

**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 [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. William S. Roberts

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

Official School Name East Aurora High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1003 Center Street

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

City East Aurora State NY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 14052-3008

County Erie County

Telephone (716) 687-2500 Fax (716) 687-2552

Web site/URL http://www.eastauroraschools.org E-mail WRoberts@eastauroraschools.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. Brian Russ E-mail bruss@eastauroraschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name East Aurora Union Free School District Tel. (716) 687-2302

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 Mrs. MaryBeth Covert  
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	89	63	152
10	85	82	167
11	80	90	170
12 or higher	72	71	143
<b>Total Students</b>	326	306	632

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 95 % White
  - 1 % 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: 5%

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	631
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.051
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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):  
Chinese, Arabic

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 19 %  
Total number students who qualify: 121

8. Students receiving special education services: 8 %  
49 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.

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness              | <u>15</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness        | <u>25</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment    | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Mental Retardation    | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed               |

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

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	48
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 17:1
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	96%	96%	96%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**  
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2016.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
Graduating class size	161
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	74%
Enrolled in a community college	18%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	3%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	4%

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

East Aurora High School is a positive physical, emotional, and intellectual environment. We offer a variety of experiences which foster emotional and intellectual growth.

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**

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East Aurora is a quaint, historical community with a rich past that remains an integral part of its present-day character. Located just 20 miles southeast of Buffalo, New York, and 45 minutes from Niagara Falls, East Aurora is primarily a residential village with a population of 14,000. It is the birthplace and home of Fisher-Price Toys, the Roycroft Arts and Crafts movement and campus, historic Vidler's 5 & 10 Cent Store, and residence of Albert Hubbard and United States President Milliard Fillmore.

The East Aurora Union Free School District was founded in 1883. The District's mission is to provide environments, experiences, materials and professional talents to help each student prepare to live in society as a contributing, self-fulfilling and caring citizen. It endeavors to develop, in each student, a lifelong desire for knowledge and the skills to acquire it. Our schools promote learning in the context of common sense, hope for a better future and a deep respect for humanity. The District enrolls approximately 1800 students located in three buildings. Parkdale Elementary is a K-4 building with about 650 students. The middle school consists of grades 5-8 and enrolls approximately 550 students. The high school, grades 9-12, offers a comprehensive educational program for about 650 students. The high school staff includes 59 teachers, a full-time librarian, school nurse, school psychologist, three school counselors, assistant principal and principal.

East Aurora High School (EAHS) cherishes relationships and connectivity. We have passionate professional educators, gifted coaches and leaders, loving parents, a supportive community, determined young learners and dedicated teams designed to support the dreams of individual students. The guiding principles of the high school are the daily promotion of exploration, innovation, growth and opportunity. The school offers a variety of experiences, in and out of the classroom, which foster emotional and intellectual growth. We encourage varied teaching approaches appropriate to students' needs and teachers' strengths.

EAHS is proud to offer one of the most well-rounded and comprehensive course selections in a Western New York (WNY) high school. Students are required to complete a minimum of 22 credits in order to graduate. This experience includes our core academic subjects and learning experiences in Art, Music, Business, Technology, Health, Physical Education and Language. A critical component of the success of EAHS graduates is their participation in our specialty programs. We support and offer 2-year off-site training programs focusing on one of 14 vocational trades, 17 AP courses including a 2-year college-level AP Capstone curriculum, a NYS Career Technical Education (CTE) endorsed business sequence, a 2-year International Studies multi-disciplinary program, a 4-year multi-disciplinary STEM initiative and a Film Academy.

