

U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mr. Michael Susi

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

Official School Name East Lyme High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 30 Chesterfield Rd Box 21

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

City East Lyme State CT Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 06333-1244

County New London County

Telephone (860) 739-6946 Fax (860) 739-1241

Web site/URL http://www.eastlymeschools.org/ E-mail michael.susi@eastlymeschools.org

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*Mr. Jeffrey Newton E-mail jeffrey.newton@elpsk12.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name East Lyme School District Tel. (860) 739-3966

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 Dr. Timothy Hagen
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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 (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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, 2016 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	115	133	248
10	118	131	249
11	157	127	284
12 or higher	136	129	265
Total Students	526	520	1046

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 8 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85 % White
 - 4 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 2%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	26
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	1065
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.024
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Albanian, Arabic, Korean, Russian, Lithuanian, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Nepali, Cantonese, Kinyar Wanda, Mandarin, Tagalog

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %
Total number students who qualify: 146
8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
136 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.

- 19 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 4 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 2 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 38 Other Health Impaired
- 49 Specific Learning Disability
- 2 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: 7
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	4
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	99
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

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	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	97%	99%	100%	99%	99%

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 2016.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	253
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	74%
Enrolled in a community college	8%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	2%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	12%

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.

The East Lyme High School experience prepares students academically, emotionally, and socially to be positive forces in the world and to live responsible, purposeful, and healthy lives.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

East Lyme is a shoreline community that is largely dominated by marine, nuclear and pharmaceutical industries. Civic activity, social consciousness, and community responsibility are hallmarks of our town. Our mission is to prepare our students academically, emotionally, and socially to be positive forces in our town and our world. We create an environment in which our children learn to lead responsible, purposeful, and healthy lives.

East Lyme High School is the receiving district for the neighboring town of Salem. Salem's demographic is similar to East Lyme's, and they provide a K-8 educational experience for their community. Each year, approximately fifty students transition to ELHS from Salem. ELHS has a total student population of 1075 students. The collaboration between Salem Middle school, East Lyme Middle School and ELHS ensures a smooth transition to high school for students from both sending middle schools.

ELHS prides itself on its students: on their tradition of high academic performance, extraordinary engagement in clubs and athletics, and strong school spirit. ELHS has consistently been ranked in the top 2-5% of the best high schools in the state and nation by all major ranking publications. ELHS offers a wide selection of courses, including 20 Advanced Placement courses, 4 Early College Experience courses, and numerous courses with a local community college. In addition, if the school doesn't offer a specific course of interest, ELHS provides students the opportunity to take online courses through an approved vendor. Our struggling learners are supported through our Scientifically Researched Based Intervention (SRBI) program and daily support is offered to all students in mathematics and English. Time management and study skills are reinforced in mandatory structured study halls for all freshman as they make the transition to a more rigorous learning environment. Students in other grades who are not making their commitments or succeeding in their studies as evidenced by more than two Ds or an F, are required to attend structured study hall as well. All of our students are challenged to be their best selves.

The school's block schedule also supports student learning. ELHS operates on a four block rotating two-day schedule with classes running for approximately 85 minutes. All of our students and teachers share a 45 minute lunch block. The extended lunch period gives students ample time to access teachers for support, participate in extracurricular clubs, or use the media center to conduct research or complete assignments. Our students take advantage of that time to engage in both academics and extracurricular activities, which increases participation in clubs and organizations. Approximately 80% of the student population participates in either an activity or sport during the school year, increasing engagement, academic performance, and attendance. An example of how students feel about our school can be seen during Spirit Week where the school is awash in school colors and competition. Students and faculty participate enthusiastically in all five days of spirit week with a culminating pep rally that encompasses the entire school.

ELHS is also proud of its cultural, social, and academic diversity. ELHS partnered with a school in China six years ago, and since then we've invited Chinese students from our sister school to study alongside our students for the full year. We also welcome students from France and Spain for visits through our global language program. ELHS has a strong Best Buddies program and Unified sports program where peers with disabilities collaborate and compete with their non-disabled peers. ELHS Best Buddies was recognized at the national level for their efforts, and one of its members was last year's prom king. Additionally, ELHS has worked to develop a non-traditional high school (Coastal Connections) modeled after The Big Picture School in Providence RI. The focus of the program is based on individual student interests where academics and internships are melded together to create a personalized learning environment.

