

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Linda Kidd

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

Official School Name The Early College at Guilford

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5608 West Friendly Avenue

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

City Greensboro State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 27410-4240

County Guilford County

Telephone (336) 316-2860 Fax (336) 316-2858

Web site/URL

http://ecg.gcsnc.com/pages/Early_College_At_Guilford

E-mail kiddl@gcsnc.com

Twitter Handle _____ 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, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Nora Carr E-mail carrn@gcsnc.com

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

District Name Guilford County Schools Tel. (336) 370-8100

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. Alan Duncan

(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, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. 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 public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) 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 2010 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: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
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

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 69 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 24 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 28 High schools
 - 3 K-12 schools
- 124 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. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 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	32	21	53
10	23	28	51
11	25	22	47
12 or higher	23	25	48
Total Students	103	96	199

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 42 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 41 % White
 - 6 % 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 2014 – 2015 school 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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	5
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	199
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.025
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Although none of our students are formally considered ELL, many come from homes wherein a language other than English is regularly spoken, including Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Hindi.

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 5 %
Total number students who qualify: 9
8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %
2 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. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- 1 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 0 Emotional Disturbance
- 1 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 0 Other Health Impaired
- 0 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	8
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance 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 13:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	46
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	100%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
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. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Make a positive difference in the lives of students by providing exceptionally challenging educational opportunities that support academic development at the highest standards. Through building bridges at the earliest opportunity between high school, college, and beyond, our school seeks to awaken the creative, social, and academic abilities of students.

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

Students are selected to attend the school in a competitive process that evaluates academic achievement, standardized test results, academic recommendations, personal essays and self-reported interests and activities. An Admissions Team representing the school and the college reviews applications from prospective students using a holistic process.

PART III – SUMMARY

Established in 2002 as North Carolina's first early college, The Early College at Guilford offers a rigorous academic experience for students with a distinguished record of academic performance and seeks to provide a seamless transition to higher education. In partnership with Guilford College, a private liberal arts institution, Guilford County Schools (the school district) formed the early college high school in order for students to participate in an accelerated curriculum of Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Grades 9 and 10 and to fully enroll in college in Grades 11 and 12. The Early College at Guilford was designed in accordance with the "early entrance" model that was beginning to form roots nationally in the late 1990's. Earning college credit the junior and senior years is a hallmark of the program. Typically, when students leave The Early College at Guilford to enter the university of their choice, they take enough credits with them to enroll as sophomores or juniors.

In a Memo of Understanding (M.O.U.), which is discussed and reviewed annually, the Guilford County Board of Education and the leadership of Guilford College formally outline the details of the partnership, including responsibility for tuition, books, facilities, insurance, etc. The Guilford County Board of Education makes a substantial investment of resources in the costs of college tuition and textbooks for juniors and seniors who are enrolled in college courses with traditional college students. In compliance with the M.O.U., The Early College at Guilford maintains a student body of approximately 200 students. The diversity of the student body, which includes many racial, ethnic, and socio-economic differences, serves as a major strength of the school. There is a commitment by all associated with the school to continuous improvement and to provide challenging expectations regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status. Students are valued as individuals with unique physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs, and in turn, students come to value each other.

Based on data collected from current and former students and parents, the research firm Niche.com rated The Early College at Guilford the #1 public high school in North Carolina (December, 2015). According to Niche, student surveys consistently pointed to the "family-like atmosphere" within a culture of high expectations as the school's greatest strength. Students also commented on the quality of teachers at the school, stating that the teachers "truly cared and wanted us to accomplish great things." Key strategies that contribute to the overall development of students include 1) supporting students' academic success; 2) creating a culture of cooperation, not competition; and 3) combining leadership and service-learning experiences with academics. Action steps to supporting students' academic success will be discussed fully in the curriculum section. Creating a culture of cooperation is a commitment of all stakeholders at the school. Unlike most high schools, The Early College at Guilford purposefully does not rank its students, nor select a Valedictorian or Salutatorian. By not ranking students according to Grade Point Average (GPA), the school fosters the spirit of cooperation wherein students help and support one another inside and outside the classroom. Similarly, a culture of equal rank and egalitarianism is a tenet of Guilford College's Quaker roots.

