



## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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12NJ8

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 2011-2012 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 foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
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

12NJ8

All data are the most recent year available.

## DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
 (per district designation): 0 Middle/Junior high schools  
5 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
5 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 16374

## SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 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	31	52	83
3	0	0	0		10	27	54	81
4	0	0	0		11	26	62	88
5	0	0	0		12	32	39	71
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>								323

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
7 % Asian  
2 % Black or African American  
3 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
88 % White  
0 % 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 2010-2011 school year: 0%

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, 2010 until the end of the school year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	1
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	1
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	307
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.00
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	0

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1%

Total number of students who qualify: 4

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: 0%

Total number of students served: 1

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>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>0</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</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>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>29</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>35</u>	<u>0</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:

11:1

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

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	98%	97%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>70</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>100%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>0%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

### *Mission Statement*

Communications High School, a personalized academy with a career focus, provides a rigorous theme-based curriculum in conjunction with community, industry and higher education partnerships. Monmouth County students acquire knowledge, skills and professional ethics while utilizing the latest technology related to their communication field.

CHS opened in Wall Township, NJ, in September of 2000 with a focus on the field of communication and currently has a total student population of 323 students. The student body is drawn from towns across Monmouth County, NJ. Any Monmouth County 8<sup>th</sup> grader can elect to take the entrance exam, and the top-scoring student from each sending district is offered admission into the school. The remaining applicants are then ranked to fill the vacant admission slots. In January of 2012 CHS offered their admission's test to 453 students who hope to be selected to fill one of the 80 places in the Class of 2016.

In the 11 years since it opened its doors CHS students have had consistently high SAT scores with averages of 668 (Critical Reading,) 651 (Mathematics) and 656 (Writing) for the Class of 2012. All the students have been proficient or highly proficient on the HSPA exam. As reported for the Class of 2010, 76% of CHS students scored highly proficient in language arts and 93% highly proficient in math. In addition, seniors currently have the opportunity to take up to 15 credits in conjunction with Seton Hall University in the areas of Spanish, English, and Calculus.

CHS provides a rigorous, theme-based curriculum in the study taught at an honors level that encompasses the emerging areas of New Media, including Journalism, Graphic Design and Communication Technology. Individual courses include newspaper, web and broadcast journalism, graphic design, animation, electronic communication (television, film and radio broadcasting), photojournalism, publishing and public relations. Through community-based and industry partnerships, students are exposed to professional and ethical issues and acquire skills needed to succeed in a new media environment.

Beyond the realm of academics, students compete in state and national competitions and have won state, national, and international recognition in the areas of journalism, photojournalism, writing, broadcast, film, and public speaking, among others.

Within the CHS community, all shareholders meet to address needs as they arise. With monthly review meetings such as Instructional Council and the Professional Learning Committees, every CHS goal, data driven or not, is met and exceeded. The collective faculty conducts annual reviews during end of the year staff days, and overall curriculum is revised every three years for proficiency and alignment.

Last year, CHS was reaccredited by The Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association. Part of our planning process was to create a Profile of a Communications High School Graduate. The process of creating such a document is just as important as the statements themselves. The planning committee organized multiple documents and had many meetings to discuss the language behind each statement and reflected on its overall context to the school.

The Profile of a Communications High School Graduate is an individual who

1. Communicates with confidence and competence in oral, visual, and written forms.
2. Demonstrates a high level of competency using current technology.
3. Maintains technical flexibility and adapts to new technology.

4. Synthesizes information in innovative and creative ways.
5. Possesses an academic skill set that exceeds New Jersey educational requirements.
6. Exhibits academic confidence with strong study and time management skills.
7. Acts ethically, possesses integrity, and exhibits accountability for his or her actions.
8. Interacts effectively in local, national, and global communities.
9. Works cooperatively to achieve academic and professional goals.
10. Assimilates both academically and socially in a college environment and meets the demands of the professional world.

The Mission statement found at the beginning of this section along with the Profile of a CHS Graduate help define the CHS community and guide the planning process throughout the school year. The small staff continually works to monitor progress and make recommendations that improve each student's education and environment. In this way, the Mission Statement and Profile are continually reviewed and revised as an ongoing process.

