

U.S. Department of Education
2023 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 Dr. Kevin Keltner
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Fort Zumwalt South High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 8050 Mexico Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City St Peters State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 63376-1119

County St. Charles County

Telephone (636) 978-1212 Fax (636) 980-1745

Web site/URL https://shs.fz.k12.mo.us E-mail ahahn@fz.k12.mo.us

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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Bernard DuBray E-mail bdubray@fz.k12.mo.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Ft. Zumwalt R-II School District Tel. (636) 240-2072

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Erica Powers
(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.

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

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

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The 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 2023 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 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2022 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 Students
PreK	0
K	0
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	319
10	306
11	364
12 or higher	338
Total Students	1327

*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
 - 5.8 % Asian
 - 8.3 % Black or African American
 - 5.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75.4 % White
 - 5.1 % 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 2021 - 2022 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, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	57
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	66
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	123
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	1349
(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. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Arabic, Filipino, Spanish, Vietnamese

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15 %

Total number students who qualify: 200

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 12 %
Total number of students served 156

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 with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>18</u> Autism	<u>5</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>50</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>33</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>20</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>14</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 5 %
Total number of students served: 72

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 14

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	6
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	78
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	13
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

12. 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 17:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	93%	95%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	93%	94%	96%	95%	91%

14. **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 2022.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	333
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	51%
Enrolled in a community college	36%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	2%
Found employment	9%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

15. 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.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Strengthening our community by embracing challenges and inspiring learners.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.fz.k12.mo.us/o/fzsd/page/notice-of-nondiscrimination>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The history of education in the St. Peters and O'Fallon, Missouri, areas dates back to 1869 when the first public school building in O'Fallon was believed to have opened. By 1875 it is believed that there were over 53 one-room school houses located in the St. Charles County area. In 1947 a school district reorganization law was enacted in Missouri, which afforded the opportunity for at least 12 small public school houses to join together. The Fort Zumwalt School district officially organized in 1949, with the first high school opening in 1960. Unprecedented growth in the St. Peters and O'Fallon areas occurred starting in the 1970s. According to the Census Bureau, St. Peters grew from fewer than 500 residents in 1970 to over 15,000 in 1980, and then to more than 45,000 by 1990. By 2008, St. Peters had grown to over 76,000. Both St. Peters and O'Fallon were named Fastest Growing Cities in the state of Missouri.

Situated at the heart of the fastest growing county in the state of Missouri, Fort Zumwalt South High School serves students from both St. Peters and O'Fallon in St. Charles County. South High, along with the rest of the Fort Zumwalt School District, is a factor in the two municipalities' consistent rankings among America's Best Places to Live (Money Magazine). St. Charles County is a community that prioritizes education, with the highest average number of college-educated residents per capita in the state. Home to global companies such as Citibank, Master Card, Amazon, and FedEx, to name a few, the South High community is diversifying. More than 35 languages are spoken in the Fort Zumwalt School District. The county is also home to a small manufacturing corridor, providing support for the school district's United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Certified Youth Apprenticeship Program, creating pathways to the workplace that can start before graduation.

South High opened its doors in 1987 and, at several points in its history, has been one of Missouri's largest high schools. South High currently has over 1,300 students in grades 9-12. Throughout its 37 years, it has been known for its excellence. South High is consistently named to U.S. News and World Report's list of America's Best High Schools. The South High community prides itself on its balance: outstanding academic achievement; competitive athletic teams; active student citizens who are engaged with their community; and a wide range of fine arts programs. This balance is made possible by providing a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that engage students and prepare them for a career or college after graduation.

Beyond the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities South High provides, it also strives to help all students realize their full potential by providing support to meet their social and emotional needs. Several counselors, including a full-time crisis counselor, help in this regard. South High School also has many groups that help provide support for students to ensure challenges faced in our growing and diverse community are met. These groups include new student groups, diversity groups, empowering young men and women groups, and others.

One group unique to Fort Zumwalt is the Positive Peer Influence (PPI) group. In 1987, the Fort Zumwalt School District adopted the philosophy of "Pushing for Positive Peer Influence," which continues to be a district-wide student leadership initiative. Students at South High apply to be members of this group. One function of the members is to act as mentors to the incoming 9th grade students. These mentors help encourage, motivate, and support our 9th grade students. The mentors follow the PPI Pledge: "I will strive to demonstrate, on a daily basis, good leadership and positive peer influence through my attitudes and actions both at home and school. As a believer in Positive Peer Influence, I will work to encourage others to be positive role models in the Fort Zumwalt School District." Members of PPI are also a part of our Leadership League. This group visits our elementary schools and discusses the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Fort Zumwalt elementary school students truly look up to the members of our PPI Leadership League, and they carry the values of the PPI pledge with them.