At The Early College, the culture of cooperation is further enhanced by the creation of "houses" to group students across grade levels, akin to Hogwarts in the Harry Potter series. Spear-headed by the Student Council, the "houses" bridge the divide between Grades 9 and 10, the high school students, and Grades 11 and 12, who are dually enrolled in college, attending classes in myriad buildings across campus. The Student Council, comprised of leaders from all four grades, sponsors events to bring students together in a social context, such as the Friday night tie-dye event where students tie-dyed house T-shirts as well as created names and cheers for their houses. In October, a pumpkin carving contest and bonfire brought the houses together for a night of fun and friendly competition. Houses also join together in service. When our district selected "food insecurity" as the target issue for all schools' service learning efforts, it prompted students to organize a November food collection for the Salvation Army food bank, as well as a Hunger Banquet, scheduled for the spring, which aims to educate participants about global food insecurity.

Students have opportunities for leadership development in 21 active clubs, most of which are service or academic-oriented. The Service-Action-Integration (SAI) Club, for example, raised over \$10,000 for sight-saving eye operations in India; the money was raised in a cultural evening planned exclusively by students,

including dinner and entertainment. Another important part of the evening was educating the guests on blindness and raising awareness about the gift and power of sight, which students urged, "should not be taken for granted." One of our most active and most popular clubs, ECG Robotics, fields five FTC (First Tech Challenge) and FRC (First Robotics Competition) teams representing a cross-section of all student subgroups. On most Friday afternoons, parents pick up Robotics team members at 3:45 and drive them to a "build site" near the school where students work on building and programming robots from 4:00-6:00 pm, after which they enjoy pizza and social time. As a result of dedication and team work, the FTC team "Back to the Drawing Board" recently qualified for Southern Regionals in San Antonio. With its exceptionally challenging academic program and its wide variety of extra-curricular offerings, The Early College at Guilford seeks to provide students with a balance of academic rigor, service learning, social growth, and leadership development.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The core curriculum at The Early College at Guilford seeks to prepare students for early college entrance and is therefore appropriately accelerated and rigorous. At its foundation are the common core standards and the standards of the Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum. On a daily basis, teachers provide students with opportunities to engage the curriculum at high levels. Through the incorporation of technology, students access the curriculum, engage in dialogue, assess their learning, and create meaningful products. Students think deeply, read analytically, and write extensively.

In Honors English II and AP English Language and Composition, students acquire and develop skills that enable them to critically and analytically read and write texts encompassing a variety of fiction and nonfiction genres. Teaching strategies provide students with daily opportunities to work independently and in small groups to engage in close textual analysis and production of their own texts. A student-centered environment allows students to interact with texts—and with each other—to discover knowledge through a process of questioning and drawing conclusions. By regularly evaluating and analyzing texts through both conversation and writing, students develop important skills that will enable them to more fully comprehend the texts they read. Students performing above grade level are encouraged to take risks with their writing and experiment with techniques their grade-level classmates may not yet be prepared to attempt. Additionally, out-of-class assignments are often structured to provide highly motivated students with opportunities to achieve beyond the parameters of the assignment. In Honors English II and AP English Language and Composition, students become confident writing in a variety of genres and delivering written and spoken arguments that appeal to specific audiences—knowledge and skills they will be able to apply in university courses across the curriculum, as well as in their professional lives outside academia. Furthermore, students’ development of textual analysis skills will aid them in comprehending the diversity of texts they will encounter in higher education courses and in their professional careers.

Students at The Early College at Guilford acquire foundational math skills through discovery labs, cooperative learning groups, and through direct instruction. The 9th and 10th grade curriculum is designed to help students develop skills needed to be successful in the challenging and independent college math courses they take as upperclassmen. At the start of a unit, students are asked to explore topics and make hypotheses about a mathematical concept. The students then read and analyze math texts prior to any teacher input, explain their reasoning or work on their assignments, and connect and extend their knowledge by working on thought-provoking problem sets. Students are formally and informally assessed using various short term and long term activities (including projects involving math applications), and the results from those assessments drive further instruction and remediation. A desired outcome is to have students become independent, efficient, and critical math students who have discovered their best individual way to learn and apply what they have learned.

In Social Studies, students experience college level work and thinking through AP World History, AP United States History, and AP Psychology. Teachers focus on the ideas and thought-processes that are the foundation of each discipline rather than simply reviewing dates and facts. While most of the students are performing far above grade level, concerted effort is made to move them into the rigors expected in a college-level, writing-intensive social science course. Our learning standards emphasize learner independence. In Social Studies classes, students learn to think like historians and become comfortable analyzing myriad primary sources, such as documents, political cartoons, letters, journals, etc. The research process is an important component of the social studies curriculum. Texts assigned for summer reading and reflection, such as Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, form the foundation for exploration throughout the year.

