

U.S. Department of Education
2015 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Angela Lundy-Jackson

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

Official School Name North Houston Early College High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 99 Lyerly Street

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

City Houston State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 77022-8501

County Harris County State School Code Number* 101912308

Telephone 713-696-6168 Fax 713-696-6171

Web site/URL http://www.houstonisd.org/nechs E-mail alundyja@houstonisd.org

Twitter Handle
#wearenhechs Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Terry Grier, NA E-mail: superintendent@houstonisd.org

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

District Name Houston Independent School District Tel. 713-556-6000

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

Date

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Rhonda Skillern-Jones, NA

(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 that it is accurate.

Date

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school’s application as page 2.

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) 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, a public school must meet the state’s AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2014-2015 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be 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.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2009 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
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

All data are the most recent year available.

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

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. 5 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	47	75	122
10	49	71	120
11	48	49	97
12	32	57	89
Total Students	176	252	428

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 92 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 0 % White
 - 0 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2013 - 2014 year: 3%

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, 2013 until the end of the school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2013 until the end of the school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	11
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	413
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.027
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
17 Total number ELL
 Number of non-English languages represented: 2
 Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Vietnamese
8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 64 %
 Total number students who qualify: 273

Information for Public Schools Only - Data Provided by the State

The state has reported that 89 % of the students enrolled in this school are from low income or disadvantaged families based on the following subgroup(s): Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals

9. Students receiving special education services: $\frac{1}{4}$ %
4 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 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>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> Mental Retardation | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of personnel in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers	15
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals	3
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

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 24:1

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

Required Information	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	97%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	97%	98%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2014

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	76
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	74%
Enrolled in a community college	19%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	1%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	0%

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. Please summarize your school mission in 25 words or less: Our mission is to prepare every student for his / her tomorrow today.

PART III – SUMMARY

Houston Community College Systems (HCCS)-Northeast partnered with Houston Independent School District in 2008 to establish North Houston Early College High School (NHECHS) on the Northline campus of Houston Community College-Northeast. NHECHS gives low-income youth, first-generation college students, English language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree—tuition free.

NHECHS serves a community consisting of people in the lower socioeconomic income bracket. The school itself is a conglomeration of trailer buildings situated in the midst of a residential community. We are surrounded by apartment housing, single-family dwellings, and assisted living institutions. Many of our students receive government assistance for food and housing needs. Thus, we strive to provide school supplies, two daily meals, and clothing to those in need. We have enhanced our Advocacy classes to concentrate on the development of soft skills students need for interviewing, social interactions, and public appearances. Because it is our philosophy that students on equal footing will excel, we strive to ensure that our students get the same opportunities as those from affluent communities. Staff and community members underwrite many of our students' social and/or academic events so that there is opportunity when there is no finance.

Many of the students at NHECHS have overcome obstacles as a direct result of their family dynamic. Several have immigrant parents and many are immigrants themselves. As such, many have responsibilities above and beyond their school activities. Several work to supplement the family income as well as to pay school fees. Others sit for siblings and relatives while their parents work in the evenings. Still others work with their parents on weekends as vendors and service providers. This presents an academic challenge because after school and weekend tutorial opportunities as well as homework and supplemental assignments are seldom possible. The social and psychological needs of our students are addressed through our on-site social worker as well as referrals to mental health facilities available through the district. Those students who request or require it are given access to counseling services and limited family assistance through the school.

Although we have a young school, we have firmly established traditions. Each year, our senior students present a Rose Ceremony in which they welcome the freshmen students and those new to our school family. Freshman orientation (Fish Camp) has also become a tradition that all students enjoy. Seniors earn community service to attend the camp and assist in acclimating freshmen to the campus and the unconventional structure of the school day and offering study tips and advice. Since most freshmen have never been on a college campus, this serves as a learning experience for them and a teaching experience for the seniors. A new tradition initiated this year is a faculty/administration home visit to our students. This practice was established to connect with parents and strengthen the home/school bond.

