

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Sampson Early College High School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1801 Sunset Avenue P.O. Box 318
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Clinton State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28328-0001

County Sampson County

Telephone (910) 592-7177 Fax (910) 592-8048

Web site/URL https://www.sampson.k12.nc.us/sechs E-mail montys@sampson.k12.nc.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. David Goodin E-mail dgoodin@sampson.k12.nc.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Sampson County School District Tel. (910) 592-1401

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mr. Daryll Warren
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2021 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	16	47	63
10	22	38	60
11	25	30	55
12 or higher	30	44	74
Total Students	93	159	252

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 9.1 % Black or African American
 - 61.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 23.4 % White
 - 4.5 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2019 - 2020 school year: ≤1%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 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, 2019	257
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Spanish

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

5 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 100 %

Total number students who qualify: 252

8. Students receiving special education services: 0 %
0 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>0</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> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	10
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	99%	99%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	95%	98%	96%	95%	90%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	60
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	68%
Enrolled in a community college	10%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	17%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	4%

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Sampson Early College High School is designed as a five-year high school that provides an opportunity for students to obtain an associate degree and/or two years of transferrable college credit. Sampson Early College High School seeks to educate all students to their highest level of academic performance and to prepare them to become productive members of society in the 21st Century.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Sampson Early College High School began the 2020-2021 school year as all remote (Plan C) for high school classes and approximately 80% remote for college classes. College classes began the school year under a hybrid format. Our high school classes switched to (Plan B) in mid-October 2020. Plan B allows for two Cohorts to attend school for two days per week. Cohort A attends on Mondays, Tuesdays. Cohort B attends on Thursdays and Fridays. Although our students are allowed to attend, approximately 40% of our student body chose to remain all remote learning only. At the beginning of our Semester 2 (January 2021) we continued with Plan B. Currently, approximately 110 students attend for both Cohorts. The college classes have remained a hybrid learning format. Wednesdays is used for intervention days. Select students come in to receive assistance with school work and classes.

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

Sampson Early College High School is an early college high school of choice that serves rising 9th graders and beyond in Sampson County. Only current 8th graders (rising Freshmen) in Sampson County are allowed to apply for admission. As a school of choice for students in Sampson County, all rising 9th graders are allowed to apply. The principal and counselor visit each middle school in Sampson County and Clinton

City Schools to talk to 8th graders about the application process. Additionally, we offer the application to private and home school students who reside within Sampson County. We advertise via social media, the school website, and the local newspaper. Any 8th grader in Sampson County is eligible to apply. Once we receive applications, students must come to our school and write an essay. The essay asks students to describe why they wish to become a student at our school, and it gives students the opportunity to articulate those reasons in writing. The essay is the last portion of the application process. A committee from Sampson County Schools, Clinton City Schools, the principal, college liaison, and vice-president of the college meet and review each application and essay. From this meeting, our incoming freshmen class is chosen. Emphasis for admission is placed on the following criteria:

1. First-time college student
2. Standardized test scores
3. Grades
4. Middle school counselor recommendation
5. Student discipline
6. Educational goals
7. Essay

PART III - SUMMARY

Sampson Early College High School (SECHS) was established in 2004 and is located in Clinton, NC on the campus of Sampson Community College. Clinton is the county seat of Sampson County. SECHS serves students in all of Sampson County Schools, Clinton City Schools, as well as private schools and homeschool students. Currently, the school serves about 250 students. SECHS is a five-year school where graduates can receive a high school diploma and an associate degree or two years of transferrable credit from Sampson Community College at no cost to the family. Students take high school core courses and their electives are college courses. Upon graduation, students are encouraged to continue their education at a four-year college or university.

Our school consists of 15 staff members. Those staff members include (1) principal, (1) program coordinator, (1) assistant principal, (1) counselor, (1) data manager/bookkeeper, (1) computer lab facilitator, and (10) teachers. Additionally, Sampson Community College provides a college liaison to assist the staff and students with college matters. Our staff also includes a part time-school nurse, and (2) part-time instructional coaches. A school social worker is available on a part-time and as-needed basis.

Students who are accepted to SECHS are typically students who are looking for more of a challenge academically than what is typically offered within our public feeder high schools. Our students have or seek to develop a mindset of being prepared for a four-year university.