ELHS encourages our students towards success beyond the classroom. Our advisory program meets every two weeks with a focus on supporting students in developing their Student Success Plan. Student Success Plans are student-centered plans that engage every student, based on his or her unique interests and strengths, to understand the relevancy of education to achieve postsecondary educational and career goals. Our Advisory program, along with developmental school counseling curriculum and Freshman Academy, allows ELHS to meet guidelines set forth in the Student Success Plan initiative and provide students and faculty with outlined lessons, activities and presentations. The advisory also provides the opportunity for students to be connected with an adult in the building during their four years at the school. Specific lessons

are delivered in those small groups and periodically for the whole grade level.

Having a strong connection to our shoreline community has served ELHS students well. In return, our students have learned to be contributing members of their towns. The school has many service clubs and activities that create a school to community connection. Service clubs such as Key Club, the Leo Club, the Rotary Interact Club, Peers Reaching Out, Chikumbuso, and the National Honor Society are just a few of the organizations that provide our students the opportunity to give back to their community. Our children are prepared to be positive forces in our world.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our mission, “The ELHS experience prepares students academically, emotionally, and socially to be positive forces in the world and live responsible, purposeful, and healthy lives” is alive. With content experts and caring hearts, we meet our mission as we challenge our students with the high expectations we set for ourselves and for them. Each department, core or elective, has a part in serving the mission.

The English department is focused on answering the school’s mission by teaching students how to communicate more effectively: how to argue, defend, persuade and inform. We teach empathy and understanding of alternative perspectives by examining the lives of the characters and people who come alive in our books. We teach how to value others’ opinions through Socratic seminars, fishbowl discussions and class debates, where everyone has a voice. Students are encouraged to question the text, the teacher, each other, and their own previously held beliefs. We teach them how to use that voice effectively and how to actively listen to the voices of others. We create reflective practitioners, which in turn cultivates reflective learners. Exit slips, paper reflections, peer review all lead students to assess mastery of their objectives and goals. We challenge them to take responsibility for their own learning as they self-monitor and reflect. Critical thinking is fostered through close reading of texts, literary analysis, synthesis of research, evaluation of sources and rhetorical analysis. Responses, written or spoken, are valued for their evidence. Although we do not teach to any standardized test, we do align our curriculum to state/national/and Common Core standards. Pre and post assessments lead to supports and enrichment for our students, and student surveys provide student input which leads to improved instruction. We are guiding partners with our students who promote peace through improved communication.

The Science department created a curriculum to teach our students to think, question and communicate about our world. Using a wide variety of lab and field experiences, they challenge our students to hypothesize, test and validate their assumptions. Students are encouraged to communicate their findings by developing models, engaging in gallery walks and writing more formal written communication such as lab reports and presentations. Students are encouraged to collaborate to solve inquiry-based problems and to explore the connections between the sciences. Electives that connect to real science work and careers such as our biotechnology class which focuses almost exclusively on the lab skills needed to work in the field of biology prepare our students for work beyond the classroom. Forensics, Marine Biology, and Anatomy & Physiology also have direct links to career skills. Our curriculum is linked to local and global initiatives such as International Beach Clean-up day, Marine Bio Beach Day, Storm Water Day in East Lyme, Water Quality testing, Project Oceanography, Latimer Brook Clean-up, and regional speakers, which move our students from the laboratory to the world.

The Mathematics Department teaches students mathematical understanding coupled with procedural skill. Real world applications and discovery lessons in geometry properties, graphing techniques, and lab investigations engage students and show them practical applications for their mathematics. Students construct written responses to report, defend, and support reasoning showing connections to other disciplines and the importance of accurate communication. Student initiative is valued. Students create a list of objectives and continually self-assess their attainment. Students are in charge of their learning: they choose how many homework problems they need to do to master a concept. Flip learning, where the students view the instruction at home and practice, extend and apply with the teacher during class is another way students are put in charge of their learning. There are opportunities for students to extend learning through Moody’s Mega Math Challenge, AIME, math league team, American Mathematics Competition, AP Calculus, AP Statistics, BC Calculus. Students are encouraged to use their mathematical skills to navigate their world.