In the 2017-2018 school year, a group of administrators, teachers, students, and community members, together with feedback from stakeholders, began to revamp South High's mission statement to better reflect our school's purpose and focus. "Strengthening Our Community by Embracing Challenges and Inspiring Learners" is the result of that group's efforts, and that mission continues to reflect the work we accomplish

each day and drive our future planning.

Throughout the history of South High and in concert with the families and community it serves, our school continues to provide the very best in educational opportunities for our students as we guide and help ensure their success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The Fort Zumwalt School District's English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum is aligned to Missouri Standards and created by a panel of educators who are devoted to student success. When selecting our curriculum, we consider student engagement, text variation, and rigor. Our curriculum is fashioned around reading, writing and speaking, with considerable focus on critical thinking, evaluation, and analysis. The students at South High go beyond surface-level learning. They tap into the deeper meanings behind our texts by evaluating and analyzing an author's tone, purposes, syntax, style, central ideas, and themes while responding appropriately to diverse and cultural perspectives. The curriculum is enhanced by pacing guides, sample lessons, and performance tasks. The curriculum is also highlighted by its flexibility, which encourages instructors to bring new ideas to the classroom to enhance student learning. It's designed to flex and bend along with our ever-changing world. Our curriculum begins with a choice between Regular or Accelerated English 1, but over the next three years, students can choose from a variety of courses. Opportunities exist for all students to challenge themselves and earn post-secondary credit through Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition, AP Literature and Composition, and Advanced Speech. Students needing additional supports receive assistance through co-taught courses, modified courses, and courses targeted to help students achieve grade-level reading skills.

ELA teachers at South High are fully invested and committed to student learning. Teachers use a variety of instructional strategies, focusing primarily on collaboration, interaction, and inquiry, especially through the use of technology. Learning success is measured by common assessments. Data generated from these assessments are analyzed during our Professional Learning Community (PLC) time, where our ELA teachers collaboratively scrutinize data, using this knowledge to guide future instruction. In addition, we lean on various learning platforms and programs to measure performance, mainly through the use of Imagine Learning/Galileo and Canvas. Using the Galileo program, the district creates benchmark assessments for underclassmen that mirror the required End of Course (EOC) exam by asking high-level questions over fiction and non-fiction texts. We have learned that EOC modeling and familiarity with EOC-like assessments increase student achievement, consistently resulting in high EOC scores. In our upper-level classes, teachers use questioning strategies reflected in the ACT to increase student success on that test. South High also prides itself on individualized student data tracking. Not only do teachers create goals for their students and classes, students do as well. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves by analyzing their progress in order to meet their own expectations.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The Fort Zumwalt School District has developed a mathematics curriculum derived from the Missouri Learning Standards, College Board guidelines, and articulation agreements with multiple post-secondary institutions for courses offering dual credit. Students learn mathematical concepts through a well-designed progression of coursework, including opportunities specifically tailored for both struggling and high-achieving students. From beginning Algebra to AP Calculus, Computer Science, and Statistic courses, students at all learning levels are provided with opportunities in which teachers meet them at their current level of understanding and create learning experiences in line with curricular expectations.

Struggling students in mathematics are supported in their learning through a variety of courses that allow them to stay in step with their peers, including lab courses in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. These lab courses provide a select group of students an additional, elective-credit-bearing course in the school day, specifically designed to supplement their learning in the Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II course in which they are enrolled. Additionally, students who have failed the first semester of Algebra II have an opportunity to take a specially-designed Algebra II course during the second semester. This unique second-semester Algebra II course allows these students time to recover the lost first-semester Algebra II credit in a teacher-supported setting, prior to working through a scaled back second-semester curriculum, thus keeping

these students on track with their peers. As data indicates changing student needs, a course created for incoming 9th grade students who struggle in mathematics is being implemented for the upcoming school year.

South High also offers accelerated coursework in Geometry and Algebra II and opportunities to earn college credit through dual enrollment or AP coursework in College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Statistics, and Computer Science. These courses are open to all students, allowing them to experience high-level challenges in preparation for post-secondary careers and academics.