Our 8th-grade application process allows school officials to meet and talk to 8th graders from all our feeder schools. From there, interested students complete the application and submit it. Upon submitting the application, students are given the opportunity to express in writing why they should be accepted within our program. A committee of officials from the school, the college, and our two school districts carefully look at each individual application and select up to 70 incoming freshmen each year. Criteria for acceptance include grades, first-time college students with the house, standardized test scores, and student discipline records.

First and foremost, the key to our school is the great staff that we have and the commitment that each of those staff members has. Our teachers have been trained in the original early college format, and they operate their classrooms with high expectations, high rigor, and a commitment to teaching and learning from students. Our students are afforded the opportunity of academic counseling from our guidance counselor and through the college liaison. The counselor and liaison meet with students several times per year to discuss academic course goals and options. These meetings assist the student in reaching their academic goals each semester.

When students enroll with us, we know that our classes and the college classes will require lots of writing. Because of this, SECHS offers a freshman class of English Seminar. This class is taken prior to English I and is taken the first semester of freshmen year by all freshmen. The goals of this class are to give an overview of writing and to better prepare students to become better writers for their high school and college classes. The adjustment from middle school to SECHS can be difficult and demanding. Students begin taking college classes immediately upon entering their Freshmen year. College instructors require that our students meet the deadlines, attendance rules, and other demands of college classes. To offer support for our students, we assign our computer lab facilitator to assist in tracking each 1st and 2nd-year students' college courses and grades. Reminders are sent out, meetings are held, and parents are notified if grades fall below an acceptable level. This initiative helps students to be more organized and prevents them from falling behind in their college classes.

Many of our students complete their high school core courses after their third year. Once they complete these courses, students are enrolled in a high school seminar class each semester. The seminar class meets twice weekly, and it gives our students an opportunity to meet with an assigned staff member. The purpose of the seminar class is to give students an opportunity to work on their college classes, ask questions, and receive assistance from our staff with college classes, college applications, career choices, etc. The assigned seminar teacher checks in each week with the students to ensure that students are on track and are meeting

the demands of each of their high school and college courses.

Our students and school perform well in the state End-of-Course test that the NCDPI has in the accountability model. Traditionally, SECHS has been an A-rated school on the North Carolina School Report Card, and the school shows exemplary growth for students in the area of Math 1, English 2, and Biology. Additionally, the graduation rate is traditionally above 90%.

All Juniors in the state of NC are required to take the ACT test. SECHS offers a class in ACT enrichment. The school utilizes Pre-ACT scores from sophomore year to help determine students who could benefit from this class. Credit is earned, and these students are immersed in an individualized curriculum that assists them in performing their best on the ACT. In addition to this class, all juniors are enrolled in Edmentum ACT Enrichment. Students are assigned to a staff member, and they are given credentials to use the Edmentum ACT platform. The platform allows students to take a pre-test in each of the ACT core requirements. The results from these pre-tests help to craft a curriculum that is unique to each student. Staff members monitor student progress. Students are offered incentives for time spent on the platforms prior to the ACT test in February.

In addition to the many support services that our staff offers to our students, we also provide these activities and services that assist in meeting the diverse needs of our students: Beta Club, Key Club, Student Government, Glee Club, Anime Club, Video Club, Book club, Debate club, Beauty Club, and the School Culture Committee.

In addition to academic counseling, our school offers traditional high school counseling services for students' social and emotional needs. We do serve teenagers, and we take pride in offering whatever social and emotional support that our students need. One example of a program that is offered is our backpack buddy program. This program allows students who need food to get those needs met weekly. Students can get the food in backpacks to assist themselves and their families during times of need. Our SCS counseling department provides lessons to all teachers in social and emotional learning. These lessons are incorporated into weekly lessons throughout each core curriculum.