### 1. Assessment Results:

A. The CHS community is very proud of students' performance levels on standardized assessments. Students' scores consistently exceed state benchmarks. Over the past five years, the majority of students score advanced proficient in Mathematics and over half of the student population score advanced proficient in Language Arts Literacy. At CHS, the community set a strenuous but realistic goal to achieve 100% advanced proficiency in Mathematics on the HSPA in the near future. Since students represent of all the sending districts in Monmouth County, incoming freshmen must be acclimated to the unique and challenging environment they encounter at CHS. Prior to the junior year, the majority of the curriculum at CHS is standard for every student. Beginning at the junior year, students may choose to pursue specific themes while continuing to take rigorous academic courses. At CHS, students are not distinguished based on socioeconomic status and/or sending district. The impact of the District Factor Group (DFG) of the student's home school becomes transparent as they are incorporated throughout their four years into the CHS population and curriculum. All of our students are held to the same rigorous standards in the classroom, and requirements for graduation from CHS far exceed state standards. For example, all students are required to take a fourth year of mathematics and a fourth year of science, and achieve a total 160 credits for graduation.

B. Data-driven instruction and focused team articulation is the key to the CHS Mathematics' department success. Mathematical concepts that reinforce the tested clusters are infused in the curriculum. Emphasis on number and numerical operations, geometry and measurement, patterns and algebra, and data analysis, probability, statistics, and discrete mathematics are infused in hands-on learning using differentiated instruction and higher order thinking skills in the classroom. This is exemplified by the upward trend in HSPA Mathematics Advanced Proficient scores from 87.1 in 2009-2010 to 92.5% in 2010-2011.

CHS prides itself on its ability to personalize the educational experience of each student. There are a number of formal and informal processes in place to make sure that every student's needs are addressed.

The Math Department meets to discuss experiences with various students to make sure faculty have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses.

At the beginning of every semester, the faculty conducts grade level meetings to discuss any special concerns with the student body of that grade.

Finally, the Math Department works closely with Guidance to understand other factors that may impact learning such as home life, parental attitudes towards education, time available for homework (for instance, if the student has to work to help support the family), or a crisis in the family.

Once faculty is aware of any issues that may be hindering a student's learning, individual teachers can make the appropriate accommodations as mentioned above, or simply provide extra help, as necessary.

The Pupil Improvement Plan (PIP) is CHS's formal process for reversing a negative trend in a student's performance. When a student is unable to maintain a grade of C, a PIP is put into place. This immediately notifies the student, Guidance, administration, and parents that there is a concern regarding the student's learning. Scheduled tutoring, parental involvement, or other corrective measures are put in place until the negative trend is reversed.

The most significant change in Language Arts Literacy is the increase in percentage of students scoring Advanced Proficient from 2009-2010 (49.5%) to 2010-2011 (76.1%). Two years ago, the English Department was given the task of forming a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to address the fact

that less than half our population was scoring Advanced Proficient on the Language Arts Literacy section of the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). They were charged with analyzing data and suggesting to administration changes in curriculum that would bring the statistics up. The team did not just want to bring the statistics up, they too wanted to achieve 100% Advanced Proficiency before the HSPA was deemed obsolete.

As a result, an emphasis was placed on reading analysis including interpreting, analyzing, and critiquing text; persuasive and expository writing, and an understanding of the holistic scoring process. Although each cohort is unique, another reason for the fluctuation in Advanced Proficient scores in Language Arts Literacy may be due to the fact that a new sophomore English teacher was hired in the 2009-2010 school year. There is no achievement gap of 10 or more percentage points between the test scores of all students and the test scores of subgroups. Due to the school's small population, there are no subgroups with 10 or more tested students. The State did not provide CHS with test results.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

In the 11 years since it opened its doors, Communications High School students have had consistently high SAT scores and all the students have been proficient or highly proficient on the HSPA exam. Seniors also have the opportunity to take up to 15 credits in conjunction with Seton Hall University in the areas of Spanish, English, and Calculus. Beyond the realm of academics, students have competed in state and national competitions and have won state, national, and international recognition in the areas of journalism, photojournalism, writing, broadcast, film, and public speaking, among others.