South High uses a modified block schedule that allows our PLC groups to meet on a weekly basis. Because every mathematics teacher teaches multiple courses, PLC time is split into halves to allow each teacher to meet with colleagues teaching identical classes. This overlap also lends itself to ongoing vertical alignment discussions. Collaboration has long been a hallmark of South High's Mathematics department, and the allotted weekly PLC time has given teachers a structure in which to collaborate that didn't exist prior to the adoption of the modified block schedule. Data analysis is a key component of this collaboration. When exhaustive data from assessment results reveals students who stumble on specific objectives within a unit, remediation assignments (coupled with meetings with the classroom teacher) and test retakes are created to allow students a second chance to learn and show understanding, especially important given the cumulative nature of mathematics. Consistent, well-planned, backward-designed instruction and increased student achievement have been the results of this teamwork.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

South High's science curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all students and push them to become critical thinkers beyond just the subject content delivered. Typically, students start with Physical Science or Biology and then progress to Chemistry and/or Physics. Within each of these courses mentioned, there are accelerated options for students along with classes in which students receive more support. Co-teaching is done in several of our classes to support our special needs students. In addition, a Physical Science section is designated as a Response To Intervention (RTI) class where an additional classroom teacher is assigned to this section to help struggling students. After the core classes, students have the option to take electives including Zoology, Geology, Astronomy and Meteorology, Environmental Science, a Science ACT course, or up to five Advanced Placement science courses (Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics 1, and Physics C). Students also have the ability to take Anatomy and Physiology as well as Science Research for college credit. Science Research is a unique course in which students get paired with a research scientist at a local university to design and carry out a year-long project in their lab. There is also a four-year Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program guiding interested students through medical-based classes.

The Fort Zumwalt School District dedicates a full-time science coordinator to collaborate with teachers on evaluating new content driven by the Next Generation Science Standards. One example is our school using the Storylines methodology in Biology which engages all students in core concepts and helps them to interact with real world data and participate in more challenging hands-on activities. Teachers operate within weekly PLC's and use data to guide decision making. Assessments have grown in rigor due to adding more question types and making them three-dimensional. We go through a comprehensive curriculum process approximately every eight years to ensure that we meet state standards and continue to offer a wide variety of courses to captivate all students.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

South High's Social Studies department emphasizes historical thinking skills by implementing priority standards across all three core subjects (U.S. History, World History, U.S. Government). The department's focus on these standards has resulted in consistently high student performance on AP and EOC Exams. The curriculum begins freshman year with U.S. History, where students develop cause/effect and change-over-time thinking skills. Sophomores in World History learn to compare cultures, regions, and eras, while juniors in U.S. Government learn how to become responsible citizens by applying the skills they've acquired throughout their social studies career. South High also offers four Advanced Placement courses in World History, U.S. Government, Psychology, and U.S. History, as well as elective courses in sociology, foreign

policy, contemporary issues, and general psychology.

South High's Social Studies department prioritizes building strong relationships with students at the start of each academic year, believing that this approach creates a positive and safe academic environment that leads to more effective learning. To meet the needs of all students regardless of skill level, the department uses a variety of research-based instructional practices. The department's success is based on backwards design and an effective PLC model.

The PLC model used by South High's Social Studies department involves meticulous vetting of common assessments through data analysis, which helps the department create engaging learning opportunities that focus on building critical thinking proficiency. Through this approach, students practice and master the skills needed to succeed in all subject areas. The practice of retaking summative assessments has been crucial to the department's success, as it holds students accountable for content mastery and provides them with the safety net necessary to take academic risks.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

The curriculum in the Fort Zumwalt School District supports college and career readiness through a variety of programs and courses. For our college-bound students, South High offers 18 AP courses to students in grades 10 through 12. South High also offers 22 college credit courses, making it possible for students to earn up to 70 hours of college credit through three different post-secondary institutions. Additionally, South High offers an ACT Prep class which, in concert with these rigorous courses, helps ensure our college-bound students are academically prepared for post-secondary success. South High also hosts an annual College Rally Day, providing an exciting school-day opportunity for students to visit with representatives from colleges, universities, and trade/technical schools and subsequently gain exposure to a variety of post-secondary options.

South High offers a variety of career readiness opportunities to help students planning on entering the work force immediately after high school. Our school partners with Lewis and Clark Career Center, where students can take hands-on courses in a variety of trades and occupations. The Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program is another alternative for career readiness. This program allows students to be fully immersed in a profession while earning high school credits. CAPS strands include Global Business and Entrepreneurship, Healthcare, and Technology Solutions. South High also offers the Fort Zumwalt Apprenticeship program, which gives our students the opportunity to be a paid employee of a career technical business while earning credits toward high school graduation, along with the Career Exploration Alliance, through which students pair with professionals in our community to engage in job shadowing opportunities. Additionally, Bridge to Success is a school-led collaborative internship program for our students with disabilities who have a post-secondary goal of competitive employment but require instruction in pre-employment skills. These students are able to go to a place of employment to learn how to thrive in a variety of jobs and learn the soft skills necessary to succeed.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

