to grow their skills and have represented Fredonia at local and state level events. Students who have demonstrated their skill and love for music are eligible to be members of Tri-M honor society. Visual Arts students are supported with a menu of classes in studio art, painting, drawing, ceramics and photography throughout their careers. Students whose skills allow them to excel are able to take Advanced Placement level art class as seniors to receive college credit. Opportunities for all students include an Art Club designed for any interested student and the National Art Honor Society for students who excel in their skills and love for the visual arts.

Physical Education classes are designed to develop skills and knowledge that will help students be productive members of our community. Instruction in fitness, healthy choices and popular sports help guide students' growth. Curriculum and instruction are designed to provide students opportunities to develop their personal skill level. Health class and successful completion of a CPR/AED and First Aid training are graduation requirements. The course is organized to address physical, emotional and social dimensions of health and healthy living. Personal Health and Safety offer students an opportunity to earn college credit.

Fredonia's World Languages program provides students the opportunity to choose between French and Spanish. The world languages department provides students access to develop their language skills and cultural knowledge. World Language course opportunities are each designed around the students' skills and range from a basic level Exploratory Language course to Spanish for college credit. The goal of the department is to teach essential language skills beyond memorization of vocabulary and embolden students to use their knowledge in a life changing way. The curriculum is designed to enhance student skills in four key areas; reading, writing, listening and speaking. More than 95% of Fredonia freshmen are enrolled in French or Spanish that is required for graduation. An impressive eighty-five percent of students will continue their course work beyond their freshman year meeting a requirement for an Advanced Regents Diploma. Students have the opportunity to continue their passion for world languages and receive college credit.

Library Media resources at Fredonia High School offer students a dynamic assortment of media resources, provides opportunities for collaboration spaces, research materials and reading centers. The library is a consistent avenue for students to pursue literary interests by hosting book tasting, organizing author visits and functions as a valuable reading center for students. The library is a multi-function resource used by teachers and students to enhance the educational opportunities throughout the high school.

Our Career Preparations courses engage students in a variety of learning experiences. Students are provided avenues to meet their technology requirements for graduation as well as expand upon areas of personal interest. The department consists of seventeen course opportunities, including traditional "shop" classes, woodworking and construction, as well as numerous computer-based courses such as CADD and accounting. Courses in cooking and nutrition also provide students lifelong health-related skills. The Career Preparations department has partnered with Jamestown Community College to offer our students opportunities to earn up to 16 college credit hours.

3. Special Populations:

Fredonia High School sees an achievement gap of ten or more percentage points between all students and those in two subgroups: students with disabilities and students who are economically disadvantaged. A long-term fix is being addressed by providing new interventions, a new schedule, and additional staffing at our middle school. Any successes at the middle school level are celebrated by the high school. However, the immediate response to close the gap with our current high school students with (or even without) disabilities is to examine our current practices of offering instruction, interventions, and assessments. It is important to understand that for the students we have, we cannot control what happened before they came to us. We need to teach the students where they are. As such, we have invited a consultant to visit our classrooms in which students with disabilities are receiving instruction from a general education teacher and

a special education teacher in the same room. The consultant is working with our general education and special education teachers, providing professional development on appropriate interventions in an integrated co-teach model to help identify and fill gaps.

Students who are economically disadvantaged may or may not also be students with disabilities. If they are not, it is likely that they will not be receiving the services of a special education teacher unless they happen to be in a class that has a special education teacher assigned to it. Appropriate professional development is being rolled out in Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports including trauma-informed instruction, social-emotional learning, and restorative practices. This will be provided to all of our teachers to assist them in providing appropriate interventions.

Students with gaps large enough to produce frustration at school are often susceptible to chronic absenteeism which further exacerbates the gaps. A team made of the principal, assistant principal, school counselors, school psychologist and school social worker have been working together to identify students at risk and try to get them involved with a couple of different extracurricular clubs that are designed specifically to give students a positive place and purpose for being in school.