When Covid forced our schools to close after March 13, 2020, we struggled to maintain our school identity for the remainder of the school year. March through the end of the 2020 school year was an emotional roller-coaster for our faculty, students, and families. Our students missed out on so many of the normal activities that we were accustomed to providing. Luckily for us, our students were able to have prom, but they missed many other milestone opportunities. The senior trip to Orlando was canceled. The awards night ceremony was canceled. The early college sports cup competition was canceled. All classes were now remote. Many of our students did not have technology devices. Many of our students did not have internet. Paper packets of assignments were being sent home, but we were fearful of how to return the packets because of so many unknown health concerns. In addition to our concern with our students, our staff members had to multi-task and focus on their students as well as the needs within their own homes. It was very difficult to keep up with all the changes that were coming our way, and before we knew it, it was time for school to be out and time for graduation. There were questions from the school board about the format for graduation. Would we be holding an in-person or drive-thru graduation? Would we choose to just have diplomas mailed to them? Despite all the unknowns and fears, we had a drive-in graduation exercise, and many family members were able to see their students walk the stage for graduation. Our staff was so exhausted, yet so relieved that our seniors could end a whirlwind last few months of school with a graduation ceremony.

Once we held the graduation ceremony, we were tasked with preparing for the current 2020-2021 school year. Our system and staff members have risen to the challenge to help provide devices to our students. We teamed up and offered ALL students a device, hot-spot internet service, and have challenged staff members to communicate with students daily. From August through October 15, 2020, students were in remote learning. The challenges we faced were primarily with our incoming freshmen. Not only were the freshmen new to our school, but they were new to college classes, remote learning, and the level of rigor that is required to be successful in our classes. Our staff members continue to constantly communicate with these students and parents. Since October 2020, we have been operating in a hybrid format. Currently, we have

about 55% of our students who come to school in either Cohort A or Cohort B. Each cohort meets in-person for two days per week. We have seen a steady improvement in the level of work that students have completed since that time. We are hopeful that students will continue to work and improve.

While our staff has worked hard and continues to work hard, our students continue to evolve with remote learning. Generally, students learn better when they are present at school. We will continue to evolve and hope that all our students can return to 100% in-class instruction as soon as possible.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

At Sampson Early College High School, vertical articulation of the NC Essential Standards drives the core curriculum, and all courses are built on the honors level. Our high school classes are based on core curriculum of English language arts (ELA), math, science, and history. As graduation requirements from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Students take English I, II, III, and IV. The math graduation requirements are Math I, Math II, Math III, and Pre-Calculus as high school courses. The Science graduation requirements are Earth/Environmental Science, Biology, and Chemistry. For high school history courses, we offer World History, American History Founding Principles of Civics, American History I, and American History II to complete the graduation requirements. Our goal is for all students to be finished with their high school core courses by the end of their Junior year.

Our school is unique in that our feeder schools are comprised of a pool of five district middle schools, therefore, producing a wide range of skills. We utilize End of Grade (EOG) test scores, Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) predictor scores, and historical grades to hand schedule each student to compensate for the diverse backgrounds. Students who need additional support in core courses are scheduled for Foundations of Mathematics to build up the requisite math skills. The English department developed a seminar course to support students struggling in writing composition, a skill needed early on to successfully navigate the college classes assigned as a freshman.

We have a dedicated Instructional Technology Advisor that monitors our first and second-year students' college classes, assisting them on their journey to mastering another platform. The Technology Advisor supports students by sending reminders on upcoming important dates, assisting with feedback on papers, bridging the gap between parents and college classes, navigating the college Moodle platform, and assisting with computer issues.

While there are no overarching school-based instructional mandates for the core subjects, the school has adopted strategies to support student learning in all content areas. In addition to foundational courses, we thoroughly utilize resources such as Actively Learn as a mechanism to bridge reading levels to navigate complex content in English, science, and social studies. The school also won a grant for Explore Learning, which hosts various science Gizmos to see the abstract interactions in biology and chemistry and help provide what was lost as our school went to fully remote learning. Our faculty utilize a wide range of online resources to engage learners and increase retention of content including Nearpod, Flip Grid, and Padlets to serve as formative assessments and learning products.

Our teachers went fully remote with learning in March of 2020, moving from initially surviving to ultimately thriving in the ten months. Our students have always had access to Canvas as a learning management system, but through necessity, Canvas shifted from supplemental instruction to the primary delivery method. Throughout this challenge, the students have taught us many lessons, including flexibility, forgiveness, compassion, and love. Assessments in some English classes have switched to creative projects such as a recorded presentation or a written paper rather than issuing a multiple-choice examination. Science and history classes have changed little as they have utilized computer-based assessments to enable ease of tracking student success by objectives. The most significant change from Fall 2020 has been establishing a specific time for classes to meet. Initial directives were given that prohibited us from holding classes at a particular time. The lack of structure caused our students to veer off track instead of working on school assignments during the regular school day. Many students submitted schoolwork after school hours, which would put them working when we were not available, inhibiting their progress. We modified our expectations to hold each class live stream during a certain block of the day helping our students gain traction in time allocation access to their teachers.