NHECHS strives to provide a pathway between high school and college. Our students share space with HCC so that they have full access to the classrooms, guidance services, laboratories and media center as well as services such as tutoring and technical assistance from the college staff during the school day. This allows the high school student to gradually integrate into college coursework while completing the traditional high school degree plan. This integration requires dual enrollment and successful completion of the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) formerly called Accuplacer (college readiness exam). Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, our student selection will be completed via a district lottery. Prior to that, students submitted an application indicating interest and were selected on a first come first served basis.

NHECHS graduated its first senior class in the spring of 2012. Sixty-eight members of the graduating class received Associate's degrees. It is our goal to increase that number each year. With a current membership of just over 400, NHECHS has maintained a TEA rating of Exemplary for four consecutive years. Our goal is to strive for academic excellence within a college-bound culture that fosters high expectations for all learners. Additionally, we strive to continually expose students to unique learning opportunities that give

them a head start to a successful life. Many NHECHS graduates have received scholarships and have been given unique opportunities to excel beyond high school.

Successful teaching strategies on the NHECHS campus follow the common instructional framework. During the lesson cycle, teachers use collaborative grouping which makes every student accountable for contributing to the activity. Along with collaborative grouping, teachers use classroom talk to create space for students to articulate their thinking and strengthen their voice. Classroom talk opens space for effective questioning, scaffolding, and successful collaborative group work along with literacy groups. Additionally, each class contributes to the writing effort on our campus by engaging in writing to learn. This strategy allows students to develop their critical thinking ability while strengthening their writing skills. Questioning modeled by the teacher and practiced by the students, challenges students to use good questions to open conversations and further intellectual inquiry.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

North Houston ECHS's curriculum is aligned with the state-adopted Texas Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) requirements. Because we are an early college, however, the curriculum has been adapted to meet the academic needs of the early college student. Specifically, the core content areas follow a rigorous Pre-Advanced Placement (PAP) and Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum to ensure success as students begin to enroll in college coursework as early as the first semester of 9th grade.

English is an accelerated program offering Pre AP English I, Pre AP English II, AP English Language, and dual credit English 1301 and 1302/English IV AB. Eleventh grade students who take AP English Language sit for the AP English Language exam. The curriculum was chosen to compliment the course of study required by the college and to prepare the students for the rigors of college coursework. Foundational knowledge begins in freshman orientation wherein students are assigned a novel and are given reading and writing activities pertaining to the novel. Teachers instruct students in writing strategies and essay preparation.

Students who struggle with reading and/or writing are scheduled into the reading course and/or the practical writing course in addition to their English class. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the district instituted College Prep Language Arts. Students who do not pass the TSI after repeated testing are enrolled into college prep courses for remediation and intense practice. Developmental writing courses such as practical writing, creative writing, and college prep language arts are available to assist with foundational knowledge. Additionally, Saturday classes and after school tutorials are available to those students who need additional practice or remediation.

Students who excel in English/Language Arts are encouraged to take advanced literature courses at the college.

Math is sequenced to meet the individual academic needs of scholars. The math curriculum was chosen to compliment the course of study required by the college and to prepare the students for the rigors of college coursework. Freshmen are given a college readiness test (TSI) to determine eligibility for college courses. The TSI, Stanford, and Algebra I EOC results are examined to determine placement in a double block. Those who have not taken Algebra I are scheduled into an Algebra I / Pre AP Geometry double block. Those who have passed Algebra I are scheduled into Geometry. Foundational knowledge is continually acquired through classroom instruction including scaffolding, collaborative grouping, researching strategies and the use of a common language. Additionally, students are required to use Cornell Notes and to write about the learning process in keeping with the school's initiative of writing across the curriculum and the powerful practice of Cornell Notes.

A growing number of incoming scholars have shown college readiness and have also passed Algebra I. This year, we created a cohort of those students and they were scheduled into Geometry and Pre AP Algebra II. After successful completion of Pre AP Algebra II, scholars are scheduled into advanced math classes including: Pre-Calculus, dual credit Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus AB, AP Calculus BC, and AP Statistics. For those scholars who do not demonstrate mastery of the subject, we have daily after school tutorials and Saturday classes to assist with comprehension and application. Retakes of the TSI indicate that most students are successful and test college ready by the end of the school year. The scholars, who achieve high levels of mastery, are encouraged to take additional college classes to enhance their knowledge.