In the science program, Honors Biology and AP Environmental Science (APES) are the two required core science courses. Honors Anatomy and Physiology is offered as an elective course. Students enroll in Chemistry and Physics at the college level, with several students entering Organic Chemistry and/or upper-level physics courses. In Grades 9 and 10, the sciences are taught as active inquiry classes. Direct

instruction is infused with inquiry style laboratory experiences that reinforce and extend the core learning objectives. Honors Biology follows the NC essential standards curriculum, teaching the fundamental core topics. The AP course teaches the fundamental APES topics in a “flipped” classroom format where students acquire basic knowledge through readings and application outside of the classroom and use classroom time to manipulate that knowledge through discussions, laboratory investigations, debates, presentations, etc. This teaching model allows the students to manipulate the content at a higher level than direct instruction. Utilizing a variety of technology, including digital probe ware with computer interface, multimedia presentation tools, and online assessment tools, the students develop 21st century skills that will directly transfer to the world beyond the classroom. Assessment data is used to evaluate student readiness and to make adjustments to delivery to ensure that all students are successful in completing the course at a high level.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

In Grades 9 and 10, students enroll in physical education (a high school graduation requirement), and foreign languages (French, Latin) as electives. Students who enjoy physical exercise may also take advanced PE in the sophomore year. Students at ECG may also elect to take Advanced Placement Music Theory. The course covers approximately two semesters of college-level theory. Music Theory teaches students the language of music. Students practice composition, analysis, listening, and singing. In Grades 11 and 12, students may choose from the wide variety of courses offered at Guilford College. In planning meetings with the college liaison, students build their schedules to include four courses each semester plus a one-hour seminar class, for a total of 17 hours. Students at the junior and senior levels may take college courses to explore particular disciplines, such as political science and economics, to determine if these disciplines inspire greater investigation or could be considered as a potential major. From art, cinema, and music to religious studies, students may choose from a wide variety of offerings. For students interested in computer programming, special permission is given for them to enroll in evening courses for advanced computer programming at the college.

Many options exist for world languages in Grades 9-12. In the ninth and tenth grade years, students have the option of taking French or Latin. We offer French I, French II, and Honors French III. Students studying Latin may take Latin I, Latin II, Honors Latin III, and Honors Latin IV. Latin II, III, and IV are taught in a combined class due to scheduling constraints. French and Latin courses follow the respective standards in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. The French courses are taught as introductory college courses and flow seamlessly into further study at the college level. Students focus on the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) in the context of culturally rich units. Students compare cultural practices in France and French-speaking countries with American cultural practices. The Latin courses focus on the history of the Roman Empire as well as on grammar and translation. The grammar focus in Latin directly impacts students' understanding of English grammar. In addition, students explore various aspects of the culture through independent and group projects. For example, students in French III give presentations in the French language about a site of cultural or historical significance in France. After studying Latin's classical influences, students draw a political cartoon with a Latin caption or create an advertisement for a product. In Grades 11 and 12, students may enroll in French, Spanish, German, and Japanese at the college level. The Early College has student representation in all four language departments at the college. Students in Grades 9-12 participate in the National French or National Latin exams, which provide students with nationally-normed results. In March, 2016, 79 students participated in the exams. World language study at The Early College at Guilford prepares students for college and the global environment beyond.

The Early College at Guilford follows the North Carolina Public Schools Health and Physical Education Curriculum. Students learn skills during physical education class that will benefit them throughout their lives. The students learn about disease prevention, how to deal with stress, and how basic muscle concepts work. Students also learn to become lifelong movers as they compete in sports such as basketball, football, tennis, hockey, softball, volleyball, ultimate Frisbee, soccer, and strength and conditioning. Students who had not previously experienced success in PE love taking PE at The Early College where students feel comfortable exploring physical fitness and team sports without the fear of failure or judgment from peers.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Both English courses, Honors English II and AP English Language and Composition, provide students with choice in both daily and long-term assignments, effectively meeting students' diverse learning needs and enabling students to incorporate their own interests into their coursework. Differentiated instruction allows all students to progress and achieve, while also preventing the disengagement that occurs when students are met with tasks that are too easy or too difficult. For example, in the AP course, instruction for AP test essays is differentiated; students earning a score of 5 or 6 on a practice essay acquire strategies to support them as they strive for a score of 7, while students earning a score of 7 or 8 are introduced to approaches to help them work toward a score of 9. Problem-based learning in both courses provides opportunities for students to apply rhetorical skills as they address real-life, current issues.