For this reason, Communications High School (CHS) has reassessed the definition of student achievement to go beyond individual classroom assessments as well as how data will be gathered and analyzed. As part of the data collection and analysis process, a Profile of Student Performance is generated. The Profile of Student Performance includes the following information and data that describe the levels of student performance on assessments that are most respected by the members of the school's community of stakeholders, valued by the school's professional staff, and/or required by the state or federal governments. The Profile includes:

- Data for standardized academic assessments.
- Data for school-based academic assessments.
- Data for achievement indicators such as graduation rate, college rigorous courses, college acceptance, etc.
- Data for citizenship measures such as attendance, promptness, discipline, etc.
- Data for state academic assessments, if applicable.

CHS uses THIS assessment data to adapt curriculum and teaching methods and identify appropriate program placement for students. The data IS analyzed to determine if the school is making progress towards achieving it's mission as well as to help determine in which areas of student performance there are the largest gaps between what is expected and how students are performing. As a result, faculty revise, adapt, and improve curriculum and teaching methods as necessary.

For example, by gathering writing data based on a standard writing rubric from all disciplines within the school, faculty will determine what areas of study and teaching methods meet or exceed expectations of student achievement and where they fall short with regard to all types of written communication. In addition, SAT scores in the Critical Reading and Writing sections will be analyzed over time to determine the achievement of CHS students in relation to the student population within the state and nationally. The data gathering process began during the 2011 – 2012 school year; this data will serve as a baseline for analysis going forward with a culminating analysis performed at the end of five years.

In addition, with the competitive academic environment of Communications there have been some visible instances of cheating during the past number of years. The students wanted to turn that trend around and approached the faculty as a whole during the 2009-2010 school year and a framework for addressing their concerns was developed during the subsequent school year. As part of the data gathering and analysis process, starting in the current school year, data regarding incidence of cheating will be obtained, analyzed, and disseminated to the school community. Based on the data gathered, the Academic Integrity Committee will develop a program to educate both faculty and students with the goal of a significant reduction in incidence of cheating with a direct correlation to improvement in student achievement.

CHS utilizes a variety of media to disseminate information regarding student achievement within the school community and the wider community of Monmouth County. The school's newspaper *The InkBlot* publishes articles about student awards and achievement, and the CHS morning news produced by the junior class produces packages reporting on the progress the school community is making in relation to our school wide objectives including student achievement. The Parent Student Faculty Association (PSFA) distributes a monthly newsletter *The Communique* that invites faculty to submit updates on student achievement in both the classroom and in extracurricular activities. Finally, local print and electronic newspapers along with the school website and CHS social media accounts on both Twitter and Facebook provide up to date information to the community at large.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

Communications High School continues to share its successful strategies with other schools across New Jersey and nationally. Our best curricula and lessons are shared through scholastic conferences and through service to student organizations.

Our teachers have developed professional affiliations with state and national organizations. Two faculty members serve as officers at the Garden State Scholastic Press Association, which serves teen journalists and their advisers.

Every autumn, these faculty members share their expertise as session speakers at the GSSPA's Fall Press Day. The daylong event draws around 2,000 teen journalists who attend the sessions, gaining knowledge on all aspects of scholastic journalism.

Our teachers have delivered Fall Press Day sessions on news and opinion writing, page layout and design and photography.

In the spring, our teachers again share their strategies at a conference for advisers of newspaper and broadcast news media. The conference is held at Rutgers University and is attended by 25 to 50 teachers/advisers from across the state. Here, again, the objective is to share knowledge and techniques that will help teachers/advisers to do their jobs better.

Two years ago, one of our teacher's led the GSSPA's effort to present a "new media" conference. Sessions were designed to help teachers to begin using the Internet and social media, both with their student publications and as teaching tools in the classroom. Our teachers organized the conference, sharing successful strategies on the use of Facebook and Twitter in the classroom, the use of blogs and the benefits of putting student publications online.