The School Counseling Curriculum, supported by our college and career program, is delivered in several ways: individual meetings, classroom school counseling curriculum, the advisory program and large group presentations. Our relationships with our students are primary as we support, teach and guide them through their four years at the high school and beyond. Programs in Advisory and classroom lessons help students

grow both socially and emotionally as time management, study skills, interpersonal relationships, academic achievement and interpersonal relationships are addressed. Eight parent nights along with a quarterly counseling newsletter and countless phone conversations and case reviews, establish and maintain our partnership with our parents, which leads to the success of our students.

The Social Studies department at East Lyme High School is committed to a curricular approach that compels students to confront the past, engage with the present, and make predictions about, and prepare for the future. Our curriculum is aligned to the Connecticut Social Studies Frameworks that are informed by both the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies and the Common Core State Standards. Our program supports the acquisition of foundational skills through classroom experiences that promote experiential learning which encourage and motivate our students to become informed, active, and responsible citizens. As teachers, we seek to create classroom experiences that nurture curiosity, promote collaboration, demand critical thinking, and inspire informed action. We are guided by the process of inquiry as is evident by the experiences that we encourage our students to participate in. Students conduct research in order to grow as readers and writers, hone their public speaking skills, and refine their ability to communicate by collaborating with others. They analyze primary sources, political cartoons, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, and video to build their historical literacy and thinking skills. Students are encouraged to attend local board and committee meetings, political debates, and other public events and presentations. Classes participate in anthropological digs, compete in local and national Model Congress and Model U.N. events, and broaden their worldview with service based learning initiatives like the Chikumbuso Women and Orphans project. In sum, all of us take seriously our role in preparing students to be positive forces in the world.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The arts, visual and performing, global language, physical education, health and nutrition, technology education, and family and consumer science education, are an integral part of an East Lyme High School education, helping us to create our Renaissance students. All students participate in our classes where they get to perform hands-on problem-based work whether they are creating a stock portfolio, throwing a pot, catering a luncheon, or practicing CPR. They learn essential life skills that enrich their lives physically, mentally and spiritually as they move, perform, communicate and create.

As with all our curriculum, state and national standards drive our arts curriculum. Our work in the arts is based in research and steeped in application. Students illustrate graphic novels and design marketing advertisements. They mold and fire clay into bowls to feed the hungry as well as beautify town buildings with their painting. Collaboration is key as products are designed and executed: furniture, machines, engines. At ELHS Viking Printing, a student-run graphic design business, students learn how to design, produce, distribute, market, sell and serve their customers as well as turn a profit. Annually ELHS students exhibit their work and place in state competitions, go on to national level, receive scholarships and awards of recognition.

Our music classes focus on music literacy and the aesthetic experience. We try to create an experience for the students that is not only enjoyable but memorable and meaningful so that they want to continue playing, singing, writing, and appreciating music once they graduate from East Lyme High School. We focus on the skills necessary to read music, interpret aspects of a score and formulate a rehearsal/practice strategy so our students are able to continue playing, singing, writing and appreciating music for the rest of their lives. Students not only perform music, they create original compositions. They study music theory and perform in ensembles of different sizes and skill levels: a capella groups, jazz band, chamber groups. Student composers, section leaders, and conductors foster leadership as these cooperative learning groups make music together. We offer concert band, marching band, choirs and orchestra to all. Concerts, musicals, and competitions showcase our students. Students with varying academic backgrounds unify to highlight award-recognized talent: high acceptance into Regional, New England and All-State music festivals; consistent gold or platinum ratings at Great Adjudication Festivals.