South High's Visual Arts program is wonderfully comprehensive and has seen a surge in enrollment over the last several years without an increase in overall student population at South High, a testament to the excitement of our program's offerings and the quality of our staff and curriculum. Following a year of Introduction to Art, students can remain immersed in several mediums throughout high school: Drawing I & II, Painting I & II, Ceramics I & II, Graphic Design I & II, Photography I & II. Students wanting to

achieve at the highest levels can choose to take AP Art History or AP Art and Design, which allows our artists to focus on 2D-Design, 3D-Design, or Drawing.

South High's Performing Arts program includes 11 on-stage offerings in band, choir, orchestra, and theatre. Students can also choose to participate in non-performing classes such as Guitar I & II, Technical Theatre, Film Studies I & II, and AP Music Theory. South High is very well-represented in district and state level events, such as the Missouri State Thespian Festival, the Missouri Music Educators Association all-state ensembles, and the Missouri State High School Activities Association's adjudicated music festivals. Our participation in these events is rigorously linked to our curricular standards and objectives.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The Physical Education department at South High offers many extensive courses to students in all grade levels. The course offerings start with general physical education and health. Each student must complete two semesters of an activity course and one semester of health. Following their freshman year, students can enhance their understanding of physical skill by selecting from six additional advanced activity-based courses. These courses provide students with an understanding of the exercise sciences and an opportunity to improve their overall fitness and health for the future. South High's Physical Education department's goal is to enable our students to learn lifetime skills through our fitness activities. This understanding is embedded into student pre/post-fitness assessment goals and projects which are tracked throughout the courses. Students are also offered the option to take classroom-based courses in Positive Leadership in Sports and Outdoor Education/Hunter Safety. Our well-rounded physical education curriculum focuses on physical, emotional, social, and mental health needs of students, all vital components of student success at South High.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

The Fort Zumwalt School District's World Languages curriculum offers a four-year sequence of language study in French, German, and Spanish. Our programs are proficiency-based through the use of thematic units, allowing students to grow in their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills as guided by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. Starting in the third year of study, students can earn dual credit for their coursework at South High through the University of Missouri - St. Louis. Our curriculum focuses on cultural competence, global awareness, and linguistic proficiency. This thorough approach has allowed students who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English to receive the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma and transcript, granting these individuals 12 hours of college credit. Since we began offering the Missouri Seal of Biliteracy in 2019, 34 South High students have earned this prestigious academic award.

2d. Technology/library/media

South High's library is an integral part of supporting students' acquisition of skills and knowledge. It provides access to various resources and services tailored to meet the needs of high school students. One key way in which the library supports students is by promoting information literacy. Students can access resources and receive training to develop the ability to locate, evaluate, and use information. Services for students include instruction on how to conduct research, evaluate sources, and cite references properly.

Moreover, the library provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Through engagement with various materials, including books, databases, and digital media, students learn to analyze and synthesize information, develop arguments, and communicate their findings effectively. The library also fosters teamwork and interpersonal skills by providing opportunities for collaborative learning and group work.

Furthermore, the library promotes students' growth and development by providing access to resources and materials beyond what is covered in the classroom, offering a collection that is diverse, inclusive, and balanced. We have intentionally transformed the library's space and structure to address and meet ever-

changing student needs. South High's library is a hub of activity in our building, a welcoming space for all students, teachers, and staff, where everyone can come together to learn and grow.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

At South High, our curriculum offers students multiple avenues to learn outside of the classroom. One such opportunity is our Peer Mentor class through which a student can earn credit or community service hours by serving as a mentor in a special education class. Other opportunities exist within our Business and ELA departments. South High's Business Production class engages students by having them work in an authentic business experience. Students create a business plan, advertise their products, make their products, and sell them throughout the school and, in some instances, to community organizations or other schools. Our yearbook courses teach real-life journalism skills and have led our students to earn the Premier Print Award and the Best in Class from Balfour Publishing. Lastly, our Introduction to Leadership class is a chance for students to earn elective credit for their leadership work within the school.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

South High understands the importance of helping students who are performing below grade level be successful, which includes addressing achievement gaps that may exist among subgroups of our student population, such as English Learner (EL), Black, and special education students. We support students through our implementation of various programs, such as our use of RTI approaches in teaching in Physical Science and English I. In collaboration with our middle school teachers, we identify students who are performing below grade level in these two areas. During their freshman year of high school, these students are placed in RTI Physical Science and/or English I class(s). These classes are taught by two educators who work diligently on analyzing the students' current performance level and creating educational opportunities for them to practice and improve their academic skills, all as a part of the regular Physical Science and/or English I course(s) with their peers. Assessments are given throughout the year to gauge these students' progress.