All of our course curricula are centered on the vertical positioning of where students are going and where they came from thereby maintaining alignment with the college courses to ensure success at the next level. Our courses' grading and weights are in alignment with the college making the transition between high school and college more seamless.

SECHS learning standards are not only meeting state Essential Standards but also providing space for student interests. Each curriculum has extensions built-in that support students in exploring their passions within the context of the course. English gives a student the ability to research and analyze a cause that is meaningful to them. Students will explore the past to change outcomes and process a new future in this area of interest.

Our school focuses intently on a multi-tier system of support to meet each student to get them to where they need to be. Utilizing pre-assessment data to establish a beginning point for our students, we craft the curriculum to match their needs. Tracking parental involvement, classroom interventions, and creating home-based learning plans to support student efforts is a foundation to our system. The school monitors attendance with live meets, engaging informative assessments, tracking objectives and interventions to enhance concept attainment. Specifically, the math department utilizes pre-recorded videos to help deliver content and uses web-based support such as Delta Math and IXL Math to track learning progressions and provide additional support.

Formative assessments at the beginning of the semester are carried out by issuing a pre-assessment that gauges entry-level student knowledge. The faculty meet formally and informally weekly to discuss specific students, depth of content covered, and brainstorm ideas for content-specific issues. Science utilizes standards-based computerized assessments and probes that stimulate thinking and exposure to commonly held misconceptions. Simulations or labs can directly address the missed conception and help students reframe their thinking. Teachers across all disciplines typically use enter/exit tickets, discussion boards, and learning logs to track student understanding.

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

The Sampson Early College High School curriculum is constructed to maintain close alignment with the next level courses, ensuring classes at the high school and college are vertically connected. Several teachers in our math department also serve as adjunct instructors at the college providing tremendous insight into course expectations and content covered. Our school has a robust population of students who are enrolled in Career and Technical Education tracks. Students could graduate with employable skills in welding, emergency medical services, or building construction technology. Many students will earn their Associate in Arts degree to create that foundation to continue their education should they desire at a four-year university. Finally, Sampson Early College High School supports a graduation project that asks students to research a topic of interest and engage in a 30-hour internship related to that interest. Students learn how to appropriately communicate with a business and reach out for a non-posted position. Students will also write an impactful resumé, create a learning plan with their mentor, and reflect on their progress. A panel of community members will serve to hear students present their takeaways from their internship. Some students decide their researched area of interest is the perfect career path while others have found out that their internship placement is not their career. Each of these conclusions is equally valuable for our students.

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students at Sampson Early College High School begin taking college-level courses in 9th grade. The typical first three college courses students take during their first year include Personal Health and Wellness, Physical Education, and Art Appreciation. During the second year, students take college-level courses such as Music Appreciation, General Psychology, Public Speaking, and Elementary Spanish I & II. In their third year, students will complete college-level Intermediate Spanish I & II, Introduction to Communications, Introduction to Computers, Interpersonal Communications, and college English 111 and college-level math. The college courses continue to become more varied based on students' areas of career interest and post-graduation goals.

Students who will be completing the college transfer pathway continue taking the required courses that will allow them to complete an Associate in Arts or Sciences degree during their fourth and fifth year of enrollment at SECHS. Traditionally, about 80 to 90 % of our students choose the academic or college transfer pathway. Upon graduation from SECHS, these students are able to transfer these credits to four-year institutions. Some of the courses students take include Pre-Calculus Algebra, Trigonometry, Calculus I, II, & III, Statistics, Applied Calculus, General Biology I & II, General Chemistry I & II, Anatomy and Physiology, college English 112, American History I & II, Introduction to Sociology, Theatre Appreciation, Introduction to Ethics, Critical Thinking, World History I & II, Developmental Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, and other transferable courses students want to explore.

Students who prefer to take the technical education pathway, are enrolled in their area of interest where they can complete an Associate in Applied Sciences degree. In the Health Programs Division, early college students can complete associate degrees in Emergency Medical Science, Medical Assisting, and Practical Nursing. Generally, less than 5 % of our students choose this pathway as students at Sampson Early College High School.