Successful students at EAHS take advantage of what our school has to offer academically and through our extra-curricular activities. We believe that these activities are an integral part of the total educational experience. The interscholastic athletic program at EAHS is unmatched for a school with our enrollment. Approximately 67% of the student body participates in at least one of our athletic programs and one third participates in at least two sports. The Buffalo News recently awarded EAHS with the Prep Talk Athletic Program of the Year award, an honor that names our program the best athletic program among all schools, public and private, in Western New York. In the past decade, EAHS has accumulated numerous honors including 43 Sectional championships, five Far West Regional championships, and an astounding 11 team and 12 individual New York State championships. The EAHS extracurricular club offerings includes over 20 options for high school students. They develop leadership skills, a sense of belonging and establish long lasting student activity traditions. The options have evolved with the changing interests of our students. The student activities calendar is highlighted by an annual ski trip, badminton tournament, whale watch trip, a Euro dance, an all-night lock-in, New York City trip, school musical and drama production, homecoming, talent show, prom and an outdoor luau dance.

EAHS is considered one of the top public high schools in WNY. Last June, Business First newspaper once again rated EAHS #4 among 133 public and private high schools. We were the highest rated high school which does not select their students. We have been ranked in the top ten of WNY high schools for 24

consecutive years. In 2016 we received subject awards for Science, Math, English and Social Studies. In 2016, 79% of our graduates earned the Advanced Regents diploma, which will place us among the top five high schools in WNY. In 2016 The Washington Post, once again, selected EAHS as one of the nation's top public high schools on the basis of our students' scores on Advanced Placement exams. Each year, Newsweek magazine ranks the nation's public high schools on their ability to prepare students for college and career readiness. In 2015-16 EAHS was selected by Newsweek as among the top 2% of the nation's public high schools. Finally, the NYS Education Department designated EAHS as a Reward School for 2015-16. This designation is awarded to NY state public schools that have the highest achievement in the state with no significant gaps in student achievement, marking the fourth consecutive year EAHS has been designated a Reward School. Although these statistics and awards are noteworthy and we take great pride in the recognition, we don't lose sight of our primary goal of graduating young adults who will be positive, contributing, self-fulfilling and caring citizens.

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

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

Committed to providing our students with a 21st Century learning experience that promotes exploration and innovation, EAHS offers a diverse course of study aligned to the New York State Common Core Learning Standards. The curricular offerings at EAHS provide students the opportunity to enroll in classes that enable them to investigate areas of knowledge of most interest to them and their future goals for college and career. The high school offers seventeen Advanced Placement courses, as well as honors, college credit, and career and technical classes, ensuring a rigorous learning environment that enhances students' opportunities to develop creative approaches to problem solving in all of the core areas. Students also have opportunities to enroll in interdisciplinary programs such as STEM, International Studies, Film Academy, and AP Capstone.

#### English Language Arts

The English Language Arts program at EAHS begins with the recognition of the individual needs of each student. The faculty's literature selections, lesson designs, and assessment practices are intended to meet the unique needs of all students in the classroom. Aligned to the CCLS for ELA, the program is designed to develop in students a proficiency in reading, writing and speaking, not only as basic skills required for all learning, but also as skills that open new paths for discovery, expression, and professional communication. Students may enroll in honors level courses all four years of high school, and may take, beginning in tenth grade, AP Seminar, AP Language and Composition, AP Literature and Composition, and AP Research. Students are also provided the opportunity to explore drama, creative writing, and journalism.

#### Math

The mathematics program at EAHS provides students the tools and ways of thinking that are necessary for solving problems in a wide variety of disciplines, such as science, business, social studies, fine arts, and technology. Aligned to the NYS Common Core Standards, classes such as Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, and Trigonometry develop students' mathematical competencies and problem solving abilities. Courses such as Algebra II STEM and Analytic Geometry STEM provide further enrichment opportunities for students to explore the "real world" applications of their mathematics courses. Teachers utilize a flipped instructional model that increases the amount of class time available for guided skill development. Advanced courses of study in mathematics are available with AP Calculus and AP Statistics.

#### Social Studies

The social studies program at EAHS provides students the opportunity to investigate in Regents and Advanced Placement courses significant historical events of western and non-western peoples from pre-history to the present time. Coursework prepares students to be informed and engaged citizens able to support their arguments with historical data. The social studies program has aligned its curriculum to the new NYS Social Studies Framework, as well as the CCLS for reading and writing. Students have a wide selection of courses in the program that enable them to determine a program of study that meets their areas of interests and college and career goals. The department offers six Advanced Placement courses, as well as specific areas of study in sociology, military history, psychology, government, and economics. The social studies department also provides support for the community service graduation requirement and the Model UN club.