The sequence for social studies coursework is as follows: 9th grade -AP Human Geography; 10th grade - AP World History; 11th grade - dual credit US History; and 12th grade - Government and Economics along with dual credit Government and Economics (offered at the community college). The social studies curriculum was chosen to compliment the course of study required by the college and to prepare the students for the rigors of college coursework. Foundational knowledge is acquired during the first two years of high school in preparation for the dual credit courses that begin in the 11th grade. To adequately prepare students

for the End of Course (EOC) exam as well as to assist students who need additional support, after school tutorials, Saturday classes, and individualized study sessions are offered weekly. Students who routinely take advantage of remediation are generally successful in social studies courses. Scholars who achieve high levels of mastery are encouraged to take additional college classes to enhance their knowledge.

1.B – College Readiness

In an effort to attain college readiness, our curriculum provides courses, which undergird the PAP and AP courses in our course list. Upon admission, campus-designed pre assessments and the college readiness exam (Texas Success Initiative or TSI) used by HCC are given to the students to determine their strengths and weaknesses and to decide upon the best course of study for them. Based upon their performance on the pre assessment, the TSI, and their chosen educational endorsement, the students are scheduled into classes on both the high school and college campus. Additionally students at all levels who have not achieved college readiness are periodically tested following remediation classes, tutorials and interventions. Individual adjustments are made according to the results.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Fine Arts

To fulfill the fine arts requirements for graduation, most students take advantage of the programs offered at HCC. Drama, Art, Dance, and Instrumental music are some of the available dual credit offerings on the college campus. The fine arts program is aligned with the state standards (TEKS) engaging and motivating all students through active learning, critical thinking and innovative problem solving in addition to providing instruction in singing, music, and the foundations of music literacy and providing an outlet for performance and creative expression. Fine Arts at NHECHS consists of only one area on the high school campus - music. The available classes: beginning choir, men's choir, women's choir, advanced choir, and voice, are open to students in all grade levels. The beginning choir classes teach the fundamentals of music and basic music theory, while the other courses focus on developing choral skills for performance.

Choir is one of the most popular classes at NHECHS. 25% (145) students participate in one or more of the choirs each school year.

Physical Education/Health

The physical education (PE) class offerings on the NHECHS campus consist of Aerobics and PE foundations. The PE course is partnered with the health education course to fulfill the requirements for high school graduation. Both courses are fully aligned with the state requirements (TEKS). The health courses include information on nutrition, health/hygiene issues, and emphasize the importance of maintaining healthy behaviors and assessing the relationship between body structure and function as related to personal health, exercise, and physical activity.

The PE foundations course and the aerobics course strive to motivate students to adopt a lifestyle of personal fitness with an emphasis on the health related components of physical fitness. Although our campus has only one PE teacher and two courses, our students can still participate in physical activities and organizations offered in the comprehensive high school. They can return to their home school during the school day to participate in marching band, ROTC, and organized sports, which satisfy the PE requirement.

The emphasis in both classes is on maintaining a healthy lifestyle that will carry the student into adulthood. Community outreach includes fun runs and walks for heart health, a healthy eating campaign, and exercise emphasis. Health-related topics such as obesity, drug abuse, and domestic violence are highlighted through special programs, campus awareness assemblies, and guest speakers from various healthcare agencies.

Because the requirements for the high school diploma include one full credit of PE and one half credit in health, all students (100%) in grades 9 through 12 eventually take one or more of the courses on our campus.

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

The LOTE courses taught at NHECHS are Spanish I, Spanish II, Native Speakers I, Native Speakers II, and AP Spanish. The AP course is usually taken after completion of Spanish I and II or Native Speakers I and II. All of the Spanish classes are aligned with the state standards (TEKS). The foundational course, Spanish I, teaches the basics of the language, communication skills, and the knowledge of culture and customs. Further in-depth study occurs in the advanced classes. The courses are open to all students in all grade levels. High school completion requirements include two years of the same foreign language, thus; all of our students take one or more classes of Spanish on our campus.