In the Division of Education, Business, and Human Services, students can complete associate degrees in Early Childhood Education, School-Age Education, Teacher Preparation, Accounting and Finance, Business Administration, Office Administration, Medical Office Administration, Supply Chain Management, and Human Services Technology. Sampson Early College students can select to complete one of the following applied science degrees: Agribusiness Technology, Applied Animal Science, Air Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Technology, Construction Management, Cosmetology, Criminal Justice, Electrical Systems, Industrial Systems, Information Technology with pathways in Information Systems, Network Management, System Security, and Programing & Development, Public Safety Administration, and Welding Technologies. Although as small % of our students initially choose these tracks/pathways, many more take some courses in the varied fields of study mentioned above.

Students have an array of options for coursework at SECHS. Additionally, in response to the everchanging educational landscape due to the pandemic, the college has made available both hybrid formats and all remote learning for these classes. Instructors at the college and teachers at SECHS have been extremely helpful and are open to tailoring to the individual student's needs during the pandemic.

3. Academic Supports:

At Sampson Early College, we have a diverse student population in terms of locations within the county where our students reside. The early college framework is built to assist students who can succeed at the college level. By accepting the level of student who can achieve success at the college level, we find that we have very few students who need the academic support that is defined within this question. We also look at factors such as first-generation college students and students who are goal-oriented and aspire to complete their associate degree as well. We currently have only one student who requires services through Section 504. We do not currently serve any students who are identified as special education/students with disabilities. Our five identified English Language learners also receive services through our school and our school system requires WIDDA testing each year for identified students.

At Sampson Early College High School, we use the EVAAS system of predictors to assist in areas of English II, Math I, and Biology. These three subjects have an End of Course Assessment that becomes a part of the School report card. Within the first ten days of each semester, an EVAAS predictor number is used to help guide instruction and to individualize instruction for students in these subject areas. Teachers are asked to identify students who would be in the green zone and red zone. Determining green/red zone students can be from pre-assessment results, which are taken within the first 10 days of the semester. Green zone students are typically students who are performing at a high level, who complete and do well on classroom assignments, and perform well on quizzes, projects, and tests. Students who are identified as red zone students are typically those

students who have lower than a 70% EVAAS predictor to pass the end of course assessment. Teachers incorporate other interventions with these red zone students. Those interventions include 1. Reteaching material 2. After school tutorials 3. Peer tutoring 4. Parent/Teacher conferences 5. Use of different learning approaches such as visual, multi-sensory, or auditory.

These interventions have proven to be extremely helpful for our students in closing the achievement gap. Throughout the semester, students take a pre-assessment, a mid-term, benchmark exams, mock end of course exams, and finally the end of course assessment. All of these testing tools help to shape the individual educational plan for the students. Teachers are professionals, and many times, they know what is best for their students. Our teachers report that one of the most effective tools that we offer at SECHS is the two weeks of after-school tutorials prior to students taking the end of course assessment. Though the tutorials are not required, many of our students choose to participate. Participating in these tutorials gives our students the chance to receive re-teaching and for the teachers to focus on the areas of need without introducing new content. The tutorials are a review of all of the course material from the semester.

Our guidance department has assisted students in the past who are homeless. Our homeless population is very small and often varies from zero to one or two students per year. Homeless students are identified through the McKinney-Vento assistance Act of 1987. Through our Federal Programs director, we are able to receive assistance for any identified homeless students. Additionally, SECHS participates in the back-pack buddies program. Local businesses donate food to support the program. Students are encouraged and take advantage of our back-pack food program at least once per week. Through the back-pack buddy program, students are able to get the most essential thing that can be offered in order to do their best in academics. That most essential item is food. Closing the achievement gap is important, and we work hard to provide the needed assistance in the core subject areas to close the gap year after year.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At Sampson Early College High School, teachers engage, motivate, and provide a positive atmosphere to students by treating them like family. We are a close-knit school, and we truly care about our students. Some examples of engagement of students include virtual meetings for the class as a whole, as well as individual virtual meetings. As soon as we recognize that a student is struggling in a class, we contact the student and parent to organize a plan for success. Students and teachers meet in person and online to focus on individual student needs. Students have several options to help in the area of academics such as meeting individually on Zoom, attending school additional days of the week, and contacting their teachers through the Remind app or email.