This spring, another teacher will share strategies concerning Professional Learning Communities, with the goal of setting up a statewide PLC for journalism teachers. At this time, most journalism teachers are working alone in their respective schools. The statewide PLC would enable them to work with teachers who are engaged in the same curriculum and face the same challenges, thus fulfilling the goal of the PLC model.

Our teachers are able to lead the PLC effort because of knowledge gained at the National Scholastic Press Association's recent national conference, where a daylong session was offered on the organization of statewide PLCs. Our faculty shared strategies at the national conference last fall and gained the knowledge to lead teachers here in New Jersey toward a better experience in their PLCs.

#### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

Communications High School has an outstanding relationship with the community and families it serves. From the very beginning CHS offers four information sessions per year that are designed to attract potential eighth grade students and to communicate our program of study. This process continually evolves based on our accomplishments and the success of our graduates at the end of each school year. This yearly endeavor brings thousands of people through our door that allows us to engage them in our student success. The information session also begins a very specific journey that identifies both students and parents that are interested in their education because parents and students are required to attend in order to get an application. This introduction to CHS provides a clear overview to our curriculum, student activities, culture and expectations.

Once a student is accepted into CHS the student and family are welcomed to our community through an orientation night. At the orientation the students participate in ice-breakers and team building activities so they can get to know one another. The parents meet with the executive team of our Parent Student Faculty Association (PSFA). The PSFA outlines all the benefits of becoming an active member to support the mission of the school. At the end our orientation the student and parent are familiar with the aspects of becoming a member of the CHS community.

The PSFA is an integral part of this community and meets once a month to promote our mission. The Principal meets with the membership during their monthly meetings to discuss upcoming events and provide guidance to programs that will benefit the student body that isn't feasible through district resources. Currently the PSFA organizes and supports programs for PSAT and SAT training, driver's education, student awards, beatification projects, funding for field trips and resources for staff members.

In addition to the hands on approach of meeting with the PSFA the school engages the community through its regular resources of monthly PSFA newsletter *The Communique*, the school website, faculty meetings, student meetings, and our annual Back to School Night. The students communicate their daily activities through their school newspaper *The InkBlot* and the morning news produce packages to track progress and report on achievements in the school community.

## 1. Curriculum:

Faculty members employ two different strategies when designing curriculum at CHS: the Curriculum Focus Groups (CFG) and career readiness concentration. CFG oversees the academic core and aligns the disciplines across the District while allowing individual departments to tailor curriculum to reflect the career concentration at each academy.

English courses at CHS focus on developing communication skills necessary for success in high school, college, and the work force. English I & II survey classical and contemporary literature, and English III offers a sampling of Twentieth Century American literature. Senior level English includes Creative Writing and Research Paper taught in association with Seton Hall University. Creative Writing fosters students' writing through individual practice and analysis of pertinent texts. The culminating project is the creation of the final bound book in association with the technology and printing classes.

Mathematics begins with either Algebra I or Geometry then proceeds through Algebra II, Pre-Calculus and Calculus (also taught in association with Seton Hall University) with an optional Statistics course offered at the senior level.

Required courses in History include World History, United States History I and II, with Historical Issues in Film as an elective in the senior year. In a time where media plays an important role in educating society, this course takes a critical look at the historical accuracy presented through film. Each unit focuses on a specific issue with activities supplemented by independent research to allow students to effectively critique the accuracy of selected films.

Science begins with freshman Biology concentrating on cellular biology, biochemistry, genetics, evolution, and ecology. Sophomores enroll in Conceptual Physics, and the junior level Chemistry course encourages a better appreciation for the environment by fostering an awareness of human environmental modifications and the resulting consequences. All students take at least one senior level science course: Advanced Biology, Advanced Physics, and/or Forensics. This last elective explores how science is applied to criminal and legal proceedings, expanding upon fundamental principles of biology, conceptual physics, and chemistry.

