

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Cheryll D. Skaggs

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

Official School Name Brunswick County Early College High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address PO Box 30

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

City Supply      State NC      Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28462-0000

County North Carolina (NC)

Telephone (910) 754-8565      Fax (910) 754-8567

Web site/URL http://www.bcswan.net/ECHS      E-mail skac@bcswan.net

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. Leslie (Les) Tubb      E-mail ltubb@bcswan.net  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Brunswick County School District      Tel. (910) 253-2900

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. Ed Lemon  
(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

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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

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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):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 19 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	36	61	97
10	35	37	72
11	25	41	66
12 or higher	55	58	113
<b>Total Students</b>	151	197	348

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 8 % Black or African American
  - 15 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 70 % White
  - 5 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 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	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	319
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.022
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %  
1 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 38 %  
Total number students who qualify: 129

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
- 1 Orthopedic Impairment
- 2 Other Health Impaired
- 0 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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 26:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	100%	99%	100%	100%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	60
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	80%
Enrolled in a community college	8%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	8%
Joined the military or other public service	3%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.  
Yes \_ No X

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.

To provide rigorous, relevant curriculum and academic, relational supports necessary for students to earn their High School Diploma and an Associate's Degree in 4-5 years.

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

Brunswick County Early College High School is a five-year school of choice. Under North Carolina Cooperative Innovative High School (CIHS) legislation, only 100 students may be accepted per grade level. Students apply in the 8th grade for admittance into the 9th grade, and small number of student transfer applications are accepted in grades 10 – 13 depending on the alignment of the student’s past coursework with the sequence of coursework required by Brunswick County Early College High School and our partner institution, Brunswick Community College.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Brunswick County Early College High School (BCECHS) students are members of a small, student-centered academic community where they may earn both their high school diploma and an Associate's Degree or up to two years of transferable credit in four or five years. The students value this nontraditional setting where they must rise to meet new challenges and be willing to abandon old habits. The Firebird, chosen as the school mascot by the first freshmen class, symbolizes this cycle of renewal.

The student body represents the diverse economy, culture, and geography of Brunswick County. Most students attending BCECHS will be the first in their families to complete a college degree; however, parents with advanced degrees are also well represented. Students from all district middle schools, various home schools, private and charter schools attend BCECHS; therefore, every community is represented.

The size of Brunswick County presents a challenge in that many students are unaware of the employment or cultural opportunities available in other parts of the county. Also, students may have bus rides up to two hours in length making after-school activities difficult to accomplish. Therefore, the school incorporates field experiences and business partnerships to expose students to career pathways or employment. Economic challenges for many students have prompted the school to provide school supplies, toiletries, clothing, and waivers for technology or field trip fees as needs arise.

Since opening in 2006, BCECHS has grown from a faculty of 8 serving 87 students to a faculty of 18 serving 342 students. In 2009 all classes and offices were moved to one building on the college campus after being housed in multiple buildings for three years. Two principals have served the school with the current principal serving as assistant principal for four years prior to becoming principal, and four original faculty members remain on staff.

The educational philosophy of BCECHS is demonstrated by developing the following attributes, both student to student and teacher to student:

Respect - Appreciating the similarities and differences between one's self and others and recognizing the importance of valuing one's environment

Relationships - Building a foundation that fosters growth, success, and accomplishments throughout life

Responsibility - Taking ownership of one's actions regardless of the consequences

Rigor - Incorporating high expectations for all students in all classes

Relevancy - Linking classroom experiences to real world applications to enhance understanding

This is created through the collaborative efforts of students, teachers, parents/guardians, businesses, communities, and Brunswick Community College (BCC). It results in more effective classroom practices because students are focused on learning.

Students complete most high school courses during the 9th – 10th grades and predominantly take college classes in the 11th – 13th grades, taking their first college class in 10th grade. Several strategies are used to encourage and challenge all students to reach their full potential. Freshmen take Special Interest Writing and Freshman Success which were designed by BCECHS faculty to increase student skills in writing, editing, time management, organization and soft skills such as self-advocacy and self-motivation. Data reflects that these courses are instrumental in providing students with the foundation to pass the college placement exam and to succeed in high school and college courses. Grade-level seminar meets weekly to provide relational and academic support such as transitioning from middle to high school or high school to college and career. Teachers loop with students to build stronger relationships. To further assist all students in being successful, mid-day is divided into three thirty-minute segments of Smart Lunch and Study Hall where students are provided targeted assistance and a quiet space to work. Additionally, as a North Carolina STEM School of Distinction, STEM initiatives are integrated into daily practices.