To motivate students, we have a variety of ways to recognize achievements. We choose “Star Students” to be put on our school website on a monthly basis. Positive notes are sent home to parents via postcards. We also have a “Shout Out” wall at school where students are recognized for a variety of reasons such as doing well on a particular assignment or holding a door open for a fellow student.

SECHS provides a positive environment for students.

All of the faculty and staff make students feel welcome by having small class sizes, participating in field trips (pre-COVID), and offering a variety of clubs. Some of our field trips include the North Carolina Aquarium for 9th and 10th graders, Washington, DC Trip for our 11th and 12th graders, and Grad Bash in Orlando, Florida for our 13th graders. Our club offerings include SGA, Key Club, Beta Club. We also offer clubs directed at particular interests such as Beauty Club and Anime Club. Students can feel comfortable at our school because we embrace the diversity that our students bring.

Our district and school participate in the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). The MTSS model helps to identify students who need extra assistance with academic courses. Identification of students is done through a data-based problem-solving process that evaluates the behavior, and social-emotional instruction/intervention supports that match the student needs in alignment with educational standards. Students are identified by Tier 1 (mild need), Tier 2 (moderate need), and Tier 3 (Severe need).

Once identified, students are given extra help through tutoring, peer tutoring and the college offers assistance through the Academic Success Center. The Academic Success Center is located in the college library on our campus.

We have had to adapt some of our engagement procedures due to COVID. For example, some of our students are fully remote. We want to make sure our students are doing well academically, socially, and emotionally. We reach all our students by doing a social and emotional activity on a weekly basis. This combination of journal and self-reflection lessons is a way for our students to let us know how they are doing on a social and emotional level. There is always a presentation and prompt that the students can respond to and this allows us to recognize students who may need counseling or additional help.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Sampson Early College High School utilizes various strategies to encourage family and community engagement in aiding student success and school improvement. One method of family communication is student-led conferences. These are held once per semester and allow students to lead a discussion with their parent or family member about their instructional progress. Learning samples are provided by teachers to better help students explain the learning process. Student-led conferences are vital for students taking ownership of their learning experience. One of our main methods of community involvement is through our Graduation Project. Juniors choose an area of interest to complete a 30-hour internship and are assigned a mentor from the community or local business. The Graduation Project culminates with a formal presentation before a panel of judges which includes community members.

In lieu of in-person student-led conferences, we held a drive-thru report card pick-up and teacher conferences, allowing us to safely interact with students and parents. Graduation Project is on hiatus due to current restrictions for this year that would not allow for internships or mentor interaction, but we hope to reinstate the requirement once we feel like we can safely do so. Our teachers, support personnel, and administrators continue to communicate regularly with parents/guardians via phone calls, emails, and Remind messages from teachers and the school concerning grades and upcoming important events. We also held in-person meetings for parents of 8th-grade applicants.

School clubs and organizations, e.g. Key Club and the National Beta Club, are heavily involved with community service projects. This allows students to take an active role in community improvement via volunteer work with nursing homes, the women's domestic violence shelter, the Chamber of Commerce, food banks, Kiwanis Club, animal shelters, and local law enforcement. Our students are also involved with Sampson Community College (SCC), which houses our school. The students help improve the campus through campus clean-up days, the Sampson Community College SGA, volunteering with the Sampson Community College Adult Continuing Education program, intramural soccer league, and other student groups and organizations.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, our students have continued to remain involved in the community by volunteering for COVID safe events. We have collected personal hygiene supplies for migrant workers and donated food to needy families and the local women's domestic violence shelter. Students have also volunteered to help with the local Kiwanis Club annual Pancake and Sausage Feast to raise money for the Kiwanis Terrific Kids Program and local Kiwanis scholarships, which was held in a drive-thru format for safety reasons.

Local businesses have been generous in donating technology that has been desperately needed to facilitate remote learning. We have also been awarded grants that have allowed us to purchase additional technology. Between these grants and support from local businesses, our school has been able to more easily adapt to remote learning.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Sampson Early College High School has the benefit of having a small but highly committed faculty and staff to ensure the success of our students. The excellence and reliability of our staff enables us to balance rigor, excellence, and a nurturing atmosphere for our students. SECHS is always highly focused on supporting our staff but especially during the transitional time of the Covid 19 pandemic.