World Language encompasses Spanish I through Spanish V. Students incorporate interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes to master basic language skills in Spanish before enrolling in upper level courses. Curriculum resources integrated into upper level courses include web-based technologies, distance learning, and multi-media presentations. Spanish V, taught in association with Seton Hall University, integrates high-level reading, comprehension and thinking activities and the creation of media using radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, and films.

The physical education curriculum encourages students to take responsibility for their personal health by pro-actively establishing positive practices that enhance lifelong wellness. This encompasses the ability to obtain, interpret, understand and integrate basic health education in conjunction with a variety of field trips including a senior class kayaking trip.

Faculty members create all career readiness curriculum within their area of specialty. Career concentrations include Digital Video, Visual Communications, Journalism, Communications Technology, and TV/Radio production. Teachers within these disciplines are typically hired from industry and bring years of experience in their field into the classroom.

The career readiness curriculum provides students with a program of study that culminates in a nationally recognized industry test developed to assess career readiness in each field. Intense instruction in each career concentration is combined with participation in a senior mentorship program. Mentorship provides on the job career readiness training since students go to a place of business and work with a professional in their respective field. As a result, career readiness teachers strive to replicate the type of projects students will be asked to complete in the professional environment of their mentorship, at the college level, and in a student's future career of choice.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The English language arts program at Communications High School is driven by the philosophy that a rich humanities background provides students with an added dimension to their intellectual and emotional development as well as the tools for self-discovery. Courses examine literary solutions to the conflicts and dilemmas of the human condition. The study of language arts encourages students to broaden their view of the world and experience perspectives that change, expand, and validate their own beliefs. All courses are student-centered; therefore, students are responsible for raising important questions, making decisions, forming opinions and expressing their points of view in various modes with supporting evidence, detail and clear reasoning.

Incisive reading skills, fluent writing skills, accurate research skills, intelligent oral communication, and critical thinking proficiency are the most valuable assets the students can bring to any situation. In addition, it is necessary that students exhibit a ready cultural literacy that facilitates the interchange of ideas in a global community. For this reason, the main objectives at the English I level include writing, research and the study of world literature. Whereas, the primary purpose of the English II program is to acquaint students with the major writers and themes in American Literature from our nation's inception to 1900. English III continues this theme by offering a sampling of American literature and film designed to capture the momentous conflict and change from 1900 to the present. Finally, English IV provides seniors the opportunity to receive three Seton Hall University credits after successfully completing the challenging, intensive writing workshop experience within the context of a university-approved English course.

Currently, the English department has made it their mission to improve the students' critical reading skills. To do this, students must realize that critical reading is an analytical activity; therefore, teachers discuss with students how to reread a text to identify patterns of elements such as values, assumptions and language usage during class discussion. Students read a balance of informational and literary texts to learn how to interact with a text by questioning, visualizing, predicting connecting and responding.

## **3. Mathematics:**

Communications High School students are required to take four years of honors level math, regardless of the class at which they begin. CHS offers the flexibility of beginning freshman year in Algebra 1, Geometry, or Algebra 2/Trigonometry. College Credit for our Calculus course is available through a program with Seton Hall University.

The Mathematics Department is constantly examining student learning and teacher efficacy by analysis of a variety of assessments. For example, Midterm and Final Exams are analyzed on a per question basis, on a topic basis, on a per student basis and on a per teacher basis. This allows us to determine if certain topics are problematic across the department or specific to a teacher or to a student. Then solutions are discussed and implemented accordingly. HSPA data is also examined to determine where we can improve teaching methods and positively affect student learning.

For example, information from both the Algebra 2 Midterm Examination and the HSPA reflected student weakness in Piecewise Functions. Upon a review of the current textbook and others in the building, we noticed that there are very few problems, providing very little practice for students. Additionally, one teacher was not satisfied with her method of teaching the material. We each did independent research on

Piecewise Functions and then regrouped. We compared findings and created a pamphlet with lots of practice, allocated an additional day in our lesson planning for the topic, and also developed a new way of introducing Piecewise Functions that has made it much easier for students to understand.