South High also has a Literacy Skills class to help students who are performing below grade level in reading. Again, in collaboration with middle school educators, students who are performing below grade level in reading are identified and subsequently placed in the Literacy Skills class their freshman year. The teacher's arsenal includes cutting-edge technology software to assess students' current reading level, and individual lessons are designed to help students advance in their reading skills. Periodic assessments show students their advancement. Different aspects of this technology platform are also utilized to assist with vocabulary and help focus on specific reading strategies. Additionally, South High makes use of an intensive reading instruction system in our Modified Reading class to help special education students who have been identified as severely lacking in reading skills.

South High has multi-tiered systems of support in place for students, helping them achieve academic success in safe, smaller environments with teachers who have been trained to target specific academic needs.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

South High has a variety of options for students who want to challenge themselves with a more rigorous course of study. As part of individual meetings with students to discuss course requests for the upcoming school year, our counselors encourage each student to challenge themselves by taking one or more upper-level courses based on their academic interests. South High currently offers 45 advanced course opportunities for students, including accelerated core classes, AP classes, and PLTW classes in the areas of engineering, computer science, and biomedical science. Additionally, dual credit courses are offered, through which students may earn both high school and college credit. Each of these accelerated coursework opportunities is designed to challenge and stretch students in selected academic areas and are open to all students. Data consistently shows high performance of our students engaging in these challenging opportunities.

Students at South High are consistently recognized for exceptional academic achievement. Accolades include students each year being selected to be part of the Missouri Scholars 100 (recognizing the top 100 seniors in the state), Missouri's Sophomore Pilgrimage, the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership conference, and Missouri Boys State and Girls State. Each year, South High has students selected to be National Merit Scholars. Students in their sophomore and junior years are encouraged to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) each fall, with scores for the juniors taking this exam determining which of these individuals are selected for National Merit honors their senior year.

The opportunities for our academically advanced students grow each year as South High reviews curriculum options and partners with outside resources, including local and state colleges and universities.

3c. Students with disabilities:

The Special Education department at South High provides a continuum of services based upon each student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Services are provided in the general education classroom through co-teaching environments, where general education and special education teachers work collaboratively to co-plan, co-instruct, and co-assess students utilizing the general education curriculum. Services are also provided in modified curriculum classes, where special education teachers utilize differentiation, reinforcement of previously learned skills, and remediation while following the general education curriculum. Additional support in reading and literacy are provided utilizing up-to-date technology resources, including Wilson Reading and Achieve 3000. Students with the most significant cognitive needs are provided services through our Essential Elements and Intensive Language and Behavior Supports (I-Labs) classrooms. Students in these classrooms utilize technology resources, including Unique Learning Systems, to implement curriculum each day and to teach daily life skills. Special education students also participate in community programs, including Work Based Learning, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and Community Based Instruction throughout the school year. Our Essentials classrooms organize and operate a food pantry and backpack program for South High, through which they send backpacks full of food items home with needy students at the end of each week. Additionally, special education students in Family and Consumer Science courses, as part of the instruction they receive, use their skills to provide quarterly luncheons for South High faculty and staff members. Each of these opportunities provide real-life work experiences for our special education students.

South High also has several programs to support students with social/emotional/behavioral disabilities. Our Connect program provides support for an identified group of students who experience difficulties in these areas. The teacher that oversees the Connect program not only teaches social skills, but also provides a safe space for the students in crisis. In our Skills Support classes, special education teachers work with students on IEP goals, complete post-secondary transition activities, and provide experiences to increase executive functioning skills. Students with IEPs also have the opportunity to apply for programs at Lewis and Clark Career Center and Bridge to Success, as well as earn elective credits for maintaining employment through our Cooperative Work Experience program.