In the difficult transition to virtual and, now, hybrid learning our school has made it a priority to ensure that every student has access to a school-provided laptop and wireless device. By providing these devices and service, our staff has been able to more easily tailor their curriculum to a virtual environment without the additional task of creating and grading paper packets. To allow for the return to hybrid learning, alternate classrooms have been secured to allow teachers to have a larger and safer space to socially distance our students.

Many of our staff members were with students all day without a lunch break because of the need to distance students during the lunch period. To provide relief and a break for our teachers, the administration split lunch into two different lunch periods allowing for the lunches to be served in the regular cafeteria while still maintaining social distancing. The administration also took on all the supervisory roles during the lunch periods so that teachers could have a lunch period to themselves. Providing this duty-free time will hopefully allow teachers to feel less overwhelmed during the day and give the students a respite from the classroom environment.

It has been important to be flexible with the way in which staff meetings are held. The school staff and administration have worked together will have a blend of socially distanced in-person staff meetings as well as virtual staff meetings through Zoom. While some staff members have needed to work from home for various periods of time, they have still been able to connect and engage with the rest of the staff through

these Zoom meetings.

Another way that our school has been supporting our staff has been by trusting their expertise and experience in reaching their students. The administration has made it a point to allow teachers to have autonomy in how they present their course material, how they conduct their hybrid class meetings, and how they modify their traditional curriculum to meet the virtual needs.

The need for school and home communication has been paramount. Teachers have been overwhelmed by their new duties and expectations. An effective way that the administration has relieved some of this burden has been to make parent contacts that the teachers have requested so that the teachers will not have to. While teachers have been continuing to make contacts of their own, the administration has stepped in to offer support and to relieve some of that workload.

4. School Leadership:

Our current school administration consists of a principal and assistant principal/program coordinator. Sampson Early College High School is structured differently than other public schools, and it takes some time to grasp the many differences within that structure. The many ways that early colleges differ is the reason that the school leadership works well with colleagues and continues to evolve into the role of school leader at SECHS.

Our current principal is in his 2nd year in the role. During the first few weeks on the job, he met with teachers and staff members to gain an understanding of the school and the students. Additionally, he enrolled with RTI international and was scheduled for a series of workshops within the Early College Network. These workshops proved to be a great learning experience and further helped him to gain knowledge on how Cooperative Innovative High schools in North Carolina operate. In addition to RTI, the principal became a part of the networking group, (CIHS) Cooperative Innovative High Schools. This group meets monthly to share ideas and discuss trends with early colleges, curriculum, budget items, and success stories.

Being visible is one of the most important duties of a leader. Our leaders are constantly in and out of classrooms, hallways, and around campus. Several students quipped that they see the Principal throughout campus more than they see the custodians. The leaders strive to get to know each student by name and to genuinely develop positive relationships within the student body and the faculty. You can find the assistant principal and principal each day at student lunch periods engaging with students.

Our school administrators encourage staff members to promote innovation, teamwork, and to genuinely support each other. The leadership believes that teachers are the professionals within their classrooms, and they strive to support the needs of the teachers in many ways. Staff members feel comfortable addressing concerns in a constructive way, and they work with the school administration in finding ways that benefit students in a positive way. Trust is developed and the leadership trusts the staff members to handle issues that prove to ensure the best results for students.

The leadership encourages teachers to participate in professional development opportunities. One example of a vital networking professional development opportunity for teachers is a math drive-in which brings together math teachers from across multiple districts to share ideas and best practices. Our teachers have attended math drive-ins in other districts and have planned and hosted such events on our campus. During the pandemic, virtual professional development opportunities were structured, and teachers were guided on these activities. Additional professional development opportunities are given by the district through the MTSS (Multi-System Support System). This model helps to identify the students who are in the most need both academically and emotionally. Our teachers and staff have participated in this endeavor throughout the school year.

The program coordinator serves as assistant principal and testing coordinator. This role requires the leader to be multi-talented in the areas of student discipline, bus transportation, federal and state testing, curriculum, teacher observations, the national student lunch program, college curriculum and book inventory, and the NBRS 2021

implementation and support of seminar classes for our upperclassmen. This employee does an outstanding job of managing all those duties.