In keeping with the school motto, "Success Is Our Tradition," BCECHS' purpose is to prepare life-long learners for success in the competitive global market place. Systemic practices that support this educational

philosophy include structured collaborative groups, protocols to focus group discussions, incorporating the engineering design process to solve real-world problems, writing in all classes, problem-based and project-based learning. Students are expected to create quality products through multiple avenues such as labs, presentations, or artistic representations. Historical data provides evidence that these practices produce an extraordinary number of honor students and high school and college completers. The Niche Report has placed BCECHS in the top 18 North Carolina public high schools twice in the past three years.

One key strategy used to develop student leadership is student-led clubs that must incorporate elements that embody the purpose of the school. To encourage leadership through civic engagement, students are required to earn ten hours of community service per month. As students progress through grade levels, community service is expected to become more advanced. Fridays are uniquely scheduled to support both: on alternating Fridays students report to community service rather than campus; the opposite Friday students report to clubs after lunch until dismissal.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

Brunswick Early College High School teachers use the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and Essential Standards as well as Brunswick County Schools' pacing guides to drive backward planning and to write goals and objectives. The English department ensures students receive foundational skills necessary for college-level coursework by providing rigorous, research based instruction following the NCSOS. NCSOS standards focus on reading, writing, and speaking skill development to ensure that students are equipped to communicate in a variety of settings. Every English course requires research papers, each one for different audiences so that students develop research, analytical writing, and technical skills that contribute to success in college classes and life after high school. Students take a faculty-created course called Special Interest Writing (SIW), designed to support developing academic writing skills such as writing thesis statements, developing credible arguments, and reading comprehension and analysis. In English I, students continue to develop writing skills through focused study on literary terms application and strategies for analytical writing and public speaking skills through a persuasive speech.

In mathematics, teachers follow the NCSOS to design methods for students to acquire knowledge in the many formats they will learn in college classes. They also learn self-advocacy methods designed to help them learn to teach themselves, a skill critical to success within today's workforce. Students are required rewrite missed test questions to reinforce weaker skills. Two math tutors provide specialized support for students. One math teacher has a period specifically to allow students in higher level math classes to receive help; she also helps them learn to advocate for themselves with their college instructors.

Students in science courses gain text analysis skills through research projects, content-specific articles, and literacy projects. Writing skills are supported through research projects. Students learn to work independently through self-paced activities, learn organization through lab journals, and learn to advocate for their own learning through activities that require students to explain and question the work. One teacher utilizes the modeling pedagogy, through which students construct and use scientific models to describe, explain, and predict physical phenomena to acquire foundational skills related to science through data collection and analysis. To best meet the students' needs, courses using the modeling pedagogy do not follow the county pacing guides, but all accomplish the NCSCOS Essential Standards.

In social studies, students are made civically aware of current events through a weekly discussion where students provide articles and contribute to a whole group discussion to analyze how international events impact American society, as well as individuals in their own community. Students practice primary source analysis to elicit critical thinking and thorough analysis. Students who completed American history received the opportunity to go to Washington, DC for the 2017 Inauguration, which gave students the unique opportunity to witness democracy in action. The NCSOS focused pacing guide directs the course's lesson plans so that students are prepared to use facts to support the skills necessary for success, which include essay writing, non-fiction text comprehension, document based question analysis, and research. Because of these focused skill practices, students are particularly successful in their college courses.

Students acquire foundational skills in each core curriculum area. For example, college classes are offered for all students. Students participate in authentic venues such as STEM Speaks, Career Day, Interview Day, and field experiences to local industries to interview engineers. In each of the aforementioned events, students are required to both present themselves as college-ready individuals and as professionals in careers varying from STEM fields to the service industry. Including graduation project and grade-level seminar presentations on community service projects, every student is afforded regular opportunities to make presentations to authentic audiences.