Physical Education classes teach our students how to live long and active lives. We begin with Freshman Academy, which helps our students transition from the middle school and motivates them to promote and

enhance their lifelong physical and mental wellness. Our courses develop skills and knowledge in individual active life, team sports, and physical training. Students learn and understand the involvement of anatomy, physiology, and kinesiology pertaining to their personalized training routines. Our Project Adventure ROPES Course emphasizes team building, develops trust, cooperation, individual growth, lifetime fitness and wilderness survival techniques. Our swimming classes ensure safety in and on the water for this ocean front town. Yoga and meditation teach our students how to balance their lives, and health education teaches them how to be their best physical selves as classes focus on substance abuse, mental health, sex education, nutrition, CPR and First Aid. Outside of the classroom, we are blessed with committed and talented coaches, winning sports teams and a high participation rate. All of this supports students in their ability to learn and grow.

Global Language classes, governed by national standards, focus on teaching our students how to communicate in our world, to be culturally sensitive and to be aware of life beyond our boundaries. All grades participate in our program which offers a choice of four languages: Latin, German, Spanish and French. Each language may be studied for four years. Classes in French and Spanish continue to a fifth year, which includes Advanced Placement and UConn Early College Experience Courses. Through their global language studies, our students increase their understanding of other cultures and are better prepared for the global workplace. Students participate in cultural exchange programs with schools in Barcelona and Paris, and have the opportunity to apply their knowledge during many international field trips. By allowing students to work with real-life tasks in class, students build their proficiency levels over the four years of study so that they can use their languages throughout their lives both professionally and personally in our global society.

Technology instruction is embedded throughout all our classes, core and elective. Vernier probes in Science, Voice Record Pro in Global Language, Webquests in Social Studies, Storybird in English, and a Prezi in Speech class are just a sampling of the technologies students learn and practice. Classes specific to technology instruction offer students real world skills and include a variety of courses including 3D Printing & Design, Web Design, Computer Applications, Digital Film, Video Productions, Morning News Show, Animation, Engineering, Furniture and Woodworking, Architectural Drafting and C.A.D. Students annually participate in the Congressional App Challenge Competition and various video and short film competitions, winning many awards. Students design and race cardboard boats as they challenge the laws of physics. Students entertain and inform the school through a daily student produced morning show and create award-winning digital PSAs. A robotics team is currently being developed in collaboration with a neighboring town. Our courses mirror real-life work, design, and production in current industry and focus on hands-on learning and critical thinking skills.

Family and Consumer Science Education classes foster real world skills; students learn to design, create, cook, and care. With its child development lab, the community's young children come to learn and play, and our students learn to teach and parent. Using our state of the art commercial kitchen, learned job skills such as hospitality and cooking are practiced as our students cater community events and learn how to feed themselves and others. Our entrepreneurial class inspires students to grow their own business, while our WISE classes encourage students to explore their passion and to create their own learning plan.

Our elective program is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all our students. Art, Physical Education, Music and Family and Consumer Science all offer our students the opportunity to work directly with students who have special needs. They create, perform, serve, learn, move and work together to the benefit of all.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

East Lyme High School (ELHS) employs varied instructional methods to ensure high levels of student learning across the disciplines. From flipped classroom models, discovery lessons, and real life applications in mathematics to hands-on exploration and field work in science, the methods often mimic what one would use in the field of the discipline. In English, discourse begins with student-generated questions based on their interpretation of rigorous text. Often online classroom discussions, spurred by thought-provoking essential questions, lead to rich discourse in Socratic seminars. In Civics, teachers facilitate student-led

learning by allowing for self-selected research and debate topics. Teachers, passionate about their disciplines, share the philosophy that enthusiasm and clear enduring understandings need to be woven into each lesson.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

As teachers, administrators and staff at ELHS, we care for our students and for each other, and in return enjoy success and each other's company. Students' uniqueness is validated and supported whether they are learning in our classrooms, chatting in our hallways, sharing a common lunch or playing on our fields. We celebrate together with performances, extravaganzas, Spirit Week, exhibitions, and honor ceremonies, and we only work harder together when we fall short of our ideals. Our climate is exhibited in held doors, unprompted thank you's, and people who stand with and behind us. We design programs and systems to support our climate of belonging.

