

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

11MD6

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2010-2011 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2005.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 or 2010.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

11MD6

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district: 105 Elementary schools
 (per district designation) 29 Middle/Junior high schools
26 High schools
3 K-12 schools
163 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 12609

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 8
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2010 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	184	182	366
3	0	0	0		10	185	162	347
4	0	0	0		11	179	168	347
5	0	0	0		12	164	171	335
Total in Applying School:								1395

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
7 % Asian
20 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
68 % White
2 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting 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.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2009-2010 school year: 9%

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	49
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2009 until the end of the school year.	75
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	124
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2009	1382
(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

8. Percent limited English proficient students in the school: 0%
 Total number of limited English proficient students in the school: 0
 Number of languages represented, not including English: 0
 Specify languages:

Towson High School has 68 students who have received ELL services in the past. In addition, we have 28 additional students who did not require ELL services but whose home language is not English.

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14%
 Total number of students who qualify: 194

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 7%
 Total number of students served: 93

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>6</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>16</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>35</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>19</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>2</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>7</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>6</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>90</u>	<u>4</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>32</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>136</u>	<u>7</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 15:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only high schools need to supply graduation rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any student or teacher attendance rates under 95% and teacher turnover rates over 12% and fluctuations in graduation rates.

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Daily student attendance	93%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	97%	97%	96%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	13%	15%	19%	21%	27%
High school graduation rate	93%	94%	90%	92%	89%

If these data are not available, explain and provide reasonable estimates.

Daily Student Attendance

During the 2009-2010 school year, the swine flu was a factor in the state of Maryland, and we were most vigilant in ensuring that students were fever-free for the required 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medication.

In addition, since our school is nestled into a community which is surrounded by colleges, universities, and research hospitals, many parents who work for these institutions must travel to different parts of the world for conferences and choose to take their children with them for several days. Although we do not encourage parents to have their children miss school, we do realize that at times it is a childcare issue, and the school will work with the parent and the child to make up and keep up on schoolwork. During the school year, students also miss school to take part in service projects and visit colleges.

Teacher Turnover Rate

During the past five years, the percentage of teacher turnover has decreased from 27% to 13%. Generally, our teacher turnover involved retirement or relocation of teachers' families out of the area. In addition, several new mothers decided to stay home full time, and several teachers were given an opportunity to teach abroad. Others chose to attend graduate school full time to secure additional degrees. Realignment with county goals also caused a shift in the subject areas of teachers who were needed to teach specific courses at our school, resulting in some change of personnel. Despite changing staff, by following our school improvement plan, which is aligned with the district's *Blueprint for Progress*, we have kept our school on course and improving each year.

Graduation Rate

The graduation rate has increased by 4 percent during the past five years. Due to increased monitoring and efforts to support our students' achievement — such as counseling conferences, schedule changes and academic support — more students have been receiving diplomas upon completion of four years at Towson High School.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools): Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2010 are doing as of Fall 2010.

Graduating class size:	<u>335</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>82%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>11%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>2%</u>
Found employment	<u>2%</u>
Military service	<u>1%</u>
Other	<u>2%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

We are all in this together: that is the spirit that runs through the halls and walls of Towson High School, making us a driving force in Baltimore County education since 1849. Our mission—to provide a safe, supportive environment that promotes tolerance and respect for diversity, to challenge students to become active learners and critical thinkers, and to foster the development of scholarship, leadership, citizenship, and integrity—reflects the collaboration of all stakeholders to provide a strong foundation for everything we do.

A comprehensive community high school serving 1,395 ninth through twelfth grade students, Towson High School achieves at the highest levels and directs its academic, technological and human resources to educating “the whole child.” We provide a rigorous, challenging scholastic program for the community’s children as well as those enrolled in the Law and Public Policy magnet program, which accepts qualified students from all Baltimore County high schools. Our school has achieved many milestones, some of which include being listed as one of “America’s Best High Schools” by *Newsweek* magazine (2003, 2005 - 2010); “Best School for Real Life Experiences” by *Baltimore* magazine for the School-to-Career Transition and Law and Public Policy programs (2010); and most recently, Maryland Blue Ribbon School of Excellence (2010). Seventy-six percent of the 2010 graduating class took the Scholastic Aptitude Test, earning an average test score of 1742 – the highest in Baltimore County. In 2010, our students took 29 different Advanced Placement (AP) tests, and 84% of them earned a 3 or better. On 14 of the tests, all students who took them earned a 3 or better, including the 40 who took the Calculus B/C and the 28 who took the various physics tests. Towson High School consistently meets Adequate Yearly Progress.