Although there is no grade level requirement for any of the courses, freshmen without prior language experience begin with Spanish I and continue with Spanish II as sophomores. Because of the demographics of our school, many freshmen enter having already taken one or more years of Spanish while in middle school. Many enter ready to take AP Spanish and several have already taken the AP test exempting them from two or more years of Spanish. Even at that, the students choose to take additional Spanish. Those who are interested in pursuing classes beyond the high school offerings enroll at HCC.

Technology

Technology is limited to Business Information Systems (BUSIM). This is a dual credit course, which is aligned to the state standards (TEKS). Although most of our freshmen are enrolled in BUSIM as their first college class, the course is open to students in all grade levels. Upon completion, students receive a certificate of mastery for the Microsoft Office suite including Excel, PowerPoint, and Word. Students are encouraged to take other technology courses such as computer science at the college.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

To satisfy our mission of preparing our students for their tomorrow today, our teachers employ an array of approaches. School-wide, we are committed to a number of instructional strategies that meet the diverse needs of our students: high impact instructional strategies in all classrooms, academic content support for special populations, college-readiness support, and the use of technology for instruction and enrichment.

Teachers in all classes have incorporated the Common Instructional Framework into lesson planning and delivery. The framework and the specific instructional strategies associated therewith enhance students' ability to successfully engage in rigorous learning experiences. The components of the framework are: scaffolding, writing to learn, collaborative group work, groups, and classroom talk.

Teachers use a data action plan to guide instructional practices. After periodic assessments, teachers determine student mastery and adjust upcoming instruction based on individual student needs. This data allows teachers to differentiate instruction and assignments for each student. Those who perform below standard are given instruction/tutorials on specific objectives; while those who perform above standard are given supplemental materials and project-based assignments to further enhance their knowledge.

Academic Support for Special Populations: Extensive opportunities for supplementary instruction are offered as students have need. Our English Language Learners (ELLs), Section 504, and Special Education students are given additional time on assignments, bilingual dictionaries, note taking assistance, and preferential seating as requested by Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) and Admissions Review and Dismissal (ARD) committees. Additionally, incoming freshmen identified as needing support in reading are double blocked in English I and Reading. Those in need of math support are double blocked in Algebra I and Math Models. Each Friday, focused instruction is given to students in need of additional support in a particular area. Students are regrouped according to need, and are given intensive support in the area of need.

All teachers offer tutorials before or after school twice per week. Additionally, many offer Saturday tutorial sessions that focus on high priority areas as identified in assessment data.

College Readiness Support: NHECHS offers Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation classes, College Prep Math, and College Prep Language Arts courses. The daily schedule includes an Advocacy class wherein students learn techniques for goal setting, organization, note taking, studying, scholarship application preparation, college application preparation, and time management. Students are led through Naviance, a web based comprehensive college and career readiness program for middle and high schools that helps align student strengths and interests to post-secondary goals, and improve student outcomes.

Technology: Learning at NHECHS is interspersed with technology daily. Teachers and students use Edmodo to share information and engage in intellectual dialogue. Teachers use flipped classroom instruction so that lecturing is accessed via the Internet in the students' home and the classroom is used for practice and application. Through the Its Learning platform, all students can access textbooks and curriculum documents. Within most classrooms, students have 1:1 access to laptops and iPads daily for reading and research in all subjects.

PART V – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results Narrative Summary:

NHECHS's data for the past 5 years is for both the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). The TAKS measured students in three levels: Did Not Meet Standard, Met Standard, or Commended Performance. It is and has always been our goal to have every student "Meet Standard" and to have at least 50% of our students perform at the Commended level for the TAKS test.

The STAAR test assesses knowledge of the state content standards. On the high school campus ninth grade students are assessed in Algebra, English I, and biology while 10th grade students are assessed in English II and 11th graders are assessed in social studies. Based on this data, a school will receive one of two rankings: "Met Standard" and "Did Not Meet Standard". NHECHS is rated "Met Standard." In the two areas of academic achievement: Reading/ELA and mathematics, our performance is "Distinction Earned." This is the highest level of achievement.