This year the faculty presented a REACH matrix for positive behaviors to our student body. Our REACH matrix defines positive behaviors that exemplify our school values of Responsibility, Empathy, Achievement, Collaboration, and Honesty. Assemblies, posters and videos model these positive behaviors and celebrate what makes ELHS great. All stakeholders are challenged to be their best. Teachers have incorporated these values into their lessons, and there are school-wide support structures in place that are aligned with REACH (e.g., SRBI, structured study hall, Advisory) which promote academic, social and emotional growth.

School counselors are connected to our students and their families by following each of their students through their four year high school career. Individual meetings with counselors and students take place several times yearly, for scheduling purposes, college and career planning, and often on demand. Counselors are part of a team that connects students with transition support and additional resources to support their goals, IEPs and 504 plans. As case managers for students with 504 plans, the counselors are responsible to maintain documentation, be in contact with the family, and revisit the plan yearly in order to uphold the most beneficial accommodations. In addition to six school counselors, ELHS has two school psychologists, two social workers, and a Drug and Alcohol counselor who support our students' emotional well-being on a daily basis and work as partners with our teachers and administration.

Our students are open to learning and challenged to meet high expectations because they are valued and understood. Even when they are not quite ready to work for themselves, they often first do it for a teacher who cares for them. They are motivated by adults who understand who they are and who offer them appropriate choices. With 32 available blocks to fill in a high school career, our students need 25 credits to graduate and the varied elective course selection affords them the ability to personalize their learning. An individual Student Success Plan designed and supported in our bi-weekly advisory program pairs a faculty member with each student for the four years of high school and leads students to their self-selected goals.

As teachers we feel uniquely valued and supported by the success of our students. When they succeed, we are validated. We recognize successes and losses for each other and are united as a team. We work together as we create lessons, tweak assessments, and share student histories. We share our lives and our space with our colleagues. Our administration respects us as professionals and includes us in decisions that concern our children. We also are supported in our personal lives by our leadership team as they help us through life's challenges. Teachers engage in professional development that focuses on new learning and refinement of our craft. Even our ELTA supports teachers by fostering that camaraderie. We flip pancakes at monthly breakfasts, challenge other departments at bowling and work together to fund scholarship programs. New teachers to ELHS learn our mission, our high expectations, procedures, and commitment to our students alongside a mentor as they participate in monthly New Teacher Meetings. Together we create a climate of support and success.

Our connections with our students and each other, help us to meet our challenges and exceed our goals.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The East Lyme and Salem communities are very supportive of the high school programs and both formally and informally support the students in their academics, athletics and performing arts. Town civic organizations, including the Rotary and Lions Clubs, work with student clubs to provide community service opportunities and student recognition. East Lyme Youth Services works with a student advisory board within the school and also involves parents, school personnel, and community members in its Youth Coalition. Our students, through their classes and extracurricular activities, volunteer their time to raise awareness and support many community groups.

Parents are involved with sports teams and clubs through active parent booster groups that support the students through fundraisers and team building events. Additionally, parents and community members are involved in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) committee. Courses, such as WISE (an individualized, experiential classroom opportunity) and Human Development allow students to work with members of the community to learn about or to work with professionals in their area of interest.

The faculty and administration of East Lyme High School communicate with students and parents in a wide variety of ways. Academic information is shared through the Student Information System, Infinite Campus where parents and students can view live data about grades and attendance. Infinite Campus also allows teachers to directly email parents and to post course information. Teachers also use Google Classroom, which provides access to and information about homework and assignments.

All students and parents also have access to Naviance which provides them with college and career tools, including career interest and learning style inventories, as well as information about colleges and careers to help with post-secondary planning. Naviance is also used to post information relevant to post-secondary planning, and teachers and counselors use it to email information and announcements to parents and students.

The counseling office publishes and emails a quarterly newsletter that provides parents with information about upcoming parent nights, standardized testing, scheduling, college and career visits and opportunities. Parent nights are held seven times throughout the year to provide parents with transition support, college and career planning information, financial aid and financing college support. The counseling office develops handouts and brochures to assist families through the high school and college application process. The counseling office also provides information to parents via email and through Facebook and Twitter.

Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers and counselors to discuss academic progress, course selection, or post-secondary planning. Additionally, parents or teachers can request a case review meeting with all teachers to review the student's progress. During senior year, parents are informed of and included in meetings when there is any concern about a student's progress toward graduation. Parents are also kept informed, via Infinite Campus and letters home, of student attendance.

3. Professional Development:

East Lyme professional development is built on a three tiered system, including district, building and individual professional learning opportunities. We provide all of our educators different and diverse professional experiences, whereby their growth will have a positive impact on student achievement. Student learning results are dependent on the continual learning of teachers, therefore by focusing on teachers' professional growth ultimately contributes to students' academic and social/emotional success.

The district establishes a long range plan that articulates key components for reaching our goals. Teachers, administrators, parents, Board of Education members and parents take part in developing that long range plan. Building administrators, such as the high school, work with their leadership teams to develop building based goals that are aligned with the district's long range plan. Through their evaluation and professional growth plan, teachers in the building develop their personal goals to align with the building based goals, as well as, focus on their own personal developmental needs.

The high school leadership team divided the professional development days into three functions. The administrators identified specific days to deliver whole school professional development, departments have specific days throughout the year for department focused professional learning and there are opportunities for teachers to seek personalized learning as well.

The high school provides professional learning around the content and skills necessary for all teachers to be able to meet the building based goals. For example, the high school has been focusing on curriculum development, unit development and common assessments. We have provided outside presenters and teachers within our own school to deliver the professional development to build capacity within our faculty. The departments have identified content and department specific needs that will be supported during the year. For example, the Global Language and science departments provided professional learning around inquiry-based learning; moving the responsibility of learning content from the teacher to the student.

All teachers have the opportunity to focus on their individual learning needs. We have teachers attend College Board Advanced Placement professional development to learn how best to challenge our students. ELHS also offers a professional development day called Edcamp where our own teachers offer workshops to their colleagues around topics that they have an in-depth knowledge base. Those topics range from understanding and supporting the emotional well-being of students to technology training. In addition, ELHS has implemented a peer observation program where teachers can observe their colleagues teach then process out what they experience with the teacher they observed. We are also fortunate to have a Reading specialist on staff that provides individual professional learning and group professional development on how to incorporate reading instruction into lessons.

All of these learning opportunities have a direct positive impact on building teacher capacity in the school. As teacher develop their skills and content knowledge their ability to support students increases thus having a positive effect on student learning.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of ELHS is one of collaboration and shared leadership. The high school leadership is composed of a principal, two in-house assistant principals and a third assistant principal who is in charge of our off site non-traditional high school. The leadership team expands to include our Curriculum Instructional Leaders (CILs) which is comprised of teacher leaders in 10 curricular areas. CILs lead individual departments, create and monitor curriculum, assist in the hiring process, schedule classes, classrooms and teachers, and create department budgets. There is a Curriculum Intervention Specialist who works with the high school and central office to develop the curricular framework as well as support the development and implementation of curriculum. The high school is supported by a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Manager, Director of Pupil Services, a Special Education Coordinator, and Facilities Manager.

Collaboration and shared leadership are the cornerstone of success as a school community. The administrative team meets weekly with the CILs to discuss items that directly relate to supporting student learning and providing the best learning environment for our students and faculty. In addition, the principal and assistant principals take part in the bi-weekly department meeting to ensure they understand the wants and needs of the departments.

In addition to the administrators and the CILs, there are many other teachers who step up to take on leadership roles in the building. The old saying it takes a village would be an appropriate description of our faculty. For example, during the principal's first year at ELHS, he asked for volunteers to sit on a Program Review Committee. The faculty had just finished their 10 year NEASC visit, and they were exhausted with committee work. However, as a show of the dedication, collaboration and shared leadership, 30 faculty members volunteered to be part of the committee with a few leading some of the sub-committees. The school is now planning for what we want the school to look like in the future; 26 faculty members volunteered for a committee to develop that plan as well.