#### Science

The science program at EAHS introduces students to the methods of scientific inquiry in applied laboratory contexts that cause students to make observations, draw conclusions about data, and report findings in analytic reports. Students learn to understand science as a process rather than as an accumulation of facts and terms. As a result, students will be able to think critically about how science and technology affects their lives. Students have the ability to select in their four years of high school courses that build the foundational skills in science, math, chemistry, and physics necessary for them to meet their goals for college and career. Students may complete the traditional coursework in earth science, biology, and environmental science, but also have the opportunity to investigate more advanced and specialty areas of science with classes like Anatomy and Physiology, Chemistry, Physics and AP Physics, AP Biology, and AP Chemistry. Students in

Anatomy and Physiology have the opportunity at the end of the year to take the Excelsior College Exam. The science department has an active science club and annually plans a whale watch trip to the East coast.

The curriculum at EAHS provides many opportunities for students to develop the necessary skills for their later success in college or in the career field they enter after graduation. The high school offers a wide range of Advanced Placement courses as well as honors, college credit, and career and technical classes that provide students the flexibility to explore career areas they may want to pursue after graduation. Students' ability to explore a variety of courses in high school is important developmentally as this provides them an essential tool in identifying what they might study in college or what career field they want to work towards. Many of these courses provide applied learning experiences for students that enable students to see the application of the learning objectives in a real world setting. Importantly, in all subject areas, teachers' practices focus on mastery learning through guided practice and high expectations. This focus on mastery learning through both teaching practice and rigorous formative and summative assessments helps to ensure that students graduate with the necessary skills to be successful in a college or career setting. Colleges and businesses expect students to have strong critical thinking, problem solving, reading, writing, and technical literacy skills upon their enrollment or hire. The breadth of our curriculum, along with the focus on mastery learning and high expectations, helps to ensure our students are prepared to realize their college and career goals.

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

### **Arts- Visual & Performing**

Employers cite creative problem solving as a highly desirable trait, thus our art philosophy centers around diverse experiences for career-readiness and art appreciation. On a rotating basis, students in 9-12 have a comprehensive art program, including AP Art, Studio Painting, Journalism & School Publications, Roycroft Arts, Video Editing, Digital Photography, and Jewelry Design. These courses and others, like Three Dimensional Studio, link culture, other curricular areas, the workforce and college readiness, especially in art-related fields. Our students participate in portfolio classes for entrance into highly-acclaimed art colleges.

Performance-wise, EAHS offers chorus, select chorus, orchestra, concert band, jazz band, music theory I & II, and drama. Competitions and a robust theatre schedule, from concerts to plays to musicals, stem from these courses. Awards have been earned in each performance-based opportunity. Through cyclical lessons and unique activities like our prism concert, students gain immense appreciation for music and theatre; many study at conservatories post high school.

### **Physical Education**

While EAHS follows required physical education mandates for 9-12, including skill-based activities as well as emotional, mental and nutritional health, we also offer CPR/First Aid for students as well as flexible scheduling for those who are involved in two or more varsity sports. From units on track and field to cross country skiing to kayaking, the department makes a healthy, active life-style a part of students' lives.

### **Foreign Languages**

Spanish, French, Chinese I-III and Latin are offered at EAHS for grades 9-12. Levels I-IV and Advanced Placement studies in Spanish, French and Latin aid students in a variety of ways, from gaining college credit to studying languages at the post-secondary level. Classes consist of learning and practicing linguistic skills to immersing students in various cultures through special dances, culinary forays and foreign travel to Spain, Thailand, Peru, Cambodia, England and Vietnam. Not only do our students win awards on national exams such as the National Latin Exam, but they are also preparing to develop the skillset that will enable them to be successful in a global economy. Students may begin language study in 7th grade, practicing oral and written skills in context, and many take more than one language beginning in 8th grade.