At the start of a mathematics unit, students are asked to explore topics and make hypotheses about a mathematical concept. The students then read and analyze math texts prior to any teacher input, explain their reasoning or work on their assignments, and connect and extend their knowledge by working on thought-provoking problem sets. To support instruction, individual and group tutoring times are offered before school, during lunch and after school. Test data is analyzed to target students who need help and to create learning groups. Math teachers maintain weekly email contact with parents via a newsletter so that parents are apprised of the math topics and assessments for the coming week and may support their student at home.

The AP US History class is centered on teaching history as a disciplined method of gathering, evaluating, and organizing information. Students work in collaborative academic teams to investigate the past. Assessments are based on an asset model that awards students for intellectual risk-taking instead of looking to punish students for "incorrect" answers. Differentiated instruction is provided by using a variety of assessment products: model-building, presentations, research, simulations, video production, app design, seminars, debates and of course writing. High levels of student choice are built into assessment strategies.

In science, varied instructional methods are utilized to ensure that each student's needs are met. These methods include direct instruction, digital instruction, inquiry explorations, reinforcement and enrichment activities both computer-based and paper-pencil style. Intervention is standards-based and individualized, and students are invited to tutorials in the morning, at lunch, and after school.

At the college level, students are engaged in a wide range of instructional methods across many academic departments, including seminar, class discussion, science and language labs, writing, research, and experiential learning. Guilford College's emphasis on diversity affords students the opportunity for multi-cultural learning experiences which prepare students to become global citizens. Guilford College provides intervention, such as The Learning Commons, centrally located on the second floor of the main library, where students may seek tutoring in a wide range of subjects. ECG students also participate in The Learning Commons as tutors themselves.

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

The Early College at Guilford relies heavily on North Carolina end-of-course tests, district pre and post-tests, and AP exams to drive instruction. In addition, teachers employ unit tests throughout the year to determine standards mastery and inform re-teaching needs. Skills tests in Physical Education (PE) also help gauge instruction.

In English II and Biology, teachers provide standards-based instruction according to a district-provided pacing guide. An on-line pre-test is administered in each course, garnering student performance data for each standard and allowing teachers an early view of students' strengths and areas for improvement. A post-test near the completion of the course is another data source to direct teaching. Again, teachers receive standards-based data which they can then apply to review and re-teaching. Students then demonstrate mastery on the English II and Biology NC end-of-course exams. These exams are also used to determine student growth data which then serves as a School Performance indicator for the state accountability model. Since students must achieve at or above the predicted score in order for the school to achieve growth,

teachers are cognizant of students' predicted scores and strive to help students achieve accordingly. With pre and post-assessments, teachers share assessment results with all students and develop individual intervention plans if needed. After pre and post-tests, the principal meets with teachers to review student performance data and discuss next-steps. End-of-Course test scores are shared with students and parents.

Even though AP exam scores are not released until July, the exams guide the instruction of AP courses. Teachers of AP courses become fluent in both the content and process of their respective AP exams, which informs their instruction from the summer reading assignment to the exam. It must be emphasized, however, that for the majority of the course, teachers engage students in the content, engender passion about the subject, and spark the desire to learn more. It is not until well into the second semester that "AP test preparation" begins. All AP teachers employ a released AP exam as a practice before the actual exam, the results of which are used as an instructional tool.

Cahoots, an online assessment tool, allows teachers to generate quick assessments and to provide immediate feedback to students. An on-going and valuable assessment tool is the unit test, or in PE, the skills test, which provides information on standards/skills mastery. Teachers form tutoring groups or tutor students individually based on unit tests. In addition, students who demonstrate mastery are given opportunities to explore course content more deeply through enrichment activities.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The Early College at Guilford seeks to cultivate and maintain a positive, supportive school culture. Engaging students at high academic levels and with higher-order questioning and tasks is paramount to the school. Although most students are intrinsically motivated, teachers foster motivation by making sure students are challenged by the content. Teachers guide students to solve problems and make authentic connections to learning. For example, students will investigate stream water on campus in different seasons, re-enact historical events such as the first Continental Congress, and conduct a trial while studying Puritan times. Creating excitement about learning has a direct correlation to maintaining high student motivation.

In an effort to support our students in such an exceptionally rigorous educational environment, The Early College at Guilford has a comprehensive counseling department that works closely with teachers, staff, students and parents to meet not only the academic needs of our students but also their social and emotional needs. The counseling department meets with students in large group settings as well as small and even individually to address any concerns. We have experienced great success with our Counseling Department preparing our students for the college application process and have 100% of graduates matriculate to college. We attribute this success to our Counseling Department starting the discussion about college planning early in the student's high school career, bringing college admission officers to the school to speak to the students, as well as working closely with the colleges and universities to provide the most current information about the college process.