ELHS is very fortunate to have teachers and administrators working collaboratively to provide the best

educational environment for our students. We have multiple teacher-led committees such as the School Climate Committee, 5 year Planning Committee, Data Team, Technology Committee, Google Classroom Integration Committee, and SRBI that help share our school and prepare our students for success. ELHS has a strong Student Senate who have a voice in the leadership decision-making process. When the 5 Year Planning Committee recommended a schedule change with which the students disagreed, they drafted a proposal, presented it to the principal who, in turn, presented it to the committee. The students' voices were heard, and their proposal was selected.

ELHS believes in collaboration and shared leadership to provide the best learning environment for our students. By working together we can make better decisions to educate our students.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

There are a variety of academic, assessment related, and socio-emotional practices employed at East Lyme High School that make our school community a unique and successful educational institution.

Academically, students are offered an extensive array of opportunities that promote real world experiences and push them to pursue and strengthen their talents. Our students produce and distribute an award-winning student newspaper the (Viking Saga), conduct anthropological digs, run a print business (Viking Printing), create musical scores, produce short-films, write proposal papers, design and race cardboard boats, make clothing, clean beaches, conduct experiments, and read, write, and speak in four different languages. Additionally, multiple methods of assessment are used to reinforce the importance of the real world application of skills. Students exhibit their work at fashion and arts expos, test models they make, participate in self and peer evaluations, present and seek support for bills they write, and perform in concerts both at school and in the surrounding communities. Teachers work in professional learning communities (PLCs) to collaborate on curriculum, unit plans, common assessments, and to discuss student growth. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to “walk-through” each other’s classrooms to share ideas and build professional capacity. Teachers collaborate across curricular areas to create school-wide learning experiences, such as our Veterans Day and Holiday Extravaganza assemblies that feature contributions from multiple academic areas, student musical performances, and original artwork.

ELHS benefits from a caring and dedicated staff committed to ensuring that our school is a place where all students can learn and achieve. Teachers use scientific-research based interventions (SRBI program) to support students who struggle with executive functioning and behavioral issues in the classroom. The STAR Reading and Reading Plus programs help to promote and advance school literacy goals. Coastal Connections, our nontraditional high school experience offers students the chance to learn in a small, supportive atmosphere while focusing on interest based learning opportunities and internships with local businesses. The therapeutic, special needs, TAP, and ABA programs all help to meet the individual educational needs of our diverse student body. Additionally, academic expectations are communicated clearly to both students and parents through the consistent use of technological platforms like Infinite Campus and Google Classroom.

ELHS benefits from an “open campus” environment that promotes a culture of respect and academic responsibility. Students head to the next class in their schedule because it is time, not because a bell rang. In the middle of the school day, there is one long lunch wave (45 minutes) where the entire school eats, socializes, attends to club business, and receives or delivers extra instruction or help. During study-halls, academic support is available to students in the areas of English and Mathematics, and our student-study center provides additional tutoring in mathematics and support services for English language learners. Students can also visit the Library Media Center during their study halls for a variety of additional academic, technological, and career-planning supports. Positive behaviors and school climate are promoted through the Student-of-the-Month program and our REACH (Responsibility, Empathy, Achievement, Collaboration, and Honesty) initiative that enunciates expectations for student behaviors in the hall, classroom, or as an audience member.

ELHS is proud of a variety of practices that support the social and emotional well-being of its student population, and the overall climate of our school, so that all of our students can achieve academic success. Our advisory program matches students with a faculty mentor for all four years of their stay at ELHS. The advisory program is designed to support students as they move towards graduation both with academic planning, problem-solving, and lessons about emotional health and well-being. The advisory program is reinforced by a counseling department curriculum that addresses time management, study skills, academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and supports students as they transition to college and career. Additionally, ELHS has a caring and dedicated support staff that includes school psychologists, social workers, and a drug-counselor. The school community has sponsored several activities that confront and raise awareness of contemporary issues important to the social and mental well-being of our students including substance abuse, safe-driving, bullying, and tolerance. Student organizations like Peers Reaching Out and Best Buddies promote school spirit and a positive climate, and multiple student organizations

(National Honor Society, French Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Rotary, Key Club, and Leo Club among others) are dedicated to community service and civic involvement and engagement.

ELHS is certainly committed to supporting the whole student for academic success.