Because our school attracts students based on an interest in Communications, we find that there is a wide spectrum of natural math ability. This requires that we offer extra practice to students who need it and offer college level problems to students who want a challenge or a deeper understanding. One of the ways we accommodate this is to offer students a choice of assignments. Either assignment offers students appropriate practice to meet/exceed curriculum requirements. One assignment offers more practice while the other offers more challenge. Homework Question and Answer the following day provides exposure to both sets of problems.

#### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The students at Communications High School are required to take three years of Spanish. The incoming freshmen take a placement test that evaluates their knowledge of the language and places them in level I, II, or III according to their abilities.

The first three levels of Spanish are District wide courses and, consequently, the five academies have a common curriculum as well as common midterm and final. Each unit in the curriculum has activities that relate to the acquisition of skills according to each school theme.

Levels IV and V have been especially designed to accommodate the needs of our students and to help them develop the skills, knowledge, and professionalism needed to pursue a career in the communications field.

CHS Spanish IV is part of the Seton Hall University Project Acceleration Program. The students in this course can get up to six college credits. This curriculum covers very sophisticated grammar concepts like the use of the subjunctive with adverbial clauses, the use of the conditional tense with the imperfect subjunctive, and perfect subjunctive tenses among others. The grammar concepts, the vocabulary, readings, and social studies in this course are introduced using different technology tools, such as power point, documentaries, movies, on-line research, interactive sites, and others. Each project gives the student the freedom of choosing the media that he/she wishes to use for presenting the project. For example, the same project may become a movie, a mural, a newspaper, or a power point, according to the student's artistic skills and technological knowledge. Some of the projects in this course include a commercial, a newspaper front page, several plays, a resume and job interview project, a TV program, and a mural reflecting the combination of dreams of several students.

The Spanish Communications/Spanish V curriculum allows the students to strengthen their bilingual capabilities in the context of communications and to apply their learning to a better understanding of the history and cultural diversity of Spain and Latin America. At the same time, it provides them with the language background that would be required if they choose to pursue a career that addresses this segment of the population. Spanish Communications provides the students with a wide variety of hand-on experiences throughout interviews to guest speakers, TV programs in Spanish channels, radio broadcasting in Spanish radio stations, articles in newspapers and magazines from various Spanish-speaking countries, and Spanish movies.

#### **5. Instructional Methods:**

CHS uses a variety of instructional practices to deliver lessons within the classroom. Faculty are facilitative and student driven with their approach. The teachers supplement the facilitative approach with a variety of methods including collaborative learning, brainstorming, lectures with discussion and/or multi-media, role-playing and interactive games, independent study, student/teacher consultation, peer review, and group presentations.

Projects across various disciplines incorporate the theme of the school and tap into different learning styles while providing students with the opportunity to work with multi-media. These approaches are used everyday to support the rigorous honors level curriculum at CHS and keep students focused throughout the day.

For example, students in the senior level History through Film class perform independent research based on an area of interest within the current unit. After watching “All the Presidents Men”, students researched factual aspects and individual personalities involved in the Watergate scandal then presented their findings to the class using multi-media tools like Prezi. Within the New Media course, students participated in a Skype conversation with a professional podcaster after the teacher presented her lecture covering the elements of a podcast and production requirements.

History and English teachers enable collaborative learning with a number of cross-curricular assignments by pairing students during essay prewriting as well as providing an opportunity for peer review of finished essays before submission to the instructor. All of the visual communications teachers use a similar peer review process: throughout the project, each teacher conducts individual checkpoints with students, at approximately 70% complete, teachers conduct a group critique by presenting each project for review by the class, and when the final project is submitted, students include a written assessment of their project and their creative process.

In addition, most classes use various literature publishing websites such as issuu.com and figment.com to produce and publish their writing while interacting and collaborating with others. Students submit their papers to turnitin.com to analyze and reflect on the integration of sources within their writing and proper citation techniques and learn how to eliminate plagiarism.

Math classes use various forms of technology to deliver differentiated instruction. Converge, Geometers Sketchpad, Excel, Grapher, and graphing calculators are just a few of the ways faculty use technology to provide another perspective for particular lessons. For the more visual learners like many of the students here at CHS, graphical representations of math content truly provide a different perspective that brings the content to life.