3d. English Language Learners:

The number of students who are classified with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in the Fort Zumwalt School District is growing each year. The English Language Development (ELD) program at South High provides direct English instruction and content support by an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)-certified ELD Specialist to students who are categorized as LEP based on their performance on the initial nationally-recognized screeners and/or tests. Each EL has an Individualized English Learner Plan (IELP) detailing specific modifications and accommodations based on English proficiency levels in four language modalities: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. EL students receive daily support during a dedicated ELD support hour with an ELD Specialist to ensure their modifications and accommodations are being met per their IELP. In addition, some ELs receive push-in content support and sheltered English instruction.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

One population of students at South High that is fluid but continues to be on the rise in the St. Peters and O'Fallon, Missouri, area is the homeless population. The Fort Zumwalt School District has a full-time coordinator for homeless students who works with homeless students and their families. The coordinator works to help assess individual needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, transportation, school supplies, toiletries, and any other essentials associated with families experiencing homelessness. Fort Zumwalt also partners with Coordinated Entry to offer other resources these families may need. We at South High understand that our homeless students may have very specific personal and academic needs. To meet their personal needs, we connect each student with our crisis counselor, who serves as a resource for both the student and the family. The crisis counselor coordinates weekly food bags for the student and the family. To help meet their academic needs, school counselors meet with each student to help determine his/her correct academic placement. Often our homeless students have been transient and are academically situated behind their peers. Our counselors communicate with homeless students' previous school districts as needed to help determine proper class placement, and they incorporate a plethora of academic testing options as necessary to assist in this endeavor. Once proper class placement is determined, the counselor serves as a liaison between the student and teachers, monitoring academic progress and providing support and academic resources as needed. South High provides academic tutoring for these students as well, all part of creating a welcoming and nurturing atmosphere for homeless students in which they can find academic success.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

South High exemplifies an inclusive and equitable atmosphere in which all students have supports in place beyond the classroom to connect them with school and help ensure their success. We offer numerous opportunities for students to be involved in school-sponsored activities and clubs. Student involvement in school activities, in addition to their regular classwork, promotes academic success. School activities and clubs serve as a connection outside of the classroom between students and the school. These activities and clubs are considered essential parts of the services we provide for students, affording opportunities for students to explore interests and enjoy challenges, competitions, and involvement with peers. Strong athletic programs, which provide students learning experiences unique to high school, create incredible connections to South High for participants and non-participants alike. The strength and success demonstrated through these important extensions of our classroom work, including consistent state playoff experiences, generate excitement and pride among the student body and resulted in South High recently being named as the Large School Athletic Program of the Year in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

With respect to technology, South High is one-to-one with computers and students. Each student receives a Chromebook, theirs to use throughout their experience at South High. Students have the ability to use this technology to complete research, access learning platforms, submit assignments, take assessments, and have immediate access to district-wide learning platforms and student information systems. South High also ensures that all students have equal access to the Internet. Wireless connectivity is provided throughout the school, and should students not have Internet access at home, they are provided with a wireless hotspot to use at home. Students, who are accustomed to instant online access through personal electronic devices in their daily lives, enjoy this same online access through their school-provided electronic devices, helping enhance their connections and engagement with South High and learning.

South High's Diversity Club is a unique organization that helps meet student needs. This club meets monthly, during the school day, and has orchestrated several activities to promote awareness about different student populations within the school, many of which might be considered as underrepresented. The students involved in this club use their voices to represent individuals throughout the entire building. In order to educate freshman students about critical issues facing students, our PPI students go into classrooms once a month to lead meaningful conversations with their peers. PPI students apply to be part of this program, and once selected, serve as mentors to their peers. South High also prides itself in having a strong Student Council and National Honor Society. Each of these organizations creates exciting events, sponsors spirit activities, and designs meaningful service projects in our school and community, appealing to a variety of interests and involving scores, and often hundreds, of our students. Actively working to engage our students throughout each aspect of our school in both academics and co-curricular activities helps ensure a positive environment that allows students to flourish.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

South High takes great pride in keeping our stakeholders informed and strongly encourages community involvement. We believe, through communication and active student participation, we can collectively build strong student leadership skills, maintain and continually improve a great school climate, and produce citizens who have the desire and ability to give back to our community.

Our students routinely engage in multiple service projects throughout the year. The goal of these projects is to give back to our community, whether that be through generous donations of provisions through periodic food drives and our annual Turkey Drive to help feed those in need, or providing gifts to those less fortunate during the holidays. These events strengthen our ties and commitment to our local community. In response to feedback from our stakeholders, our school operates a weekend backpack program that ensures no child goes hungry over the weekends. South High also gives back to the students in our community by helping our families who have large financial burdens and find it difficult to obtain certain necessities associated with various high school events. To help, our school has partnered with different local vendors, and through

donations has been able to offer assistance with prom attire, sports equipment, admission fees, and optional field trip experiences to ensure students from families with financial burdens are able to access the same opportunities at South High as their peers.