The student body—reflecting the nation’s changing demographics and enriching the school with its cultural, scholastic, and social diversity—is our most valuable asset. Our students include speakers of more than 20 different languages, including Albanian, Farsi, Nepali, and Urdu. Approximately 14 percent of our population receives 504 plan accommodations or special education services, including those in the Functional Academic Learning Support (FALS) programs. About 14 percent of our students qualify for the federal Free and Reduced Priced Meal (FARM) program. Our differences make us stronger as a unit, and as a result, we accomplish many things that further demonstrate Towson High School’s “Tradition of Excellence.”

In 2010, more than \$9 million in grants and scholarships was awarded to graduating students. Those graduates included 7 National Merit Finalists, 26 National Commended Students, 3 National Achievement Scholarship Finalists, 1 National Hispanic Recognition Scholar, 38 Maryland distinguished Scholars in Academic and Visual Arts, and 68 Advanced Placement Scholars. 17 percent of the seniors ranked in the top five percent of Maryland’s students. Ninety-eight percent of our school’s students demonstrated proficient or advanced skills in reading and mathematics on the Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) exams. More than 96 percent of the 10th and 11th graders had met the requirements of all four High School Assessments (English, Government, Algebra/Data Analysis, and Biology), and programs were in place to ensure the success of students who had not yet reached that goal. Students earned places as members of the All-County Honors Band, All-County Honors Orchestra and All-County Honors Chorus. Our writers and visual artists won numerous local, state, and national awards.

Our faculty members contribute their expertise on a daily basis, supporting the students academically and socially. More than 80 percent hold masters degrees and several have been recognized district- and state-wide for excellence (Maryland Technology Teacher of the Year, High School Math Teacher of the Year Award, and Baltimore County High School Teacher of the Year, all in 2010). Eight staff members, including an administrator, have earned National Board Certification in an area of teaching expertise. Faculty members sponsor more than 50 academic or interest-driven extracurricular clubs including Anime Club, It’s Academic, Robotics Club, Diversity Club, Model UN, and the THS Service Coalition.

In the past 11 years, Towson High School athletic teams have won state championships in volleyball, cross country, baseball and soccer, with numerous other sports teams winning county and regional championships. We participate in the Allied Sports program, offering combined teams of special education and regular education students in three sports: soccer, bowling, and softball.

Music Boosters, Sports Boosters, and Towson Art Parents Association (TAPA) are parent-organized groups whose fundraising and volunteerism support school programs within the building and partnerships in the community. The Towson High School Alumni Association (THSAA), active since 1906, continues to contribute to its alma mater by providing scholarships to students and support for events and activities throughout the year. Towson University, Johns Hopkins University and Baltimore County Community College, provide college preparatory and curricular extension activities to further expose our students to authentic learning experiences.

Through a differentiated approach to teaching, learning and living, we address all students' needs, working to maintain a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive environment.

1. Assessment Results:

Passing the HSA exams is a graduation requirement that began with students who entered Grade 9 in 2005. Tests in algebra, government, and biology are administered to students in Grade 9. The English HSA test is administered to Grade 10 students. These four tests reflect Maryland's Core Learning Goals, which are aligned with national expectations, goals, and objectives, and congruent with those outlined by professional organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Association of Teachers of Mathematics. Maryland State Department of Education determines where the cut score is for students considered to be performing at the basic, proficient, and advanced levels. A full explanation of the Maryland High School Assessment Program is available at <http://hsaexam.org/about/overview.html>.

On the HSAs, our students continue to show progress in the critical areas of mathematics and English. The percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced on the mathematics assessment has increased during the last three years, especially African American students (from 85% to 91%) and special education students (from 59% to 100%). The percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced has increased over the last three years in reading as well, particularly for FARMS-eligible students (from 83% to 90%), for African American students (from 83% to 98%), and for special education students (from 53% to 83%).