The data for NHECHS shows a general trend of improved results with a higher number of students meeting the state standard and a higher number of students attaining the highest level of Commended performance each year of the TAKS. The addition of the state's new State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), which replaced the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), greatly impacted our scores. The first year of the new assessment (STAAR) showed a sharp decrease in the scores. Upon subsequent testing cycles, the scores improved and are currently maintained at high levels.

With the exception of the first year of the new STAAR in 2012, math scores have increased steadily each year. Reading/ELA 1 scores increased slightly but Reading/ELA 2 scores decreased. As in the case with math, these scores are the result of the increased rigor in the new state test and our students' and teachers' lack of familiarity with the questioning techniques. The gains and trends in increasing achievement results over the last year of the TAKS test and the beginning years of the STAAR can be attributed to several factors.

NHECHS teachers have engaged in careful analysis of previous results of students and both achievement and growth data. Teachers use predictive data to ensure they are moving students to their highest possible achievement levels. This has not only improved the number of students meeting the passing standards, but also ensured students who could achieve at higher levels were encouraged to perform.

The root cause of the decrease in our language arts scores lies in the fact that the students had not been required to write in all content areas or are not engaged enough in academic level writing in all content areas. Campus wide interventions have been put in place to alleviate the problem. It is our plan to continue the use of Literacy Groups in all core content and elective areas, and all disciplines have designed lessons, which allow students to gain more practice in writing. In addition, we have scheduled more students into the practical writing classes to increase the frequency and rigor of their reading and writing.

Improvements in math and language arts are also attributable to the teacher's deeper understanding of the composition of the test and the questioning techniques. This knowledge is used to better acclimate the students to the structure and requirements of the test. Double blocking for math, reading, and writing and twice weekly tutorials for content mastery also attribute to the improved results.

Our most recent data indicates that there is no performance gap of more than 10 percentage points between the test scores of all students tested and the scores of any one sub-group. There is, therefore no need to target a particular group of students for special interventions. Rather, it is our practice to provide rigorous, quality instruction to all students

2. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Data is an integral part of informing instruction, differentiating, and personalizing student learning at NHECHS. STAAR data is used to provide a performance baseline for students. Additional data results including PSAT, SAT, AP, and TSI scores are used to determine college readiness. District-generated Benchmark assessments determine content mastery and assess when reteaching and/or restructuring is appropriate.

During Advocacy class, teachers share test results with students. Teachers explain to the students how the score was determined and the meaning of each score. Teachers track progress in each objective so that students are aware of their areas of greatest need.

An examination of last year's test data identified writing as an area in need of growth. To combat the problem, NHECHS added practical and creative writing to the master schedule. These two classes provided additional writing opportunities for students. Additionally, we instituted writing across the curriculum. Teachers added writing assignments to all subject area coursework. Data gathered at the end of the year showed increased writing performance on all tests.

NHECHS understands the need to collaborate with others in order to improve instruction. Weekly meetings in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) allow teachers to collaborate on lessons and discuss teaching strategies. Our teachers participate in an Early College High School (ECHS) Collaborative. Quarterly, teachers observe colleagues from other ECHS and document strategies, methods and a selected problem of practice. The teachers collaborate on best practices, calibrate scoring, and discuss how the targeted instruction impacts student learning. This collaborative analysis allows teachers to introspectively view their teaching and restructure their lessons for better results.

Teachers meet bi-weekly with their appraisers to discuss data and to formulate action plans. The data assists teachers with interventions, spiraling, reteaching, and tutorial opportunities.

The need to communicate with parents is crucial. We meet with parents as grade-level teams, twice each grading cycle. We use a call out system to inform parents of parental involvement days, and we mail standardized test results to their homes. Parents are encouraged to monitor their child's progress and attendance via progress reports, conferences, and the grade book program (Gradespeed) that is accessible to parents and students and provides performance data in real time.

Quarterly Parent Action Committee (PAC) meetings allow parents to participate in workshop sessions on student academic performance, communicating with teachers, magnet concerns, and data related issues. Test results are explained in detail and parents' questions are answered.