The School Improvement Team and lead teachers also take on multiple responsibilities. The SIT team meets bi-weekly. Their job is to facilitate and implement the components of the School Improvement Plan and to maximize school resources while supporting all students. Our staff members work together in a professional way to create school improvement goals that highlight the most pressing needs of the school.

Our leadership shows each day that they are instructional leaders and decisions are made with the student's best interests and needs in mind. The school administrators observe and are visible in and out of classrooms each day. At SECHS, the administrators genuinely support staff members in their pursuit to make SECHS a great place for students to receive an education.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Sampson Early College High School addressed the diverse needs and backgrounds of students, families, and staff. Our college liaison and Juntos Coordinator are both bilingual and they assist in serving as translators for our ELL families. Juntos is a partnership between SECHS and N. C. State University. The word Juntos is Spanish for "together." The Juntos coordinator works with our Latino population and offers opportunities for students to explore and grow through educational opportunities and activities that go beyond the school day. Our district ESL coordinator assists with federal testing and further assists families as needed. Our guidance counselor continues to assist both in-person and virtually. She keeps before and after school hours and completes home visits with the school social worker when needed.

At SECHS we have a PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) matrix that has expected norms in the classroom and throughout the campus. These norms focus on responsibility, respect, and integrity. At SECHS, we recognize a student of the month based on a specific character trait, such as honesty. Additionally, in English classes, our teacher assigns projects that allows students to explore cultural stereotypes.

In our history classes, our students are given opportunities to compare the Great Depression with our current pandemic. Comparing modern events and their significance is a staple in our history classes. Another staple is that our students are given the opportunity to view current events and the news at the beginning of class. Our science classes research scientifically relevant current event articles and are asked to write summaries.

Prior to the pandemic, our students had student-led conferences that allowed them to explain to their parents on report card pick-up night, some of the things they were completing within each of their classes. This proved to be a nice eye opener for all stakeholders.

At SECHS, we support our diverse populations by sending letters and other correspondence home in English and Spanish. Our calls home are bilingual and we hold a college boot camp for our first generation college students. Our care cabinets that we have help to serve students who struggle to afford the necessities for school and class. Our staff steps in to assist and our caring teachers are quick to help provide resources to those students. More recently, we are excited to partner with Juntos and its partners through NC State University. The Juntos organization strives to identify certain Latino families and students of need. Though we just started several months ago, we are excited to see how this endeavor will further support those students and families in the future.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

All courses at Sampson Early College utilize Canvas as our learning management system. Canvas was purchased as a pilot for our school in 2015. We have continued to allocate funds for the program in our yearly budget. Students can gain access through an app on their phones or directly through the NCEdcloud on computers at school or home. Parents can connect to the students' accounts and be an observer. The staff has created a PDF to help guide parents and videos are also provided by Canvas to help educate observers. Announcements can be posted at the top of the class stream for easy viewing. Teachers can create assessments and assignments within the program. Students can view a daily or weekly calendar of assignments and quizzes to show both completed and unsubmitted work. Files and videos can be attached, linked, or embedded into assignments. External tools such as Flipgrid, SchoolNet, EdPuzzle CK-12, Google Drive, and Khan Academy are easily accessed by students through assignments.

Teachers can comment on assignments immediately with text and file attachments. Assignments, viewings, and comment previews are time-stamped to allow better communication among teachers, students, and parents. Analytics within the program show grades and times for weekly activity along with communications. Quizzes can be moderated as students are working and logs show times spent on each question. During moderation, another attempt can be created, and extra time can be added. These settings can be whole class specific for differentiating among students.

Students were already utilizing the Canvas LMS when we began quarantine. The students were familiar with the inner workings of the platform making the transition easier. Social and emotional check-ins were posted through PowerPoints. Freewrite journals were assigned and reviewed by teachers and counselors on a weekly basis. Canvas allows students easy email access to express concerns or difficulties directly to teachers concerning online instruction. Before COVID, teachers used Canvas as a resource but still had face-to-face instruction. As we adapted and learned, we have all changed our teaching styles and incorporated different tools. More options have been integrated as Canvas has updated. For new freshmen, a day of orientation provided students the opportunity to sign in to individual accounts, set up communication settings, and learned how to view the components to be successful. Teachers along with the freshmen worked together to set up agendas and formats that were similar and easily accessible.