Towson High School continues to work diligently to close the gap between how each subgroup achieves in comparison to all students. In addition to the inclusive, differentiated instruction offered in English classes, the English department offers two courses to accelerate reading skills acquisition: *Language!* and *Accelerated English*.

Over the past three years, our SAT scores have increased in each of the three areas tested. Critical reading scores have increased by 13 points, math by 20 points, and writing by 9 points. Our 2010 average SAT score of 1742 was composed of an average score in critical reading of 574, in math, 588, and in writing, 580. Towson High School places an emphasis on ensuring that all students are prepared to take the SAT and strategies to meet that goal are continually updated and addressed through the school improvement plan.

Towson High School offered 25 advanced placement courses last year; 1063 tests were given in 2010. Continued emphasis on rigorous course offerings and revised strategies for identification of AP students are incorporated into the school improvement plan and enable the school to continue to increase both participation and passing percentages for students in all subgroups.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Weekly common planning in the tested areas focuses on analyzing short-cycle and benchmark assessment data to determine the need for revision and adaptation of curriculum for specific skill development. Administrators, the chairs of the math, science, social studies, English, school counseling, and special education departments, as well as the technology liaison, meet weekly to review HSA assessment data, report cards, attendance records and other data to make decisions regarding course placement, testing strategies, and remediation opportunities.

Maryland School Assessment (MSA) results for incoming ninth graders are examined, and those scoring basic to low proficient on the MSA reading test—as well as 10th graders and new enrollees scoring two or more years below grade level on diagnostic reading assessments—enroll in *Language!*, a research-based intervention that brings underachieving students to or above grade level in reading. Assessment data, interviews, and recommendations are used to invite students to participate in AVID (Advancement

Via Individual Determination), an academic support program which uses weekly tutorials, goal-setting, guest speakers and college investigations to assist these students, who traditionally may have slipped through the cracks.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) results and AP Potential scores, provided by the College Board, aid teachers, students, and parents in choosing appropriate placement for students in appropriately challenging course work. PSAT/NMSQT, Accuplacer, and SAT results are analyzed to determine effective strategies and possible remediation needs in math, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension. The staff has also incorporated into instruction pre-AP strategies and the 6-point writing rubric to help students develop skills necessary for success in post-high school endeavors.

After using assessment data to identify problematic areas of instruction, teachers conduct lesson studies and collaborate to improve lessons and implement research-based strategies. For example, student survey data led the American Government teaching team to reevaluate its re-teaching strategies. When students reported that afterschool tutoring sessions were not feasible for them, the teachers signed up for a professional development program to learn new strategies to do in class. As a result, they adapted the Pause Lesson strategy and created a "Re-teaching Activities" binder containing strategies that focused on connecting major concepts. Teams also examine learning style inventory results to plan lessons incorporating both independent learning and dependent learning.

Teachers analyze advanced placement scores and the AP Instructional Planning Reports to determine strengths and weaknesses in their programs. For example, when the ability to read various maps appeared as a student weakness in our AP Human Geography report, teachers focused instruction on extensive map creation and interpretation.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Towson High School uses a variety of outlets to communicate assessment data to the school community, and all stakeholders have an opportunity to clarify the information they receive. Parent programs such as Back-to-School Night, American Education Week, Academic Planning Night, College Planning Night, and National African American Parent Involvement Day provide opportunities for us to report testing outcomes to the public.

School counselors share assessment data with students during academic advising in the course of individualized counseling to develop and update those students' four-year academic plans. This kind of counseling also includes orientation of new students, academic conferences and course credit reviews. In addition to mid-quarter interim grade reports and quarterly report cards, student, and parents also receive assessment information through PSAT and HSA score reports as well as information through features in the monthly parent newsletter, the school newspaper, Talisman, and the televised morning announcements. Information is also disseminated through bulletin boards, school, and county Web postings, the school performance report, and The Towson Times newspaper. Another important feature in our communication with students and their families is our use of the Family Connections Website by Naviance, a Web-based program for parents and students to explore careers and colleges. Each grade level has an individualized opening page which the counseling office adapts to meet the needs of the school community. Parents are linked to student accounts, keeping them connected to their children's information and activity on the site.