Part VI School Support

1. School Climate/Culture

The strength of NHECHS lies in its relationships. Building relationships fosters a sense of trust that is essential to the success of the early college. Both internal and external surveys describe our school with the same term – family. Students have a sense of security and safety in this small school setting that they might not otherwise enjoy in a comprehensive high school. A district-initiated survey from 2013-2014 indicates that the majority of the students values the family atmosphere and prefer it to the impersonal nature of a larger school.

This familial setting lends itself to social growth. Students are given a voice in matters that concern them. They are encouraged to formulate presentations to “pitch” their ideas to, first, their peers and ultimately to the larger school community. They work collaboratively to develop plans and solve problems. As part of the required community service hours embedded within student life, students must work together to perform community service. As a result, they tutor and read to young children, donate blood, visit nursing homes, work in homeless shelters and area food distribution centers. These community service projects serve to strengthen the students’ social skills by requiring them to communicate with those who they might otherwise ignore. They also promote emotional growth by partnering the students with people outside of their age, race, and social group. They are challenged to learn about others and they often bond with them as they learn about diverse cultures and customs.

The culture of NHECHS could be best described as collaborative. The teachers, administrators, and students have a voice in the operation of the school. Each week, administrators meet together to discuss the needs of the school and suggest procedural and/or instructional changes that would aid in our mission to deliver quality education. Each member of the team is given the opportunity to share concerns and to offer solutions.

This process is repeated in the grade level PLC meetings where each teacher has a voice and in the classroom where the students are given the opportunity to assess the educational atmosphere and to offer suggestions for change. The teacher hears their concerns and takes them back to the grade level meeting to present them to the group.

The collaborative culture at NHECHS promotes trust and encourages creative problem solving. Decisions that govern the school such as the master schedule, new courses, and the day-to-day operation of the campus are not implemented without meaningful input from all stakeholders. Teachers are encouraged to examine new policies and to bring potential problems to the administrative team. Along with the problem they are asked to bring possible solutions. Whenever possible, their solutions are implemented on a trial basis. If they are successful, they become a part of the operational procedures. Teachers know that the administration values their opinion and listens to their concerns. They are confident that they have a voice in decision-making.

2. Engaging Families and Community

The Houston Independent School District utilizes the Your Voice instrument to poll students, parents, teachers and district stakeholders about their perception of the district and their experience with the systems. The Your Voice survey report for North Houston Early College High School indicates that those surveyed are satisfied with the overall program of the school. Specifically, parents and students approve most of the academic rigor, consistency, and learning of the school. The areas of greatest concern in the survey, school safety and school environment, were viewed as problems because of the physical limitations of the school. Many parents and students are unsatisfied with the conditions during inclement weather and the lack of security which is the result of having a T-Building campus. Most of the areas of concern will be alleviated with the completion of our new building in January 2016.

NHECHS provides opportunities for parents to become involved at our school. Parents are members of the Parent Action Committee (PAC), the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and the Project Advisory Team (PAT). Membership in these committees allow parents and community members to have a voice in the decision making process of the school including the design for the new building. Parents also participate as Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) wherein they chaperone student events and field lessons, perform office tasks, and assist on campus. Members of school committees such as Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), and Site Based Decision Making Committee (SDMC) are directly involved with the students and assist in making educational decisions.

During the pre-service week for this school year, teams of teachers and administrators initiated a neighborhood walk. Staff members visited incoming freshman students in their homes to welcome them to the school family and to distribute backpacks filled with school supplies. We met with parents and students in an effort to establish relationships and become approachable. This one gesture served to make parents comfortable enough to continue the relationship. Parents are now active participants in most school events and students participate in academic endeavors of the school.

NHECHS hosts many grade level parent nights to discuss academic information relevant to the students' progress. Grade level Deans meet with parents concerning graduation requirements, calculating grade point averages, accessing grades online, completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TAFSA). During the parent nights, community representatives provide their expertise to assist in guiding parents and students in their decision making process. In this effort, parents and professional community members are granted opportunities to connect and have important questions answered and extended relationships are created.

Communication with our parents comes in the form of mail notifications, call outs, flyers, a school newsletter and personal contact. All communication is provided in both English and Spanish and interpreters are available during all school meetings, parent conferences, and during the admission interview process.