### **Technology**

EAHS understands the necessity of fostering confidence in diverse forms of technology for college and the workforce. To that end, a plethora of courses, all of which balance project-based learning with theory, develop time management, teamwork, logical and creative thinking, research and critical thinking. Faculty maintain rigor and stay up-to-date in their training. Students may take classes in architecture, computer

programming, electronics, engineering, and production systems as well as earn a sequence with three or more courses, most of which are semester-long and open to either 9-12 or 10-12, with engineering usually reserved for seniors.

### STEM

Classes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics comprise EAHS's STEM programming, but since technology, art and music are one department, elements of design cross over into STEAM-like, project-based learning experiences for students who have completed Algebra I in 8th grade. Once done, STEM students in grades 9-12 contain one class from each discipline; for instance, 11th graders take Pre-Calculus, AP Biology and computer programming for an entire year. A total of four Advanced Placement classes in grades 10-12 are in the STEM program, and critical reasoning classes from Analytical Geometry in grade 9 to Engineering Design & Development in grade 12, aid students in STEM-related college and career choices.

### International Studies

International Studies is a multi-disciplinary approach to a globally-themed education. This two-year program encompasses social studies, world literature, world art, and language study by investigating connections between cultures, communities, geographies, economies, and governments through collegial, project-based learning and travel. Currently, students study Chinese I and II, World Art, World Literature, World Cultures, and Advanced Placement World History over the course of their 9th and 10th grade years. In the past, the language study has been Japanese and German.

### Film Academy

The Aurora Film Academy is a three-course learning experience for 12th graders. Creative Writing, Drama and Video Production occur for a half-day during which time students learn about and craft scripts, study acting and directing, and finally practice digital editing using powerful editing programs. Students produce commercials for local businesses, videos for school-related activities, feature-length sitcoms, and short feature films for a culminating celebration in a historic town theatre. The "AFA Film Festival" highlights the best films of the year. Many students, some earning scholarships, take the communication and editing skills into their college areas of study. Ultimately, the program fosters the transfer of performance skills and technological design into a finished product.

### Advanced Placement Capstone

The College Board's AP Capstone is an innovative college-level program based on two courses, AP Seminar and AP Research, that complement and enhance discipline specific AP courses. The program provides students with an opportunity to engage in scholarly skills necessary for successful college completion. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher on AP Seminar and AP Research assessments and on four additional AP Exams of their choosing will earn an AP Capstone Diploma, signifying their outstanding academic achievement and attainment of college-level academic research skills. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher on AP Seminar and AP Research assessments will earn the AP Seminar and Research Certificate.

### Business Education

EAHS's New York State approved CTE course of study allows students an opportunity to apply academic concepts to real-world situations, preparation for industry-based assessments or certifications, and opportunities to earn college credit or advanced standing while still in high school. Students can earn up to nine SUNY credit hours in the program with work-based learning opportunities. Classes such as College Success Skills, Business Law, Marketing and others serve to enhance critical reasoning and professional relationship skills.

### CTE

The Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) offers a variety of programs which allow for the practice of occupational skills in fields like animal care, automotive technology, CADD, criminal justice, culinary arts, sports conditioning and exercise science, diesel mechanics, construction and more. 11th and 12th graders spend a half day earning credit in work settings that cater to the school and community.

Students can also compete in these fields at local and state level contests.

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

Teachers at EAHS are invested in meeting the unique learning needs of every student by differentiating instruction and employing a variety of methods for delivering lesson material, as well as through data-driven instructional practices. Lessons in all discipline areas emphasize the development of students' inferential thinking skills and problem solving abilities, often in performance based projects. Students in our International Studies program, for example, complete a global outreach project that requires students to develop a campaign addressing a need around health care or education in a third world country. Students conduct research, draw conclusions, and apply their understanding of the problem in a campaign that includes speaking to community organizations and partnering with a non-governmental agency to raise funds to help address this problem. Students in our Film Academy produce films presented to the public in the local movie theater. Students draft movie scripts in a creative writing class and then collaborate to develop those scripts into original films in their drama and film production classes. Besides short films, students in the program complete films that promote school activities or create awareness about district initiatives. In addition to implementing performance based assessments, many of our teachers utilize Socratic seminars or rely on the Harkness discussion model as these approaches encourage students to share and then defend a reading of a selected text or issue.