SAT, AP, and ACT reports are shared with families through the use of our school profile document and through monthly PTSA and School Improvement Team meetings. PSAT scores and the resulting AP Potential reports are used to identify students who have high probability of success in AP courses, and those students meet with counselors who explain the course selection process and encourage the students to enroll.

We also use recognition ceremonies (such as the AVID Induction, the Breakfast of Champions assembly, Senior Awards Night, and graduation) to promote the outstanding achievements of our students. Parents and community members may attend to celebrate the achievements of our students. In addition, posters, banners, and plaques are displayed prominently throughout the school to recognize our National Merit Scholars, National Achievement Scholars, AP Scholars, and winners of school academic and leadership awards in each graduating class.

4. Sharing Lessons Learned:

With continuous and ongoing improvement as our goal, Towson High School staff reflect on what we do, how we do it, and why it is done. Our teachers are lifelong learners willing to “think outside the box” and take risks by implementing cutting-edge initiatives. We base decisions on the needs of our student population, and some of the initiatives we have implemented have put the school on the forefront of education in our county, state, and nation, presenting us with opportunities to share our ideas.

Our school has hosted professional development seminars for area high school administrators and department chairs to examine our student achievement strategies. We have hosted representatives of faculty from both local and out-of-state high schools to discuss and observe our Law and Public Policy magnet program. The ninth grade American Government teaching team was the first group of teachers in Baltimore County to implement Project Citizen, a program in which students research community concerns and devise and present specific proposals to local political officials to address them. Other schools have contacted us for advice and information about how to implement that program in their schools.

Additionally, our teachers are leaders in the county in the areas of curriculum and pedagogy. Our teachers became mentors for Baltimore County teachers new to teaching gifted and talented courses. Since we were the first school in Baltimore County to offer AP World History, our teacher is the resource for other schools as they begin to offer the course. Our creative writing teacher has mentored teachers countywide who were setting up writing programs in their own schools. Our teachers have served as test readers for the College Board for many years and have served on committees to mentor teachers working to earn national board certification. Our teachers’ expertise is called to write curricula in math, English, social studies, world languages, and other areas. Several teachers have run countywide professional development sessions; most recently, members of both our art and technology education departments have used their expertise to lead workshops for their colleagues.

Our teachers, administrators, staff, and community make decisions based on what is best for our students. Sometimes those decisions gain us recognition. The best recognition is our students’ achievements. That alone drives what we do.

1. Curriculum:

Engaging, challenging, and relevant—Towson High School’s curriculum is aligned with state and national standards. Its 25 advanced placement courses represent most departments in the school. Each area of instruction provides a unique contribution to an environment inclusive of different learning styles, cultures, and abilities.

The English curriculum is rich in literature, composition, and language at every level. In Grade 9, students follow a genre approach adopted from College Board’s Springboard Program. In Grades 10-12, students study World Literature, American Literature, and British Literature, respectively. Instruction is offered at the standard, honors, and AP Level. Students engage in problem solving, academic discourse, and critical analysis of challenging texts. The SAT Prep course is given to all Grade 11 students. Additionally, English electives include offerings in drama, journalism, yearbook, and creative writing. Our writing students have won numerous awards in such prestigious programs as YoungArts and the Scholastic Writing Awards. The English Department is also solely responsible for two student publications—the yearbook, *Sidelights*; and the newspaper, *Talisman* — and in conjunction with the Art Department, sponsors *Colophon*, the school’s creative arts magazine, which recently earned the 2010 Highest Award from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

The math program is comprised of coursework in algebra, geometry, pre-calculus, trigonometry, statistics, and calculus at levels ranging from standard to advanced placement. It provides differentiated instruction with the goal being that every student will be both challenged and successful. All students leave the math program with the fundamental concepts of the courses they have taken as well as the ability to problem solve and justify their thinking, which prepares them for real-world mathematics and college math courses.

The student-centered, technology-infused approaches to learning used by the science department challenge scholars to be active learners and critical thinkers. Rigorous courses, offered at the standard, honors, gifted and talented, and AP levels, encourage students to explore science in a hands-on manner while making real-world connections. Courses are offered in biology, chemistry, environmental science, physics, anatomy and physiology, and forensic science. Technology, including laptops, Lab Pro data collection devices, and a collection of Vernier probes, allow science students to collect, graph, and analyze actual scientific data.