South High emphasizes the importance of students becoming involved with community members to celebrate and honor their accomplishments. Veterans Day activities at South High School is but one example of our work in action. South High invites veterans from local senior citizen centers, along with veterans who are relatives of our students, faculty, and staff members, to enjoy breakfast with us on Veterans Day morning, served to them by students from our Family and Consumer Sciences Culinary Arts programs. Following breakfast, these guests are treated to a performance by students from South High's Drama and Theatre program, designed to be similar to a traditional United Services Organizations (USO) show, combined with exciting and uplifting music performed by our jazz band and choir students. This annual event is a hallmark example of our school community coming together.

South High encourages input from our community. Focus groups consisting of parents, students, and educators study key issues to help our school make informed decisions and shape district policy that directly affects our students and culture. Advisory committees comprised of local business professionals help our teachers and students stay abreast of latest trends and needs within the workforce. Through partnerships with both St. Charles Community College and the U.S. Department of Labor, we provide meaningful job shadowing experiences and local apprenticeships, further strengthening our ties with business entities among South High's community.

Our school's commitment to family engagement also encompasses routine, clear communications. South High utilizes numerous avenues of communication and disseminates information to students, families, and community members through a multitude of electronic platforms. South High's online presence through its website, Twitter, and YouTube, helps highlight student accomplishments, activities, and announcements. Events are coordinated throughout the year to provide tailored experiences for parents that are timely and in line with current student opportunities at school. These events include occasions for families to explore course offerings, visit with academic department chairs, meet coaches, and gain in-depth knowledge about post-secondary financial aid, including information about college scholarships and navigating the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Regular communication to parents provides awareness of and encourages the use of real-time online information so parents are able to view student progress and keep abreast of changes in their students' coursework.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

South High understands the importance of creating and supporting a professional atmosphere. We do so by providing a variety of professional development activities, educational opportunities, and designated collaboration times. The Fort Zumwalt School District sets aside three full days solely used for district-led professional development activities. During these days, teachers sign up for activities that lend themselves to their discipline. These activities are developed by district curriculum coordinators, and include guest speakers, education leaders and professionals, and teachers from across the district, along with various South High teachers who have expertise in particular areas deemed beneficial for colleagues.

South High prides itself in its value and approach to professional learning. On a weekly basis, teachers at South High augment their craft by utilizing a PLC model to build a structured approach to teacher growth and student support. A department chair from each academic department serves as the PLC leader for the department. On Wednesdays of weeks which have five full days of student contact, students are released early so that teachers can engage in PLC activities for the remainder of the normal school day. Meetings are one hour in length these Wednesday afternoons, with the addition of a second hour on one designated Wednesday each month. During this time, PLC groups design goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Timebound (SMART), professional growth plans, and student learning objectives to create and assess student learning. Teacher-designed common assessments, both formal and informal in nature, along with teacher-designed lessons and scoring rubrics, rely on common data to assess student achievement and ensure student learning.

In addition to our PLC work, South High helps sustain a professional culture through a focus on small educational opportunities for teachers. Quarterly, we have teacher-led workshops we call Lunch and Learn. These workshops are an opportunity for teachers to learn from their peers, with lunch provided for them during the workshops. Topics have included innovative technology, teaching strategies, and lesson ideas. Well-attended and beneficial, these quarterly workshops truly foster a positive professional culture among peers. Using this small educational opportunity approach to establish a professional culture with new teachers is also a priority at South High. Administrators meet each month with beginning teachers and teachers new to the building to discuss a variety of topics pertinent to teaching, learning, and South High culture. These meetings are designed to provide insight into areas that are often not part of teacher preparation programs, as well as provide them opportunities to ask questions in a small group setting as part of their new career and/or new to South High experience.

4. School Leadership:

The overall leadership structure at South High includes the principal, four assistant principals, one Activities Coordinator, and 12 department chairs.

The leadership philosophy at South High is one in which decisions are pushed to the individuals actually doing the work. The principal is ultimately responsible for everything that occurs in the building; however, if the principal has to make every decision or if every decision has to run through the principal, the school will become crippled and unable to function. Decisions that are in line with our school's mission are best made by the people who are directly responsible for that particular area. Assistant principals and department chairs regularly make important decisions in line with their responsibilities, all the while keeping the principal informed and bouncing ideas through the principal and other colleagues as necessary.

The principal assigns supervisory roles in specific departments to each assistant principal, where assistant principals are heavily involved in working directly with PLC activities, classroom observation, goal setting, and instructional improvement. The principal, while overseeing certain departments as well, actively works with assistant principals and department chairs in their PLC efforts. Assistant principals are each assigned a grade level of students to oversee, handling all activities, including discipline, of that grade level. Additionally, assistant principals are given responsibility for various managerial duties throughout the school. The principal, assistant principals, and Activities Coordinator meet formally on a weekly basis; the principal meets formally with department chairs on a monthly basis. Department chairs lead weekly PLC meetings, guiding teachers through departmental goal development, common assessment development, and data analysis, all in concert with the principal or assistant principal assigned to the department.