In addition, students at the junior and senior levels meet with the school's guidance counselor in a large group once per week for one semester, and in the alternating semester, students meet with the college liaison once per week. Topics for the weekly seminar meetings include The College Application Process, Writing a Resume, The College Essay, Mental Health in College, Financial Aid and Special Programs, Choosing a Major, Residential Life, Study Abroad, and more.

Teachers find a great deal of satisfaction in the work they do and are invested in students' success. Teachers all share a genuine passion for their respective content area and are life-long learners themselves. They are motivated by seeing their students succeed, and by helping students extend learning outside of the classroom, such as in Science Olympiad, Speech and Debate, Quiz Bowl, and Model Congress. News of alumni achievements also brings faculty and staff great pride and joy. In turn, students appreciate and value their teachers, thanking them and crediting them the positive influence they have had. The principal supports and values teachers by creating a culture of collaboration and support.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Early College at Guilford benefits from the support of a strong Parent, Teacher Student Association (PTSA) as well as the active involvement of community and business partnerships. Since the school's inception, the PTSA has annually earned the recognition of "Honor Unit," which designates those organizations that embrace strong membership, engage the school community, and provide school support and advocacy.

The PTSA provides classroom support to teachers by allocating funds each year for teachers to purchase items that will enhance the students' educational experience, including additional books and teaching materials, such as stethoscopes for Anatomy class. The PTSA is most proud of its mini-grant program, through which the officers of student clubs can apply to the PTSA for grants to fund their leadership projects. Parents of the PTSA work closely with students to explore these grant requests and support the student-led projects; for example, parents assist students in writing a grant proposal that includes resources needed, costs, expenses, audience, and desired outcomes, similar to what students would encounter in the business world. The PTSA has provided funds to send students to Model Congress events, Academic Quiz Bowl events, HOSA (Health Occupations) conferences, and has funded many student-led service projects.

With PTSA support, students have collected hundreds of pairs of eyeglasses and organized a 5K and other walks in support of many charities over the years, including the Out of the Garden project which provides food locally to students who experience food insecurity. The PTSA also works with the Student Council to fund and provide volunteer support for the social events which enrich The Early College experience for all the students. During magnet school recruitment, parents share their knowledge and experience with prospective parents.

The Early College at Guilford has also achieved excellence through the support of many businesses. Several corporations support and fund our Robotics Teams, including TE Connectivity and Syngenta. Employees from TE Connectivity can choose to earn service hours through mentoring our students in STEM and Robotics, which is a win-win relationship. An engineer and former ECG parent continues to volunteer his time weekly to coach our five Robotics teams.

Perhaps our strongest partnership, however, is with Guilford College. Students benefit from smaller class sizes at the college level. Students not only earn college credit which will transfer to the university of their choice, they participate in many facets of campus life; for example, students may write for the college newspaper or DJ for the award-winning college radio station. Students who play a musical instrument may audition to join an ensemble or play in the marching band. In this way, students gain the experience college life outside of the classroom. When Guilford sponsored a Day of Service in September, our students joined with traditional college students to provide service on and off campus. Finally, to encourage ECG students to remain at Guilford College, each year the college offers one senior a substantial scholarship. Since 2003, 50 students have chosen to stay at Guilford to complete their college education.

3. Professional Development:

The focus of professional development at the district and school levels is based on an Instructional Framework: “Plan, Teach, Evaluate.” The framework seeks to provide all teachers with a clear road map to student achievement, where teachers plan, teach, and evaluate within a student-centered culture so that students will be prepared for college, career, and life. In August, 2015, principals were trained in the model, and returned to their respective schools to provide the training to teachers. This year, all schools in the district focused on two core concepts in the framework: 1) “Teachers leverage proven routines, processes, and management techniques to create a predictable environment that maximizes learning for all students” and 2) “ Teachers provide authentic, relevant, and rigorous instruction to ensure that all students are college, career, and life ready.” At our school, we placed emphasis on the latter concept, specifically making the learning targets explicit, promoting higher-order thinking, and developing communication skills. A key component of promoting higher-order thinking is asking higher-order questions during instruction. To this end, the principal and teachers participated in a Paideia seminar, led by the principal, wherein we discussed the text of a Grant Wiggins article on questioning . We also examined Webb’s Depth of Knowledge to help frame higher-order questions. As a result of the seminar, teachers reflected on their own questioning practices and how these might be improved. Teachers also applied the higher order questioning to the acquisition of standards in their curriculum at the lesson plan level. We then looked at “higher order tasks” and discussed whether our products and processes also encouraged higher order thinking. In the principal’s walk-throughs, she provides feedback on the teacher’s use of questioning during instruction. Teachers display student work that results from assigning the higher-order tasks.