As a high school, we have been working to leverage technology as a tool to widen the walls of instruction beyond the physical structure of the building. A number of our teachers have implemented flipped instructional models for delivering instruction. Our Algebra I teacher posts the next lesson lecture on YouTube daily. The students' homework is to view the lecture and take notes at home, enabling the teacher to use class time for guided practice with math concepts. In social studies, a teacher records his lectures and then makes them available for students to download, allowing these students to review aspects of the material they found especially difficult.

Our school has worked to reduce barriers to students who want to challenge themselves in an advanced curriculum. All students may enroll in our Advanced Placement courses, college for credit courses, and electives. Students who have been identified as needing additional academic support may be placed in a co-taught classroom or in our Academic Intervention Services classroom where they have access to a teacher in a core content area for one-on-one assistance. Teachers in a blended classroom work closely with the special education teacher to design and implement lessons and assessments appropriate for all learners in the classroom. When necessary, the student, teacher, counselor, and parent or guardian will meet together to develop a learning plan based on a reflection of the student's academic progress and identified areas of need.

We are committed to using data as a tool for developing and implementing teaching practices that best meet the needs of all learners in our classrooms. Each department at the high school has developed formative and summative assessments that enable teachers to monitor students' progress towards learning goals and to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction. Teachers realize the value of formative assessments by reflecting on this data together, diagnosing problems, and adjusting teaching practices where gaps in learning have been identified. Results from summative assessments in the form of department-developed finals, Regents exams, and Advanced Placement exams provide indicators of students' overall progress towards learning outcome standards, and important data for evaluating the effectiveness of a program. As part of this reflection, teachers review historical data stored from previous administrations of an assessment to develop a broader perspective on the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction. Examining historical data enables faculty to determine trends in learning outcomes across time and, as a result, understand the significance of the current performance results in this broader context. Performance data on Regents exams and on Advanced Placement exams is reflected on by all levels of the school community, from teachers, to administrators, to the school board as all work together to ensure the best practices are in place and that the necessary resources are available. The school district has also developed a grading committee comprised of teachers and administrators tasked with reviewing current practices and policies around teacher assigned scores, the use of data to drive instruction, and new research emerging on grading and assessment.

Since understanding the communication of a student's academic performance is a vital piece of academic success, the school provides students and parents and guardians online access to teachers' gradebooks. Access to real-time data of student progress in a class provides yet another tool for engaging students and families in the learning process.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

EAHS makes a conscious effort to engage and motivate our students. These priorities, combined with a history of high achievement in a strong community, have built a positive and productive school culture. EAHS has developed programs that ensure the continued expectation of excellence.

#### Mentor Program

Students in need of an advisor, coach and/or role model are selected to participate in our Mentoring Program. Through informal and formal interaction, students develop a relationship with an adult in our building, and they may address academic skills, resources for learning, social skills and/or translating life experiences into learning opportunities. These are unique alliances, shaped by a mentor's talents and resources and by a student's unique needs.

#### New Student Program

During the 2016-17 academic year, nearly 60 students have joined EAHS from other Districts. We have developed a New Student Program to assist students in their transition to EAHS. Students are assigned a student mentor with whom they attend social and transitional experiences. The program assists students with typical stressful transitional pieces such as who to sit with at lunch on the first day of school to dealing with new school expectations.

#### Freshman Advisory

An important aspect of success for 9th grade students is the successful transition from 8th grade to high school. Each member of the 9th grade class is assigned an Advisory Group. The groups are limited to 15 students and meet quarterly. Each group includes a member of the staff and 2-3 student leaders from the senior class. The leaders facilitate discussion of the transition issues facing 9th grade students.