BCECHS students earned 51 BCC Associate Degrees by 53 students in 2014, 75 earned by 74 students in 2015, and 66 earned by 60 students in 2016. Some students earned both an Associate of Science and Associate of Arts degrees. Many students earn recognition on the BCC Dean's List, Honor Roll, or President's List; in the 2015-2016 school year, 41% of juniors, seniors and graduates earned one of these

awards. Students take a minimum of 12 credit hours to be eligible for Dean's List and Honor Roll or a minimum of 6-12 credit hours to be eligible for President's List.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Other curriculum areas offered by Brunswick County Early College High include classes and activities that support essential skills necessary for higher education and career readiness. Every freshman is enrolled in Freshmen Success which is a year-long class that meets daily. The course focuses on academic and study skills students need to be successful in a college environment. The teacher concentrates on building foundational skill sets such as critical thinking and reading, time management, writing, article annotation and study skills. Every sophomore is assigned to Sophomore Success every day, which provides focused study time for the students as they are enrolled in their first college course. This time is also used for sophomores to prepare for the ACT test using the online platform Method Test Prep.

Seminar is a grade-level specific class that meets once per week for approximately an hour and is designed to foster social and emotional support while encouraging strong support bonds between students and teachers. Students in Seminar work on STEM projects like Design Challenge that encourages team building/collaboration and solve real-world problems using the Engineer Design Process. Activities are prepared to address the social/emotional needs of the age group in engaging and informative ways.

Jumpstart is a two day program scheduled for the first two days of each new school year for freshmen. Students attend sessions on the annotation process, advanced Google search tools, Cornell Note taking, and test-taking strategies. Math and English pretesting is done during that time to determine each student's proficiency level. Data from testing is reviewed and students are scheduled to attend tutoring that utilizes proven strategies that addresses their specific deficient areas.

Spanish is offered for students in grades 10 – 13. Spanish I meets daily first semester and Spanish II meets daily second semester of the same year. This course fulfills a high school graduation requirement and also provides critical scaffolding for students who plan to enroll in Spanish at the community college. Course curriculum is determined by the North Carolina Essential Standards and pacing is outlined by the Brunswick County School pacing guide for Spanish.

Foreign language, physical education/health and nutrition, and technology courses are offered through Brunswick Community College as dual enrollment courses taught and managed by BCC instructors. Essential skills are outlined in the college curriculums and support the academic requirements for these courses. Students at BCECHS may take any seated course at Brunswick Community College that fulfills degree requirements for the Associates of Arts or Associates of Science. College courses meet for one semester each and may meet daily or two days a week as determined by the college curriculum.

While Brunswick County Early College High School does not offer formal classes in the arts, there are multiple opportunities for students to participate in visual art, photography, film production, dance ensemble, instrumental music and vocal music throughout the year. Each of these groups meet on club Fridays or after school and many of the students participate in the arts segments of the North Carolina Scholastic Cup competitions as well as district events offered for all high schools. Students may also enroll in music and art courses at Brunswick Community College, which would meet two days a week for one semester.

Additional opportunities for learning include outside experiences for students that are connected to curricular areas. All students are taken on a college field trip each year to expose them to institutions of higher learning, the college environment, and to provide them the opportunity to ask college personnel about course offerings in a variety of degree areas. Field trips/field studies are another integral part of the school as they are chosen for expanding the knowledge of students in social, career, or content reinforcing areas including those that expose them to historical events, STEM careers, or how to apply strategies learned within the classroom. Additional opportunities to support the academic and career knowledge of students is the club Girls who Code club that focuses on encouraging females to enter careers utilizing code thereby reducing the disparity in the gender gap in these fields.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Brunswick County Early College High School implements multiple research-based methods to support student success in a rigorous educational environment. The Common Instruction Framework encompasses many approaches used by the teachers to ensure high levels of learning and achievement for students of all skill levels. These include classroom talk, scaffolding, questioning, collaborative groups, literacy groups, and writing to learn. Problem-based learning, presentations, and other authentic assessments give students an opportunity for differentiated outcomes, to engage in peer assessment, and to use higher-order thinking skills. Teachers intersperse these assessments with more traditional assessments to gain a broad perspective of their students' level of content mastery.