Social studies courses create informed, productive citizens in our democratic society and within the global community. In American government (Grade 9), world history (Grade 10), United States history (Grade 11) and economics (Grade 12), they learn by examining, researching, and analyzing information to gain a better understanding of the constructs and events that shape the world. Courses are offered at the standard, honors, GT and AP levels, with electives in Human Geography, Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Philosophy, and International Law and Comparative Government. The Law and Public Policy magnet program is housed in this department and provides unique academic offerings (Trial Advocacy and Introduction to Law, Research and Writing) and leadership opportunities to enhance instruction. In addition, students participate in job shadowing and internships.

Our award-winning art program offers 10 courses at the standard, GT, and AP levels, and addresses art history, aesthetics, and criticism in the context of intensive studio arts program. Students paint murals in community businesses, and seniors display their work in private showings in the school lobby throughout the winter and spring, inviting guests and discussing their pieces in a professional setting. Our artists regularly win honors in local, state, and national competitions, including the national Scholastic Art Awards program.

Towson High School's halls are alive with the sound of music – 12 different courses in band, chorus and orchestra, guitar, music technology, and music theory. The program features our award-winning Marching Generals and the Jazz Ensemble, both of which often perform in the community. Our musicians are regularly chosen to perform in all-county and all-state performance groups and are invited each year to perform with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

The physical education courses (Fitness Foundations, Aerobics/Body Conditioning, Team Sports, and Weight Training) emphasize optimal health and wellness. The family and consumer studies courses address our students' health and nutrition needs through hands-on experiences: Nutrition and Foods and Food for Singles teach the contribution that food makes to lifelong wellness. Health focuses on developing the skills and knowledge to address health issues impacting teens as they enter adulthood.

Our world language offerings prime our students to compete in the global community. Students usually elect to study beyond the two years of a language required for graduation as they explore their choice of four levels of Chinese, Latin and French (which begins with French II and ends with French V AP), and six levels of Spanish (the last two levels are AP courses). Each language has its own National Honor Society, which enjoys an industrious, enthusiastic membership.

The School-to-Career program typically places 25 students each year in its work-study program and 50 seniors in half-day internships in professional settings. Internship sites have included the local Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Baltimore FBI Office.

2. Reading/English:

(Secondary Schools) English

Arguably, more than any other single factor, reading impacts student success across all content areas. Reading plays a critical role in success in writing and critical thinking, and on the SAT and AP exams. The English program at Towson High School challenges students to read literature that extends their vision and understanding of the world. We have them read often, across all literary genres including novels, short stories, drama and poetry, and at a challenging level in order to facilitate success across the board.

Recognizing that some students struggle with reading and writing, we offer interventions to address those needs. *Language!*, a year-long literary and reading intervention course, fosters greater academic success in our underachieving students, bringing them up to or above grade level in reading. Currently, about 50 Grade 9 students who scored basic to low proficient on the MSA reading test in grade 8, as well as Grade 10 students and new enrollees who scored two or more years below grade level on a diagnostic reading proficiency assessment, are enrolled in this course, which stresses the comprehensive development of reading skills. The Accelerated English course is provided to students who have not reached proficiency on the English HSA exam. The success of both of these programs is reflected in improved student performance on the Maryland High School Assessment exams.

Four-year student writing folders reflect the graduated writing skills addressed through compositions at each grade level and include timed writings, essays in the rhetorical modes, student resumes, creative/original pieces and journals. The folders include all steps of the writing process from pre-writing to revision, and teachers use various assessment tools for grading, including instructor-designed rubrics, specification sheets, oral presentations, and technology-based presentations. Students complete independent reading assignments, including a schoolwide summer reading initiative first quarter, one work per semester for honors students, and one work each quarter for AP and GT students.