East Aurora Schools have made great gains in recent years in the area of creating a culture in which teachers feel valued and supported. The Superintendent of schools has set the example with his sincere desire to listen to teachers and include them in the District decision making process. Examples of this include the Superintendent taking the time each year to meet with every department in order to listen to and support them. This goes beyond the teachers and includes meetings with the clerical staff, buildings and grounds department, and civil service staff members. The Superintendent has also included the faculty and staff in the yearly process of establishing the District's Values and Vision. At a building level, EAHS teachers are empowered to seek professional development, explore new curriculum, and course ideas and the freedom to support our students in a way that fits their personal style of instruction.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

In many ways, EAHS and East Aurora (with its surrounding villages) are one in the same, working together to shape responsible, successful citizens. Certainly, we host events like New Student Orientation for incoming freshmen or those moving to our district. We offer Drug and Alcohol Awareness forums, parent teacher conferences, an active PTO, open houses, college forums, school musicals and plays, numerous varsity and junior varsity sporting events, all of which are well attended by community members and their respective booster organizations. In addition, via print and online sources, such as The Challenger, our monthly school magazine, the community is kept abreast of happenings at EAHS.

Parents may use the District's online grading portal to access their children's grades and be updated about assignments, tests and projects on a daily basis. In fact, they may view a teacher's gradebook specifically for their child. This transparency helps parents, teachers and students. Yet some of our community links stand out.

Local businesses, like theatres and grocery stores, help sponsor students of the month with motivational prizes and acknowledgment. Our relationship with local colleges provides university experience and credit

for some students, while international businesses in our community, such as MOOG and Fisher-Price, promote internships and support Blue Devil endeavors. Two of the more unique family and community engagements EAHS offers are A Taste of International Studies and The Aurora Film Academy Film Festival.

A Taste of International Studies, hosted by our ninth and tenth grade International Program students, invites community members to sample foods and customs of cultures across the globe. Parents and townsfolk join us for meals and entertainment prepared by student groups, complete with artwork, music and clothing from diverse backgrounds. At the dinner, students share their Global Outreach Projects, ventures involving research of developing countries (historically, politically and economically) and their special needs in terms of healthcare or education. They report their findings regarding work with credible NGOs with whom they've partnered. They also share their public awareness campaigns through entities such as Facebook and gofundme.

Our yearly AFA Film Festival stems from EAHS's Film Academy. The local Aurora Theatre offers its historic movie house for a night of student films and donations. Businesses donate food and supplies for a reception as well as money for awards. Although the event is free, community members are encouraged to patronize local businesses and make contributions for new video equipment that budget constraints may prohibit. The program has been featured on our NPR radio station and acts as a culminating community event that celebrates performing and digital arts in our school.

Finally, the not-for-profit East Aurora Educational Foundation (EAEF) links school and community as it is funded and sustained by alumni, residents and local businesses who provide financial backing. The EAEF hosts award ceremonies for scholarships, Alumni Hall-of-Fame inductees, and Teachers of the Year, all open to the entire community. Their mission, "To enhance students' educational experiences by funding grants for programs within the East Aurora School District", has resulted in over \$660,000 for student opportunity.

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

Although professional development (PD) has undergone many changes at EAHS, hallmarks of PD remain at the forefront of teacher, staff and administrative growth. These include improving instruction for students, teacher collaboration and critical feedback for improvement within many aspects of PD. Teachers entering EAHS are assigned mentors to guide and model best practices in lesson design. All teachers are observed during both announced and unannounced visits with feedback given during pre- and post-meetings regarding lesson planning and teaching. Our Professional Development Plan (PDP) and Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) center around Danielson's research-based frameworks for instruction. Prior to this lens of evaluation, we receive workshop training in understanding Danielson's rubrics and how different domains are used for evaluating teachers.