Students collaborate on a daily basis at BCECHS. This provides opportunities for differentiation through the use of structured roles that often match the student's learning style. Collaborative groups also allow students to freely share ideas, notes, and process what they are learning in each class. Many students have mentioned that this approach improves their overall understanding because they are able to learn visually, auditory, and kinesthetically.

Rubrics are used school-wide to communicate expectations, grading criteria, and further student ownership, thereby providing differentiated learning opportunities. Differentiation is also evident when teachers provide assignment choice. For example, one assessment for Fahrenheit 451 permitted students to choose between creating an individual detailed book jacket or collaboratively creating a movie trailer to demonstrate synthesis of character and plot development and application of knowledge.

Scaffolding is a key component at the Early College and can be seen from the variety of resources provided to all students. Students that are first-generation may not have academic assistance at home, and staff at the Early College focus on bridging those gaps in their skills through Smart Lunch tutoring, peer tutoring and student conferencing. During the first week of school, freshmen students are involved in "Jump Start," which focuses on reinforcing skills such as note taking, annotation, and collaboration. The faculty knows that each student's situation is different and works to differentiate for each unique student need.

Technology is used school wide to increase the critical thinking and problem solving skills that are used daily in the classrooms, both alone and collaboratively. Teachers provide their students online platforms to take notes, review for tests, give formative assessments, research and communicate with teachers and other students. Teachers at BCECHS use multiple platforms including Edmodo and Google Classroom to allow students to work collaboratively on group projects outside of school. Teachers also use video as a "flipped classroom" strategy for students to gain prior knowledge before they learn new content. The school has a 1:1 iPad initiative for all freshmen and sophomores as well as lap top and iPad carts for every department of the school. This enables all students with equal access to technology. Students who do not have internet access at home may download information at school to complete assignments on the iPads at home. They then submit the work when they return to school.

Using data driven decisions the faculty continues to improve lesson plans through reflection and analysis as well as by utilizing scaffolding, extension, problem-based learning, and both individual and group presentations to meet the unique needs of students, both high and low achieving. Throughout the course of five years students will work with a variety of peers, teachers, and professionals to increase their skills and knowledge. Students at BCECHS consistently score higher than the state and national average on the ACT and SAT tests, which is in part attributed to the use of tools such as Method Test Prep. 2015-2016 data shows that BCECHS students' ACT Composition score of 23.8% was in the top 5% of the state. Not only do student grades and test scores show growth and excel expectations, BCECHS maintains a commitment to continued improvement in our teaching and learning for the students served by the school.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

A supportive family environment focused on the “5 R’s,” respect, relationships, responsibility, relevancy, and rigor, is recognized by parents, students, and faculty as the school’s foundation. Students become invested in their education when their voices make a difference. Each quarter all students provide feedback on school climate and student supports, which the principal uses to introduce changes to school practices. The Student Advisory Council, comprised of seminar representatives, regularly meets with the principal; and both administrators offer an open-door policy to students, parents, and staff. Student privileges increase with each grade level. Privileges foster trust between school administrators and students and motivate students to achieve high academic and behavioral standards. During the first three days of school, freshmen engage in activities designed to reduce the anxiety of transitioning to a rigorous high school, to frontload tools for success, and to build relationships. Very low discipline rates and very high success rates in high school and college courses, state exams, SAT and ACT tests provide evidence of student engagement and motivation.

Grade-level seminar fosters the emotional and social development of students through fun, meaningful, developmentally appropriate activities that create strong bonds with the teacher and within the student peer group. Furthermore, teachers find value and feel valued through these same relationships.

Seminar provides additional engaging experiences through real-world problem solving incorporating Design Challenge techniques. Students take the lead in determining what need to address. They support one another and the community in various ways such as placing toiletry baskets in restrooms, providing motivational notes on lockers, organizing food drives, and promoting physical activity.

Students report that the best cross-grade level relationships are through club involvement. Club members participate in school, district and regional events in fine arts, Quiz Bowl, Science Olympiad, among others. Chess, yearbook, prom, photography, film, fitness, and sports clubs fulfill personal motivational needs and support the school culture as a whole. Teachers sponsor clubs they enjoy, which nurtures a positive environment for both students and faculty. Positive behavior supports are incorporated through quarterly activities like dodge ball, ice-cream socials, winter and spring celebrations.