3. Professional Development

The cornerstone of our school improvement efforts at NHECHS is consistent high-quality faculty professional development. Our professional development mission is two-fold: to foster individual teacher development and to promote a campus culture of effective college-preparatory instruction. As an early college faculty, professional development is used to provide a format for training that assists teachers in framing conversations and curriculum decisions around the rigor of instruction.

Throughout the year, our staff members strive to enhance their teaching skills and to remain abreast of current educational trends to augment their teaching. College Board requires specific elements in AP course delivery, and it is up to our teachers to complete yearly updates and remain AP certified. Because our mission is to prepare students for their tomorrow today, we continue to focus on increasing the rigor in our instruction so that students can seamlessly merge high school and college coursework.

Friday staff development, therefore, is at the core of the collegial engagement that is fostered on campus. Our professional development focuses on building teacher efficacy by adopting effective research-based instructional strategies, building peer-to-peer observation procedures, and incorporating reflective self-assessments of teaching practices. An average of two hours per week during the academic year has been dedicated to whole faculty professional development training including text based discussions using National School Reform Faculty protocols, MCNC's peer review process, sharing "take aways" from outside training, and department work examining practices and data.

Our internal campus professional development is augmented by collaboration with other early colleges within Houston ISD. Given the small size of our faculty, this forum is particularly valuable as it provides each of our teachers the opportunity to collaborate with faculty who teach the same subjects. These sessions have strengthened the instruction and have produced measurable results in the academic progress of our students.

All teachers have participated in training provided by outside organizations including Houston ISD's Professional Development, Middle College National Consortium, the Rice University Advanced Placement Institute, Educate Texas (formerly the Texas High School Project), and the Early College High School Conference. Core subject and foreign language teachers attend who are AP certified participate in a variety of external professional development opportunities including AP workshops hosted by Houston ISD and Rice University.

NHECHS has been selected by the district to participate in a district initiative entitled Leverage Leadership, which is based on the research practices of Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. Before implementation, the administrative team was trained for four weeks during the summer. They returned in the fall to serve as trainers for the school based professional staff. The pre-service professional development included a large component of the Leverage Leadership.

Next year, our school will join other high schools in the district in the Power Up initiative. This summer and during the fall pre-service, all staff will receive intensive professional development to prepare for integration of technology as each student will receive a laptop for their daily use at school and at home.

4. School Leadership

The principal is the campus leader at NHECHS. She is assisted by the leadership team consisting of an associate principal, a dean, a magnet coordinator, a college access coordinator and the campus registrar. The administrative structure of our school is unique because the principal serves a dual role. She is the Lead Principal for the early colleges as well as building principal at NHECHS. In her role, she supervises and monitors four campuses in addition to her own. Thus, the associate principal assumes the leadership of the school in her absence.

Performance is monitored through the Teachers Appraisal and Development System (TADS). This process includes classroom observations as well as formal and informal evaluations. The evaluations are followed by written feedback in all instances and face-to-face discussion when needed and/or requested. Weekly PLC and grade level meetings are utilized to provide additional feedback and to communicate values.

The leadership philosophy on the NHECHS campus is based on the Distributed Leadership model as defined by Richard Elmore of Harvard: regardless of role or predefined duties, leaders' work is rooted in instructional practice, understood collegial scrutiny, and modeling of appropriate actions at all times. These constructs enable shared leadership, shared ownership, shared knowledge, and shared responsibility by all stakeholders, and provide a flat administrative structure that allows for input by all stakeholders.

To ensure that the focus remains student centered, teacher leaders meet with their teacher group weekly to review school policies and programs and prepare suggestions for improved instructional practices to the administrative team.

A strong Shared Decision making committee composed of the principal, teachers, parents and community and business members also helps guide the school in decision based on policies, programs, relationships, and resources to focus on student achievement.

We also practice the Leverage Leadership model as presented by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo in which instruction is data driven; administrators provide observation and feedback; teachers and administrators plan effective lessons and participate in meaningful professional development; and the student and staff culture is conducive to effective learning.

To ensure that best practices are continued, administrators regularly observe instruction. Following the observation, a conference is held with the teacher to point out areas of strength and the areas in need of growth. Specific suggestions are made and the teachers are given a timeline in which to implement the new practice.