PD is a collaborative effort at EAHS with shared decision making between teachers and administrators who often create many of the attended workshops. During Superintendent Conference Days, teachers often share expertise in workshop formats. Colleagues may attend various workshops, ranging from technology training to health and wellness. Recently, we've received training on Flipped Classrooms, Smartboard usage, Google Docs, and a host of web apps for gathering data efficiently in the classroom. These are in addition to planned training and development in such areas as eDoctrina for data usage and Dr. Harvey Silver's "The Core Six", which has been implemented in all subject areas to increase critical reading comprehension and analysis across the common core curriculum. These larger PD training initiatives allow for greater collaboration, not only within EAHS, but also throughout our K-12 buildings. Since students' well-being is at the forefront of educators' minds, training in suicide prevention and bullying have been necessities. Our latest PD efforts involved speakers Dwight Carter and Mark White, who keynoted a day of implementing technology for maximizing student participation.

Professional Learning Communities have enhanced classroom teaching as well. These programs involve smaller groups of teachers dedicating time to a particular area of pedagogical growth to be implemented in various classrooms. One such project involved reformulating our conception and practice of grading and

evaluating in 9-12 classes. Participants read academic books and papers provided by the district, reflected on their own practice, experimented with new strategies in classrooms, shared results, and reported to colleagues and administration on their findings.

The above PD forms are in addition to our BOCES offerings and district-funded workshops off-site, from AP training to teaching research for college readiness. PD's importance cannot be understated, and EAHS's goal is transference from teachers, staff and administration to the student body.

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

Buildings running as a team grant all players the ability to contribute in decision making, take ownership of their role and have a stake in the successes. This is the center of the school district's philosophy on school leadership. The primary role of the EAHS administrative team is to ensure that policies, programs, relationships and resources focus on student achievement. Some of the key principles that support these goals include hiring great teachers, establishing expectations of engagement and success, fostering the expectation for continuous improvement, providing a filter so teachers can teach and students can learn without interruption, valuing principal-teacher collaboration, and most importantly treating everyone with respect, every day. Consistency in leadership and subsequently consistency in our core principles has contributed to the implementation of successful school leadership. The current principal was hired this past January after working in the role of assistant principal for eight years and teacher for seven years at EAHS. He was hired to fill a vacancy after our principal of 33 years retired.

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

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The Common Core impacted all areas of study at EAHS, and as a unified school, we established strategies to meet the demands across the curriculum. Since our college credit bearing classes and AP classes are integrated into those abiding by the Common Core, it was necessary to unify our approach, which we did by implementing Dr. Harvey Silver’s Core Six strategies into 9-12 classrooms throughout the school, achieving the ultimate goal of integrating high level critical reading and writing into all subject areas so students can be successful on AP and state testing as well as for college and career preparedness.

Two district-wide conference days, in the beginning and middle of the year, were devoted to teachings led by Dr. Silver and his associates; these sessions included a breakdown of his well-known text *The Core Six: Essential Strategies for Achieving Excellence* and break-out sessions for incorporating the strategies into different curricular strands as well as across them. From physical education and science to art and English, teachers designed or retro-fitted units to correlate with precepts of: reading for meaning, comparing and contrasting, inductive learning, using a “circle of knowledge”, writing to learn, and using a vocabulary CODE.

All programs were impacted, particularly those comprised of more than one curricular area, like International Studies, STEM and Film Academy. Students witness and experience a common language of higher meta-cognitive analysis across classes, making their learning more connected and efficient. Even in foreign language and physical education classes, writing assignments with Core Six semantic references help align language for success on Common Core tests like English, math and history; in fact, our English scores rose as a result of the Core Six alignment across all areas.

Teachers have embraced the Core Six initiative, as evidenced in lesson planning and observations. Teachers and administrators use the concepts to deepen content and discuss Core Six tenets in pre- and post-observations, not to mention actual teaching. A consistency of pedagogical rigor has developed, yet the universal language has allowed more student accessibility to that rigor. Furthermore, data from Common Core tests that have been developed, helps refine instruction yearly, and teachers use the Core Six for aligning their lessons with higher text complexity, sophisticated evidence and mature vocabulary. Silver’s Core Six has enhanced collaboration by providing an anchor for three constituents: administrators, teachers and students. Administrators and teachers work cooperatively around principles of best practice in instruction, and students communicate and advocate about their learning for deeper understanding and success.