The school culture creates an environment where teachers feel valued and supported by parents, students, and administration through mutual respect, positive relationships, collaboration and open communication. The teacher voice is critical to school-based decisions regarding duties, finances, scheduling and more. Teachers are encouraged to pursue classroom initiatives and leadership roles within the school and beyond.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Consistent communication with parents provides the most effective link to student success at BCECHS. Held the week school begins, a parent meeting and open house provide parents and students valuable information and opportunities to connect with faculty. Teachers, parents and students regularly communicate via e mail, phone, Google Classroom or Edmodo. Progress reports are sent home every three weeks, and teachers are required to make phone or email contact with the parents of all students whose grade is a “D” or “F” on the progress report. Parents and students also have access to their grades through Power School. Student-led conferences are required for any student earning a grade below “C” in any course at any time during the semester. Conferences provide an opportunity for parents, teachers, the counselor, and the student explore strategies for improvement. An interpreter is available to translate all documents into the native language of parents with limited English skills.

To support families in preparing for college and career, the counselor meets individually with every student during first semester and with each student and a parent at the beginning of second semester. These advisory meetings are valuable in assisting students, especially first-generation college, in understanding course and college requirements as well as post-graduate options.

Parents have the opportunity to participate in the school parent association (WINGS), the Parent Advisory Council, or the School Improvement Team, and as volunteers. Each area provides support to BCECHS in a variety of ways, including monetarily, relationship-building activities, school decision making, and volunteering for school or classroom events.

BCECHS is fortunate to have strong community partnerships that provide students with exposure to career pathways, STEM experiences, and civic engagement that strengthen college applications and guidance for career choices. Examples of strong partnerships include, but are not limited to, industry field trips, sponsorships for the Science Olympiad and Engineering clubs, guest speakers, Career Day presenters, Interview Day facilitators, Rotary and Kiwanis Club, Teen Court and the various schools and businesses that sponsor student community service and volunteer hours. Brunswick Community College is extremely supportive of BCECHS, providing space, instruction, and affective supports for students. The college liaison periodically organizes meetings for college and high school instructors to discuss curriculum alignment, and the high school counselor serves on the BCC Academic Services Committee. Each partnership furthers the school purpose and educational philosophy to prepare life-long learners for success in the competitive global market place.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Brunswick County Early College High School has a unique schedule dedicating two Fridays each month to professional development and collaboration. The school has autonomy in selecting professional development that focuses exclusively on the individual needs of our students, teachers and administrators. The greatest identified challenge is providing rigorous instruction while also correcting fundamental skill deficits and providing for the social and emotional needs of a diverse student body. Therefore, each year the school improvement team analyzes student data to identify both academic and affective professional development opportunities.

Contracted coaches provide training in instructional strategies that utilize the Common Instructional Framework, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and Webb's Depth of Knowledge. These are used to collaboratively plan instruction that provides scaffolding and supports college-ready skills. Teachers are encouraged to train colleagues in various strategies or initiatives, such as technology and the engineering design process. Through Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) teachers use data to analyze the effectiveness of training on student work and to formulate strategies that increase rigor and produce college and career-ready students. The faculty is trained in Critical Friends and Instructional Rounds which are used to develop strong instructional practices and subsequently analyze their effect on student success.

Teachers attend workshops on Learning Focused Lessons in alignment with the district instructional improvement plan. Teacher and student performance data indicates that this planning framework increases effective instruction and student success. District instructional coaches identify areas for growth in content areas and provide training and networking opportunities for individuals and departments. Instructional technology training supports the school's STEM focus and provides teachers current tools that provide evidence of increased student engagement and innovative practice. In addition, teachers attend conferences based on both school and individual needs and goals as determined by student, teacher, and administrative surveys.

Administrators attend district professional development designed for school leaders every month. The principal networks with other early college leaders on a regular basis, sharing best practices and gleaned from initiatives shared by others who face similar challenges. The administrators use information learned in these meetings to devise systemic practices in the school that produce measurable growth in teachers and students.