Student activities, including athletics, music, speech/debate, drama, and clubs, are an important part of students' education at South High. Research is clear in the importance of student activities and their ability to connect kids to school and provide learning experiences for them that cannot be duplicated anywhere else. We see our activities programs as extensions of the classroom, and they often serve as the "porch light" for our school, becoming a public highlight of the great things happening each day with our students. In that regard, the full-time Activities Coordinator is an integral component of the administrative team at South High, and that individual is responsible for overseeing this aspect of our instructional endeavors. The principal and assistant principals join with the Activities Coordinator in supervising events and working with faculty coaches, advisors, and sponsors.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

The teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff members at South High address the diverse needs and backgrounds of students, families, and staff members through a variety of programs and extracurricular activities. South High provides many services for our students of lower socioeconomic status. For families that qualify for free/reduced lunch, our Counseling department works with our Special Education department and students to assemble backpacks filled with food every Friday to ensure individuals in these homes have meals for the weekend. During the holiday season, the crisis counselor and National Honor Society members lead South High in adopting families in need, collecting gifts for all family members and delivering these items before Christmas. Faculty and staff members also participate in Winter Wishes by

purchasing presents for students who may not receive gifts at home. South High joins forces with our feeder middle and elementary schools each year and participates in the St. Charles County No Hunger Holiday event, providing Thanksgiving meals to hundreds of families in our community.

Co-curricular activities at South High encompass a wide range of interests to ensure those with diverse backgrounds have a welcoming connection at school outside of the classroom through which they can share common experiences. Such activities, in addition to being excellent parts of students' educational experience, are utilized as resources to help faculty and staff members identify student needs and design future opportunities for students. With more than 30 club offerings encompassing a wide spectrum of interests, groups centering on ethnicity, sexual orientation, race, and diversity are integral parts of our co-curricular programming and are intentionally designed to be inclusive, meet student needs, and serve as avenues for student voice. Our students' needs are continually evolving, and South High places the utmost importance on recognizing change and adjusting our co-curricular offerings in response to the latest needs of our students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Over the past several years, South High's success can be first attributed to an adherence to PLC practices within our academic departments. Teachers are afforded time each week, through early-release days, to set goals and meet together in a continual review of essential PLC questions: What do we want our students to know? How will we know if they know it? What do we do if they don't get it? What will we do if they already know it?

This practice has pushed decisions down to classroom teachers, who are seen as learning experts in their field of study. Administrators work collaboratively with department chairs, who then work with teachers in their respective departments, to develop norms for their PLC time. Departments then break into smaller PLC subgroups (for example, our Mathematics department divides into three PLC subgroups; Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II). In each PLC subgroup, teachers develop short-term and long-term student achievement goals. The focus of goal development is first placed on where we want our student achievement to be (the target). Goals should follow the SMART approach, ideally with both a one-year target and a three-year target. Such goals don't have to measure everything a department does with students; however, the goals do need to address important student-achievement topics, especially if the subject area includes state testing requirements. After goals are created, teachers then take a look at where students currently are with respect to each goal, and then design instructional approaches focused on each teacher-developed goal to take students from where they are to where we want them to be. Teachers take a close look at our district's curriculum, create common assessments, agree upon common grading practices and pacing, and use these assessments each week in meetings as checkpoints to help inform instruction and ensure that all students in a given subject, no matter which teacher they have, receive the same experience in a course, flavored with a teacher's individual teaching style. If a state assessment exists through which we are measured, including the ACT exam, our district's curriculum includes those topics and our teachers ensure that instruction is geared towards student learning of that material, all measured through common assessments. We don't see this approach as extra work; rather, it is the work of teaching. We strive to push students towards rigorous coursework, appropriate for their potential, knowing our efforts result in it becoming commonplace for students to challenge themselves when they request classes. The basis of our work is rooted in Rick DuFour's Professional Learning Community research, along with the Assessment For Learning research of Rick Stiggins, Steve Chappuis, Jan Chappuis, and Judy Arter.

The PLC approach has helped our faculty grow professionally, providing intentional, regular, and focused collaboration among and between content areas. As a result of using this approach, students at South High have consistently demonstrated exceptional achievement through a variety of measures, including state-mandated assessments and national assessments. For the past several years, U.S. News and World Report has regularly named South High as one of the best high schools in Missouri.