Our media specialist works closely with English teachers to design technology-based research projects in alignment with the county and state learning goals. Grade 9 students receive *The General Guide to Research*, an in-house publication designed and updated each year to reflect current research techniques

and documentation protocol, including technology citations. The guide is also posted on the Towson High School Web site through the library link along with links to credible, relevant research sites.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics department prepare's students to demonstrate readiness for college-level math work. We offer courses ranging from Algebra I through AP Calculus (BC). Teachers encourage students to enroll in a math course beyond the three required for graduation and provide them with support. Research shows that students who take four years of high school mathematics do better in college and are more likely to finish college on time than their peers who don't. We encourage full participation in mathematics to help students be as successful as possible.

In mathematics, student achievement is facilitated in many ways. Teachers meet regularly for planning purposes, evaluating AssessTrax data and other assessment resources to plan and facilitate future instruction. Common planning time is built into the master schedule for teachers of Algebra I, an HSA-tested area. This specific scheduling strategy enables the teachers to collaborate on skills instruction, generate departmental assessments, and share techniques and strategies to enhance student learning in this all-important, foundational math course.

Technology is used in a variety of ways to enhance instruction and address the variety of learning styles present in every mathematics class. Math classrooms have a teacher desktop or laptop computer, an LCD projector, an ELMO document camera, and a Promethean Tablet, all of which promote interactive, authentic instruction. Each student has a graphing calculator. Teachers give some assessments and assignments in which calculators are used and others in which they are not in order to prepare students for higher-level problem solving.

Teachers have implemented several key strategies to assist students who are performing below grade level. We offer the semester-long Mathematics Modeling course for students who have not reached proficiency on the HSA exam for algebra. This course focuses on both content and test-taking strategies and uses the EPat Launcher program online to encourage preparation and promote success on the state exam. All students have access to afterschool help sessions four days each week from one of our math teachers. Each month, the department publishes a calendar informing students of the location and time of each session.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The science program at Towson High School is a springboard for students to explore real-world applications for the content they learn. This directly addresses the school's mission "to challenge students to become active learners and critical thinkers."

All Maryland students must earn three credits in high school science as a graduation requirement, yet many students at Towson High School take beyond the required number. Every student earns credits in biology and chemistry during his or her tenure at Towson High School. These core courses help students to understand the world around them and the way they interact with it. A semester-long remediation course is in place to assist students in achieving success on the HSA exam for biology if they did not do so while enrolled in the biology course. The majority of students earn their third science credit in physics, while others choose Anatomy & Physiology, forensic science, or environmental science. Advanced placement courses in biology, chemistry, environmental science, Physics B, and Physics C: Mechanics are offered at Towson. These challenging classes provide students with college level content and help prepare them for higher education. As a result of taking one or more of these courses, students may find a college or career path that they may not otherwise have considered.

The science department provides our students with a safe, positive learning environment which promotes student achievement. Our teachers model excellence while fostering student success through the planning and implementation of engaging lessons. They also excel at involving members of the community in the educational process. Recently, the AP Biology class extracted DNA and mapped the genome of duckweed in cooperation with a research scientist from Johns Hopkins University. On other occasions, parents of current and former students who are employed in science-related careers have donated their time to serve

as guest speakers in our classrooms, providing our students with exposure to and knowledge of various scientific careers.

5. Instructional Methods:

Towson High School embraces the belief that all students can learn and achieve. We work tirelessly to ensure that each student reaches his or her potential. In order to accomplish this goal, we strive to have an effective and highly qualified teacher in every classroom, implementing rigorous, challenging curricula. From Language!, AVID, and AP courses to School-to-Career Transition placements, parallel enrollment, and internships. We provide students with opportunities that fit their individual needs to attain and hone skills that will open doors for future careers and college admissions.

Students experience consistency of instruction across curricula by all teachers planning lessons using the Strategic Classroom Learning Model, an approach developed by Dr. Donna Walker Tileston, which stems from research in brain-based instruction. The components of this learning model ensure that students receive instruction clearly defined in a behavioral objective, a mindjog that sets the stage for the specific content covered in the lesson, a personal connection to students' lives, an information exchange and experience of direct application to ensure practice and transferability of information, and a quality summary/assessment that pulls all the pieces together to fortify instruction.