All professional development is intentional, monitored, and builds measurable capacity among professional and support staff as evidenced by data collected from school surveys, state performance measures, and EVAAS (Education Value Added Assessment System). The program is rigorously and systematically

evaluated for effectiveness in improving instruction, student learning and the conditions that support learning.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

The philosophy and structure for leadership at Brunswick County Early College High School can be summed up in one word, “empowerment.” Having a small faculty ensures that each and every faculty and staff member is an educational leader. Opportunities to contribute to the decisions made at BCECHS are presented nearly every day. As life-long learners, the faculty is fortunate to be able to think and work outside the box to serve our students and solve the issues that arise in our building. The school administration has created a safe place for teachers and students to become the best that they can be.

Staff and students have opportunities to build leadership skills and are empowered to demonstrate those skills in the school, district, and beyond. Staff members engage in a dynamic process of continuous reexamination and refinement of the mission and vision of the school in order to grow the school’s direction based on previous successes and challenges. They are inspired to assume ownership of problem identification, solution generation, and strategy implementation. Collaborative decision-making is an important part of the school culture, sharing expertise and holding themselves and their peers accountable for professional learning and improved practice. Principal and staff focus on powerful teaching and learning in a culture of high expectations.

The principal is reflective and analytical and acts as a catalyst to seek new solutions to meet individual student needs with potentially beneficial outcomes. As a result, the staff assumes ownership for the development of new solutions to meet school and individual student needs. The principal proactively develops partnerships within the district and with higher education colleagues to the benefit of all. Staff participation is promoted in district and external leadership opportunities, teachers are encouraged to lead professional development in the school and at countywide professional development, and staff is enabled to lead school-based conversations about those experiences.

The school improvement team provides departmental leadership and contributes to decision-making regarding school issues and initiatives. Teachers direct instructional funds and have input into how general funds, technology, and capital outlay are dispersed. All expenditures are focused on targeting student needs. Input from parents, students, and teachers is used to make decisions that further the mission to develop college and career-ready students. As a result the vision, mission, and goals of the school can be communicated in a consistent, relevant manner. Each year student success data is analyzed in order to improve, change, or add to existing supports. Leaders and staff are continually working to ensure effective, reflective, data driven practice so that all students reach their highest potential.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Brunswick County Early College High School faculty and staff implement many strategies to support students academically, especially during their transition from eighth to ninth grades. The increased rigor of the Early College environment demands focus on academic success; therefore, it is a priority to provide students with the skills to succeed in high school, college and beyond. Having a smaller student body than traditional high schools fosters strong relationships that assist in identifying the strengths and the weaknesses of every student. The school's close-knit environment is conducive to the formation of student-teacher relationships, and faculty is intentional in ensuring that each student is known and cared for. When students and faculty members form relationships, students are more likely to succeed.

Establishing strong relationships begins right from the start. Freshmen students participate in team building activities and orientation by the faculty and veteran students as well as receive targeted support for specific academic and social issues such as reinforcing test taking skills and reviewing fundamentals that allow students to succeed in a rigorous environment. Building these strong relationships allow for honest feedback among students, teachers and administrators which affords true growth and reflection for the betterment of the students and their success.

The need for an increased focus on relationships was established through data collected from quarterly student reflections, Youth Truth and other surveys, student's engagement, as well as the Principal's Student Advisory Committee. BCECHS faculty discovered that every student in the school felt that they had a positive relationship with at least one adult at school. That is a vital accomplishment in the endeavor to support every student both as an individual and as a member of the BCECHS family. The school regularly engages in celebrating successes and supporting stakeholders in need. Examples of this are twice yearly Spirit week celebrations, ice cream socials, student performances, art displays and the annual talent show and silent auction, Relay for Life and other fundraisers in support of BCECHS students and their families.

Firebird Family activities that cultivate strong relationships include academic supports such as exam preparation, SMART lunch and study hall for academic remediation and support, and academic clubs such as Quill, Science and Math Olympiads and Quiz Bowl. By building strong relationships, students feel comfortable seeking assistance for academic and social/emotional needs from the faculty. Student performance data in both high school and college classes and parent, student, and teacher surveys provide evidence that these strategies make positive impact on student outcomes. Building meaningful relationships is a skill that students will incorporate throughout their life.