With a focus on student achievement, NHECHS has developed and borrowed structures from its institutional partners for peer-to-peer classroom observations. We use two observations models: the Instructional Rounds Model, where teachers participate in a pre-conference, focused observation, and post-conference to discuss observations, and MCNC's Peer Review Process which allows for an in depth look into what a teacher does in and out of the classroom based on observations by multiple staff members, reflections by the observed, and a formal learning session following the observation. Additionally, the use of the Critical Friend's group structure and protocols as provided by Houston A+ Challenge (an organization that supports school leadership and development) enables collegial conversations around a multitude of school issues.

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>STAAR (2012-2014) / TAKS (2010-2011)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>10</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2014</u>
Publisher: <u>Pearson</u>	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above		100	93	100	99
Advanced Academic Performance		15	11	55	52
Number of students tested		99	107	93	99
Percent of total students tested		100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment		0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above		100	97	100	87
Advanced Academic Performance		13	39	58	99
Number of students tested		89	89	71	51
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above		100	92	100	99
Advanced Academic Performance		15	12	57	52

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Number of students tested		95	95	72	77
5. African- American Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Performance					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: Due to state assessment changes, 10th grade math was not tested in the 2013-2014 school year. Assessment changed from TAKS to STAAR in the 2012-2013 school year.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Math</u>	Test: <u>STAAR (2012-2014) / TAKS (2010-2011)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>9</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2014</u>
Publisher: <u>Pearson</u>	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	May	May	May	May	May
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	98	99	93	99	98
Advanced Academic Performance	46	13	0	57	70
Number of students tested	60	91	81	104	99
Percent of total students tested	98	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	100	99	91	99	98
Advanced Academic Performance	45	11	0	53	71
Number of students tested	53	79	68	90	85
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	100	99	92	99	97
Advanced Academic Performance	43	11	0	60	70
Number of students tested	49	89	73	95	79
5. African- American Students					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: The state of Texas transitioned from Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) in the 2011-2012 school year. The last year on TAKS for the 10th grade was the 2010-2011 school year. This table reflects data from two different assessments. The phase in occurred with the 11-12 9th graders who have now completed STAAR graduation requirements and will graduate at the end of this year.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>STAAR (2012-2014) Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (2010-2011)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>10</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2013</u>
Publisher: <u>Pearson Educated</u>	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	95	100	99	100	99
Advanced Academic Performance	3	12	31	37	22
Number of students tested	108	100	110	93	98
Percent of total students tested	98	100	99	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	97	100	100	100	99
Advanced Academic Performance	2	10	29	38	20
Number of students tested	98	84	100	73	84
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	97	100	100	100	99
Advanced Academic Performance	3	13	30	33	22
Number of students tested	104	89	99	72	74
5. African- American					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: The state of Texas transitioned from Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) in the 2011-2012 school year. The last year on TAKS for the 10th grade was the 2010-2011 school year. This table reflects data from two different assessments. The phase in occurred with the 11-12 9th graders who have now completed STAAR graduation requirements and will graduate at the end of this year.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: <u>Reading/ELA</u>	Test: <u>STAAR (2012-2014) TAKS (2010-2011)</u>
All Students Tested/Grade: <u>9</u>	Edition/Publication Year: <u>2014</u>
Publisher: <u>Pearson</u>	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	93	92	77	100	100
Advanced Academic Performance	6	3	0	40	32
Number of students tested	144	116	107	105	99
Percent of total students tested	93	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/Disadvantaged Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	100	92	75	100	100
Advanced Academic Performance	7	4	0	37	31
Number of students tested	134	108	89	91	85
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above	100	92	75	100	100
Advanced Academic Performance	6	3	0	39	30
Number of students tested	128	112	95	96	79
5. African- American Students					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Satisfactory Academic Performance and above					
Advanced Academic Performance					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: The state of Texas transitioned from Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) to State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) in the 2011-2012 school year. The last year on TAKS for the 10th grade was the 2010-2011 school year. This table reflects data from two different assessments. The phase in occurred with the 11-12 9th graders who have now completed STAAR graduation requirements and will graduate at the end of this year.