We are also working on infusing literacy strategies across all curricular areas to improve the overall literacy of our students. Our district brought in a national speaker during a recent regional inservice day to teach – in a practical way – some interventions/strategies that are research and evidence based to help our teachers close the gaps with these two subgroups and to improve the overall literacy of all our students.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Improving school culture begins with the adults buying into developing quality relationships with the students. This needs to be done with fidelity. Admittedly, this is a process that takes time and commitment – and an understanding that getting 100% buy-in on anything is rare. Fredonia High School has been working on culture continually and on several fronts. The culture of our school used to sustain a practice that during lunches, students could hang out in the lobby of the school and the surrounding hallway. Students would make themselves very comfortable. At times, they would lie on the floor to relax or sit in groups and make inappropriate comments at students, adults, or even guests who were walking down the hall. This practice could no longer continue upon my becoming principal – it was not an environment that fostered any growth whatsoever, was socially and emotionally damaging to some students, and was a safety issue because we did not have the staffing to monitor the students over such a widespread area. Over a period of time, the resolution was to have all students remain in the cafeteria during lunch periods. We later went from three lunch periods to five lunch periods to reduce the number of students in the lunchroom at once and reduced the allotted time for lunches. The result was more intimate groups during lunch with a lot more space for students to eat and in a far quieter atmosphere. We have also tried mixing up lunches occasionally so that students sit with different people and make new friends. As an example, each table had large poster with the name of a month of the year on it and students sat at a table that displayed their birth month. The shorter lunch periods with lower populations staying in the cafeteria during the full lunch time dramatically improved the environment of the lobby and halls for everyone in the building. The shorter lunch periods also allowed the addition of short study halls for students to work with teachers, collaborate with peers, or work alone under the supervision of a teacher.

Our PRIDE initiative is a means to recognize students for academic, social, or emotional growth or for demonstrations of Preparedness, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and/or Excellence (hence the PRIDE acronym). Teachers recognize students by writing them a pride note with a short description of the reason the note was written. The note is actually a postcard that gets mailed home. This has had a positive effect on students, parents, and staff alike. One week per year, the PRIDE initiative flips the rules and the students get to write Gratitude Notes to any adults associated with the school: principals, secretaries, bus drivers, aides, teachers, custodians, ...anyone. Students write these notes to express their gratitude to the adults. The adults feel valued and supported.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The administrators and teachers at Fredonia High School make it a point to have timely communication with parents both in times of concern and when there are positive messages to relay. Communication is made in several ways: phone, email, letters, positive post cards (we call them PRIDE notes), automated attendance calls, webpages, and texts.

Parent and student online portals are used so that parents and students can have real-time data regarding grades, attendance, and lunch balances. Parent-teacher conferences are held during three late-afternoons and early-evenings per year to provide accessible times for parents to meet with teachers.

Our English as a New Language (ENL) program sponsors a culture night (or day) every year where families and students are invited to share their cultures, food, and music.

Fredonia has several partnerships that have been successful in working with family and community members for student success and school improvement. Kids Escaping Drugs (KED) is a non-profit group out of the Buffalo, NY, area that partners with Fredonia High School to provide services for students and families. Each year their Face-2-Face program brings students from their campus to our physical education classes to discuss their problems with drug addition and/or selling illegal drugs. Our students find the talks extremely compelling coming from someone near their age who has had very traumatic experiences with drugs and alcohol. KED also attends our freshman orientation night and has an adult-only presentation for

all the freshmen parents while their children are completing orientation activities. They share current trends and things to look for at home that may indicate their child is having a problem with drugs or alcohol. They also share the realities of addiction from an adult viewpoint. Parents are informed of these events through a summer mailing and on our district website prior to the event.

Academically, Fredonia High School partners with the State University of New York (SUNY) Fredonia College to provide academic opportunities for our students they may not ordinarily have at the high school. Some examples include utilization of the college sound recording studio, science facility, and multiple opportunities for our students to work with student teachers on individual or small-group projects. Parents are often informed through permission slips, emails, and/or phone calls from the participating teachers. For mental-health and counseling services Fredonia High School works with Chautauqua County Mental Health to provide needed services for students and their families for general counseling needs to crisis counseling. As needs arise our psychologist, school counselors, and/or social worker will communicate directly with parents to inform them of available services.

3. Professional Development:

The Fredonia Central School District's Professional Development Plan was developed by the combined efforts of the district's Curriculum Council and Administrative Team whose focus was to provide professional development activities to all professional staff and school personnel, to design professional development activities that cross grade levels, and to align all professional development activities with the New York State approved subject area standards and student needs.

Professional development is aligned to support achievement of the Next Generation Learning Standards, the district's mission statement, and district goals. A comprehensive plan driven by clear goals helps ensure systematic improvement by addressing the interrelationship of each component in the context of the "whole" organization.