All students are encouraged to tackle coursework that will further their academic and personal goals. Teachers support student choices by offering tutoring sessions, in-class review activities, access to teacher's notes and informational teacher websites, and extended study sessions. Teachers also use the learning styles inventory to plan lessons that utilize students' current strengths and scaffold instruction to support student growth in areas of weakness. The schoolwide incorporation of AVID and AP strategies also blur the strict lines that typically demarcate levels of instruction, allowing all students to benefit from strategies that support college readiness in a global society. Teachers implement strategies such as Concept Mapping, Cornell Notes, Placemat, and Four Corner Discussions, so that classroom activities and research opportunities engage and set high standards for all students.

Our teachers realize that students operate in a technology-driven world. Teachers use Smart Board technology, document cameras, flip cameras, interactive student response systems, TeacherTube, Safari Montage, and wikis to engage students academically and to expose them to technology used on the college level as well as in the work force. In the SAT Prep course, accelerated HSA classes, and AP courses, students access online programs that provide valuable practice for the SAT, HSA assessments, and AP tests.

6. Professional Development:

Towson High School has made professional development for the entire faculty and within each department a priority. Professional development activities are an integral part of schoolwide faculty meetings. Since the addition of AVID to the academic program, members of the AVID site team and occasionally AVID students have presented strategies and activities to the faculty. Some of those AVID strategies include Fish Bowl, Philosophical Chairs, and Serialized Questioning. AVID strategies dovetail perfectly with the Strategic Classroom Learning Model. The faculty has embraced the AVID strategies, and they are used on a daily basis in many classrooms.

Teachers within each department make professional presentations during monthly meetings. Those presentations generally involve information about innovations and "best practices," gathered through research, off-site professional development, and experience. Teachers within every department of the school have taken advantage of this opportunity for professional growth, sharing ideas on topics ranging from teacher-generated Web sites and PREZI (a Web-based application and storytelling tool) to composition revision strategies and vertical teaming.

Many teachers have seized the opportunity to participate in one-day AP workshops and weeklong summer institutes to improve their teaching. These programs are offered by the Baltimore County Public Schools, sponsored by the College Board, and taught by College Board-approved instructors.

The schedule at Towson High is designed so that teachers of HSA-tested subjects have common planning time. Teachers share lessons, strategies, and data analysis at weekly meetings. Lesson studies are a natural offshoot of this collaboration and have proven to be an effective means for evaluating and fine-tuning instruction.

The administration is also involved in district professional development to keep up with educational trends and strategies that will benefit the school. In recent years, several books have been incorporated into the professional development of department chairs at Towson High. Motivating Black Males to Achieve in Schools and In Life by B.K Kafele, Connecting Teachers, Students, and Standards by D.L. Voltz, M.J. Sims, and B. Nelson, and Detracking for Excellence and Equity by C.C Burris and D.T Garrity have been read, presented, and discussed during leadership team meetings. Another book, Choosing Civility by P.M. Forni, has been used as a reference in classes and departmental meetings and served as the foundation for a schoolwide initiative, which included an assembly given by Mr. Forni to our entire staff and student body.

7. School Leadership:

Leadership at Towson High School is a team effort; its cornerstones: vision, collaboration, and implementation. Our principal, three administrators, and fifteen teacher-leaders, who are the department chairs, function as “principal teachers” and are stewards of our school’s vision, supporting the district’s guiding framework, *The Blueprint for Progress*, and emphasizing quality education that meets all students’ needs.

Our leaders truly understand the school’s mission and goals and share a belief that informed decisions are the result of research and analysis of data followed by thoughtful conversations where that information is interpreted and applied to improve student achievement.

The administrative team meets every Monday morning to monitor student attendance, discuss student concerns, and monitor progress toward goals of our school improvement plan. The HSA team – comprised of the principal, the assistant principal in charge of testing, and the department chairs of the English, math, science, social studies, school counseling and special education departments – meets weekly to monitor and review assessment data and intervention plans for students needing additional support to achieve success on the four HSA tests. The critical care team (whose members include the administrators, the crisis interventionist, school nurse, social worker, school counseling, and special education chairman) meets weekly to review the progress of students with special needs.

Department chairs, the faculty, curricular departments, and special committees meet monthly to ensure that specific needs of the student population are discussed by the people best equipped to address the issues. Typically, the department chairs meet with the administration to discuss possible schoolwide professional development needs, and curricular departments meet to discuss common issues and instruction for students in the content areas.