In addition to the school-based professional development, teachers of English II and Biology attend bi-annual Learning Conferences sponsored by the district. The conferences create content-based professional learning communities wherein teachers share best practices and receive classroom resources. Teachers are also encouraged to seek professional development on their own; for example, the calculus teacher attended a nearby conference for math teachers. Serving as an AP reader, as many of our teachers do, also provides built-in professional development as teachers hone in on AP exam expectations.

The principal’s monthly meetings with district leaders and other principals provide current information on the instructional framework and other school leadership priorities. Principals have the option to attend ASCD or similar conferences if the topics suit the goals of the School Improvement Plan.

4. School Leadership:

As a collaborative leader, the principal seeks feedback from faculty and staff when making instructional and managerial decisions. At monthly faculty meetings, the principal polls teachers about concerns, issues, and day-to-day matters that arise-- the small things that become big things when not handled. The principal also maintains open communication and is visible, so that teachers have the opportunity to speak directly about a question, or send an email, which the principal responds to within 24 hrs. Furthermore, the principal leads the faculty in support of district initiatives, such as service learning. With the district-wide expectation that all seniors graduate with a minimum of 100 hours of service learning completed during high school, the school counselor along with a teacher coordinator for service learning help students meet the goal and make sure service hours are reported. In a small school, distributive leadership is essential; there is a lot to do and few people to do it.

The School Leadership Team (SLT), comprised of the principal, faculty, staff, and parents, meets monthly to implement the School Improvement Plan and to discuss initiatives. Furthermore, the SLT functions as an advisory group to the principal, making recommendations about budgetary decisions, operational matters, and any other matter related to the successful operation of the school. One example of the SLT at work is in the decision to purchase laptops for student use in the classroom, which came about after a discussion of equitable access to technology. First, we surveyed the ninth and tenth grade students to determine if they preferred an iPad or laptop, and the majority indicated that laptops would serve a greater purpose for classroom use. We then used magnet funds to purchase four laptops and a laptop storage cart. The SLT plans to build the collection of laptops for student use each year.

In partnering with the college, the principal, along with the college liaison, ensures that students are performing well in their courses, seeking help when needed, and extending learning beyond the classroom, such as in extra-curricular activities. Students enrolled in college French, for example, attended a French film festival on campus to increase their knowledge of the language and French culture.

The school's PTSA also provides leadership and seeks involvement from parents and community. The principal works closely with the PTSA on all of their projects and events.

As club and academic team advisers, teachers perform leadership roles while fostering leadership development in students.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

One of the key, mission-based practices at our school is creating time during the school day to strengthen students' socio-emotional skills. Called "Plus Time," The Early College at Guilford ends the instructional day one hour early on Wednesdays twice per month so that students may meet in clubs, practice with their academic teams, or receive peer tutoring. We typically divide the one-hour time period into two thirty-minute sessions, increasing the number of clubs who can meet. In addition to club meetings, we have employed Plus Time for Kids Voting, SAT prep, or simply enjoying a game of chess with peers. The students know the Plus Time days in advance, and the Plus Time schedule is posted for each session, so that students know where to go. Due to the high level of academic rigor, our students need the "down time" that Plus Time provides. It also serves to allow clubs to meet during the day, so that afternoons are free for students' other commitments and homework. Juniors and seniors also return for Plus Time, especially if they are a club leaders. This allows for greater cohesion among the student body, and students feel unified toward common goals. More importantly, Plus Time serves to reach the whole student, not the academic side exclusively. Through Plus Time, students have the opportunity to meet with club leaders and advisers in a relaxed, yet focused setting that fosters leadership skills, communication skills, and collaboration. Among students who are very bright, social situations can be problematic. By providing time for students to "bond" around similar interests and passions, we foster students' social and emotional growth. As a result, many gain momentum in building their "soft skills" and go on to improve their leadership skills or discover the leader within. Plus Time not only affects the individual student but the school as a whole. Students enjoy the time together and benefit from the experience, but at the same time, Plus Time contributes to the "family-like" atmosphere which has become a hallmark of the school.