The Fredonia Central School District recognizes that professional development must be continuous and ongoing to effect systemic change. For example, the district's building level, department, teacher and Site Plan goals are written and evaluated on an annual basis. These goals are created by analyzing district testing data, incorporating the New York State approved subject area learning standards, identifying student needs and applying the district's mission statement and established goals. The Fredonia Central School Board of Education, administration, Site-Based Teams, and Curriculum Council collaborate to identify areas of need and to create specific curricular goals. A vital part of this goal writing process is to identify potential professional development needs within each department or grade level.

The data used for analysis was taken from the New York State District Report Card. All strategies and activities outlined in the Professional Development Plan specifically address focus areas identified through gap analysis of that data. Indicators of success are determined by follow-up analysis of those same gaps.

From this analysis, we identified three major SMART goals with the priority of improving instruction and meeting the needs of students with disabilities:

1. We will develop a district-wide culture that promotes high expectations for student achievement, student behavior, classroom instruction, and teacher and administrator development.
2. We will establish a district-wide school climate that supports the social and emotional well-being of students and staff and actively seeks to establish and improve the relationships among students and staff.
3. We will integrate literacy skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking in all Pre-K to Grade 12 classroom curriculum and instruction.

The Professional Development Plan is reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the changing needs of the students of the Fredonia Central School District.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of our full administrative team is emulated at each of the building levels and is steeped in having - and empowering others to have - a growth-mindset, grit, resilience, and common procedures. With top priorities of student safety and student achievement, we believe that building relationships and having strong communication among all stakeholders are means to those ends. The high school principal, as the instructional leader for the building, is tasked with helping to create a culture of community and cooperation - balanced with high expectations - for all staff and students. We accomplish this through modeling and distributed leadership.

The high school has a team of instructional leaders, many schools call them department chairs, that meet with the high school principal and assistant principal monthly. From this group, we have recently developed committees to examine needs that have been identified as priorities. A procedures committee has been tasked to update the student handbook to ensure relevance and consistency in what we have deemed to be the procedures for the school. This committee, in turn, is working with a student team to creatively problem solve some of the rules or procedures students seem to be struggling with the most. Another subgroup, with additional members who are not instructional leaders, are examining restorative practices and circles to help develop stronger relationships; first as a staff and then to students in classroom settings. This is aligned with one of our district goals to roll out a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program for our elementary, middle and high schools. A third committee came together to address a need in our ninth-grade cohort in which several students receiving academic intervention services (AIS) were identified by teachers as having significant barriers or gaps hindering their success. From this group was born a pilot teacher mentoring program for these students called Check and Connect. These students were assigned to teachers as mentors for their study halls in groups of two, three or four. The teachers worked on building relationships with these students first, and then focused on helping them to develop needed study skills and filling gaps.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The single most influential initiative to date is our PRIDE (Preparedness, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, Excellence) initiative. The theme and the direction to our future successes lie in building relationships. Relationships need to be strong at all levels (adult-adult, adult-student, and student-student) to provide the strongest academic and social-emotional achievement (learning). Much of our success in building relationships to foster student achievement has come from PRIDE. We have made it our goal that each teacher simply writes two PRIDE notes per month. A pride note is a post card on which an adult at our school (not necessarily a teacher) hand writes a message to a student who has demonstrated one or more of the ideals in the PRIDE acronym. That note gets mailed home. One might think that there is no further discussion to have, but these notes have made a huge impact on our students and their families. We get phone calls. Parents speak to us at events. “I loved that PRIDE note! It’s hanging on the fridge!” The students talk about how good it makes them feel and that they didn’t realize the adult cared so much. A relationship is formed.

Three or four times each school year, we sponsor larger PRIDE events in which teachers invite students (and sometimes their parents) to attend. Some examples include ice cream socials, a family pancake breakfast, and cookie decorating & hot chocolate. Themes for these events have been for having a great start to the year, recognizing vast improvement, being selected pride student of the month, etc. Pride students of the month are selected from each department in the high school to recognize overall achievement each month. They each receive a special letter from the principal in the mail and get their picture posted on the televised announcements that play in the lobby and lunchroom all day.

The relationships and good feelings about school help students who might not normally want to come to school to have a reason to be at school. The more students attend - and feel good about attending – the better they can perform.

Students get a chance to participate in showing gratitude to the adults in the building during the PRIDE Gratitude week each year. Students write Gratitude Notes to adults in the building for whom they wish to show gratitude. The staff beams at the end of the week when their notes are delivered – even the ones who may have thought the idea was silly in the first place.

The PRIDE initiative has truly helped with the adult-student relationships. However, our work is not done. We are currently training some of our pioneering staff in restorative practices and classroom circles to bolster the adult-adult and student-student relationships. We can’t wait to see this take our school community to the next level!