The Towson High School Improvement Team, composed of teachers, administrators, students representing various clubs and organizations, Student Government Association (SGA) leaders, community business leaders, alumni, and parents, meets six times each year and has been responsible for ongoing character education activities to promote civility and cooperation among all members of our school community. SGA officers meet regularly with the administration to discuss students’ concerns and the organization’s plans to lead and serve the student body and the school. Sports Boosters, Music Boosters, and TAPA (Towson Art Parent Association) meet monthly and share their ideas and initiatives to support our extracurricular programs. We reiterate: The instructional program at Towson High School is designed to benefit “the whole child” in each of our students. That goal is the focus of our leadership.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 10

Test: English 10

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2010 Publisher: Maryland State Dept. of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient & Advanced	98	96	95	92	84
Advanced	64	66	66	67	37
Number of students tested	325	322	328	313	373
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	6	3	3	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	2	1	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient & Advanced	90	87	85	84	51
Advanced	33	33	35	11	9
Number of students tested	30	30	34	37	43
2. African American Students					
Proficient & Advanced	98	87	83	70	57
Advanced	33	33	33	24	15
Number of students tested	49	55	54	66	66
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient & Advanced	91				
Advanced	55				
Number of students tested	11				
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient & Advanced	83	75	53	45	26
Advanced	25	0	12	9	5
Number of students tested	12	12	17	22	19
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. WHITE					
Proficient & Advanced	99	98	98	97	88
Advanced	70	75	74	74	41
Number of students tested	240	236	243	244	282
NOTES: - Blank cells indicate fewer than 10 students were assessed in the subgroup. - Data from 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 represent formal, cohort data rather than the piloted data from the years 2005-2006, 2006-2007. Therefore for consistency and accuracy the years 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 were used for analysis. - MARYLAND STANDARDS ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT: ADVANCED is a highly challenging and exemplary level of achievement indicating outstanding accomplishment in meeting the needs of students. PROFICIENT is a realistic and rigorous level of achievement indicating proficiency in meeting the needs of students. BASIC is a level of achievement indicating that more work is needed to attain proficiency in meeting the needs of students.					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9 Test: Algebra and Data Analysis

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2010 Publisher: Maryland State Dept. of Education

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient and Advanced	98	97	96	88	83
Advanced	61	52	52	35	14
Number of students tested	291	316	319	337	473
Percent of total students tested	100	98	99	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	6	3	3	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	2	1	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Proficient and Advanced	85	93	88	67	60
Advanced	33	25	28	6	8
Number of students tested	27	28	32	36	50
2. African American Students					
Proficient and Advanced	91	89	85	58	53
Advanced	19	22	26	8	5
Number of students tested	42	55	54	60	102
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Proficient and Advanced	100	62	59	54	49
Advanced	27	8	0	4	3
Number of students tested	11	13	17	24	37
5. English Language Learner Students					
Proficient and Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. WHITE					
Proficient and Advanced	99	99	99	94	90
Advanced	68	61	61	42	16
Number of students tested	220	234	238	246	335
<p>NOTES: - Blank cells indicate fewer than 10 students were assessed in the subgroup. - Data from 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 represent formal, cohort data rather than the piloted data from the years 2005-2006, 2006-2007. Therefore for consistency and accuracy the years 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 were used for analysis. - MARYLAND STANDARDS ARE DIVIDED INTO THREE LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT: ADVANCED is a highly challenging and exemplary level of achievement indicating outstanding accomplishment in meeting the needs of students. PROFICIENT is a realistic and rigorous level of achievement indicating proficiency in meeting the needs of students. BASIC is a level of achievement indicating that more work is needed to attain proficiency in meeting the needs of students.</p>					

11MD6

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: School Average

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient & Advanced	98	97	96	88	83
Advanced	61	52	52	35	14
Number of students tested	291	316	319	337	473
Percent of total students tested	100	98	99	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	6	3	3	4
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11MD6

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: School Average

	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES					
Proficient & Advanced	98	96	95	92	85
Advanced	64	66	66	67	37
Number of students tested	325	322	328	313	373
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