## **6. Professional Development:**

The focus of professional development at CHS over the past few years has been the formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the Middle States AFG process. Professional Development during the school year has become more focused and structured than in the past and is now more closely tied to District objectives. Positive aspects of this approach include increased faculty interaction and productivity as well as a more focused approach to analysis of student achievement.

Long term goals as developed through the Middle States AFG process are:

1. As of 2018, all students will write effectively and efficiently at a high level of competency through various styles and techniques. Students will utilize proper mechanics while writing for diverse audiences and purposes as measured by:
  1. Maintaining or increasing the current median score of 640 on the SAT while decreasing the variability by raising the minimum score by 5%.
  2. Increasing writing scores using an internally developed rubric.
2. Improve the CHS school climate by reducing the number of incidences of cheating by 11% (Fall 2011 – Spring 2018) as reported by an annual survey.

During the current school year, PLCs are in the process of gathering baseline student as well as analyzing data obtained via standardized testing. Last spring, a web based interface was created as a means of gathering writing data as mentioned in 1(2); the interface also includes the ability to sort and filter data for

future analysis. The results of this analysis will be used in future years to review and revise curriculum in order to improve student achievement.

At the end of the prior school year, an Academic Integrity Committee comprised of both faculty and students was created in order to accomplish the second long term goal. Members developed guidelines and participated in training sessions with a full implementation of the academic review process put in place in January of 2012. Going forward, this committee will continue to gather data from both students and faculty regarding cheating, then analyze the data with the goal of educating both faculty and students regarding incidence of cheating along with fostering an environment of integrity and personal responsibility.

## **7. School Leadership:**

While the Principal is ultimately responsible for implementation of procedures, processes, and curricula at Communications High School, many of the programs and functions of the school are governed by teachers, students, and parents. This shared decision making model allows CHS to be very successful in carrying out its mission by empowering all stakeholders within the school.

The school is guided, in part, by the Strategic Planning Committee, a committee of parents, students, teachers, and community members. This group meets five to six times per year and discusses matters related to the entire school and specifically assesses the status of the Accreditation for Growth objectives under the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association. Accreditation for Growth committees operate throughout the year and meet regularly to check their progress and keep members apprised of recent developments. The groups are comprised of and are led by teachers and work to assure attainment of the objectives established in concert with the Middle States Association.

The school also has a Advisory Council of professionals from the communications field who offer advice and counsel on changing trends and philosophy in the field. This council works in concert with the mentorship curriculum and keeps the career readiness aspect of our school aligned with industry needs.

In addition CHS has a Instructional Council composed of faculty members and students. The

Instructional Council contributes to the quality of the educational experience at Communications High School. The Council advances discussion of administrative decisions affecting students and staff by making recommendations to the Principal on planning, delivery, and assessment of programs and procedures. The role of the council is to:

- Provides a forum dedicated to improvement of teaching and learning at Communications High School;
- Provides a critical link of communication between faculty and administration;
- Addresses issues and proposals, sparks ideas and discussion, develops solutions, and assists with planning and implementing changes;
- Facilitates communication and professional development among the faculty at large.

The principal of CHS is a member of all these different groups and is the only administrator within the building. The leadership style is to provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to improve the educational environment by making recommendations that can be implemented to enhance the school.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 11

Test: HSPA

Edition/Publication Year: Year Specific Publisher: NJ Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	100	100	100	100	100
Advanced	93	82	85	82	91
Number of students tested	67	72	68	83	78
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12NJ8

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 11

Test: HSPA

Edition/Publication Year: Year Specific Publisher: NJ Department of Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	100	100	100	100	100
Advanced	76	49	46	64	84
Number of students tested	67	72	68	83	78
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient & Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested					
<b>NOTES:</b>					

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	100	100	100	100	100
Advanced	93	82	85	82	91
Number of students tested	67	72	68	83	78
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12NJ8

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading      Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	100	100	100	100	100
Advanced	76	49	46	64	84
Number of students tested	67	72	68	83	78
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient & Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12NJ8