

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Kevin Robert Fagan

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

Official School Name West Chester East Senior High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 450 Ellis Lane

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

City West Chester State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 19380-5123

County Chester

Telephone (484) 266-3801 Fax _____

Web site/URL

http://www.edline.net/pages/East_High_School

E-mail krfagan@wcasd.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*Dr. James Scanlon E-mail jscanlon@wcasd.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name West Chester Area School District Tel. (484) 266-1000

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. Christopher McCune

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

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

Date _____

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2011 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
9. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
10. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
11. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 10 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 16 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	154	137	291
10	159	159	318
11	156	147	303
12 or higher	168	165	333
Total Students	637	608	1245

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 7 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 0 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2015 – 2016 school year: 3%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	24
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	1272
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.031
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Mandarin/Chinese, Somali, Arabic, Nepali, Italian, Gujarati, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 15 %
Total number students who qualify: 188

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
165 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>15</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>42</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>79</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>15</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>7</u> Mental Retardation	<u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> 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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	77
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	12
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.	8

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 20:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	95%
High school graduation rate	97%	99%	96%	94%	95%

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

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	305
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	78%
Enrolled in a community college	12%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	4%
Found employment	3%
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 educate and inspire our students to achieve their personal best.

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

WC East High School is a high-performing school located in West Chester PA. We are a relatively large school, with a population of more than 1200 students, from varied backgrounds. In our building, we have students who come from single parent homes, financially-challenged homes, and two parent, dual-income, college educated homes. It's our primary task as educators to ensure a place for everyone. Our underlying philosophy here at East is to work with every child to help him or her achieve their personal best and have good options for post-secondary planning. A high school diploma alone is simply not enough today. Students need to continue their education; whether that be in college, the armed services, or a trade school, we seek to provide as many opportunities as possible to our students. While the vast majority of our graduates each year enter college, we take pride in knowing that college or not, every graduate leaves here prepared for what comes next.

We are fortunate to have tremendous students at East. The student body is our single greatest point of pride. We have star academics, musicians, thespians, and athletes. At East, there is a place for each student to find his or her passion and excel. We are also fortunate to enjoy the support and interest of a caring community. West Chester East families care deeply about their children's education and about our school. Whether it's involvement through our PTO, our post-prom club, or attending one of our many extra-curricular events, the family and community passion for education is alive and well at East.

WC East is one of three public high schools serving the expansive West Chester Community. East opened in 1970 to serve a fast-growing population in the area and quickly became one of the premier high schools in the area. Over the years, East has seen a great deal of change, and we've adapted over that time to maintain our excellence, thanks in large part to a professional and loyal staff who have taken great pride in working hard every day for our students and families. In addition to our academic achievements, East has a reputation for its school spirit. Our student body takes special pride in wearing their red and yellow. Their pride is most visible during one of our home football games, when we consistently pack the student section with more than 400 screaming fans. Each year, our spirit week event takes place in the fall, culminating in our annual pep rally event, which is a huge hit for the student body, as is our annual volleyball tournament, which took place a few weeks ago, and our end-of-year events focused on celebrating the successes and growth of our senior class each year. East is also known for its charitable endeavors. Our Interact Club is the largest in the area, and each year our Student Council hosts a Red Cross Blood Drive that is one of the most successful around.

East utilizes many different methods to help students reach their full potential. For starters, most of our curricula is offered at three or four different levels, each designed to meet the needs of different types of students. Those students needing remediation can get that in our academic level classes, while those interested in taking AP classes have 18 AP certified courses from which to choose. In addition to leveled academics, East offers more than 50 clubs and activities and 23 varsity sports. Particular points of pride include our swimming and diving team, our theater/music program, DECA and Academic Competition. Some students gravitate naturally toward the extra-curricular activities, while others need additional encouragement which we provide as well. We take pride in building relationships with our students, getting to know them and guide them in the right direction. Each year, our counselors make a point of meeting their freshmen caseload early and developing rapport, in part so that we can identify opportunities for interventions. One of the more meaningful interventions we've implemented over the past three years was related to our minority student population. In response to the demographic disparity we sometimes witnessed in our upper level classes, where the diversity was imbalanced, we began to work on an individual basis with those students who were "under-scheduling" themselves into lower level courses. This kind of work takes time, and we are still working, but we are making progress and the results have been encouraging, both from an individual student basis and on a larger scale. In the coming years, WC East will continue to provide not only a high caliber education to these students, but also a supportive environment committed to fostering both equality and equity.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Reflecting the district's commitment to meeting the needs of all students, the core courses of language arts, math, science and social studies are aligned to the Pennsylvania Standards. Advanced Placement courses are offered in all of the core disciplines. Our students have access to a rigorous curriculum that is intended not only to meet standards established by the state, but challenge students on multiple other levels. Students have the opportunity to develop individual study habits, organizational skills, and critical thinking skills, and leave here with a solid foundation of essential knowledge and skills. During their four years at East, our students progress through the curricula and are prepared to succeed at the next level. Student participation rates are high in the SAT, ACT and AP exams, and include various demographics. Each year, our AP scores are some of the strongest in the area. East is especially proud of its high AP test participation rates. In the state of PA, students in the class of 2019 and beyond are required to demonstrate proficiency in three different Keystone Exams (KE). East students tend to do very well, and we are particularly proud of our "re-test scores." Typically students re-testing in the KE struggle to make proficiency, but at East, through the hard work of our students and dedicated staff, our re-test scores are strong. In addition to our regular curriculum, students have access to reading, math, and biology remediation with our teachers both after school and on their own via our online learning portal, Schoology. Our students are required to take four years of English/language arts, social studies, and PE. They are required to take three years of math and science, though many students choose to take four years of these courses as well. All of our students complete two health courses, and have elective requirements to satisfy. Most of our students take at least two years of a world language.

Each year, roughly 90% of our students choose to attend a two or four college, ranging from local community college, to state universities, to more elite colleges and universities. We have programs and initiatives in place to help ensure their success at whichever level a student would like to pursue. These programs include our dual enrollment program, blended learning program, career exploration program, and AP course work.

The dual enrollment program was established to provide students with the opportunity to take college courses at a local college campus and receive credits at both East and West Chester University. These students experience the "real-world" of college life while getting to learn about themselves and their own interests. This school year, we broadened our blended learning offerings to include 16 different courses, ranging from computer programming to world language and business courses. Students enrolled in these courses attending class for part of the week, and then do not attend for the remainder. During that time, students have the opportunity to further develop their independence and organizational skills. Students interested in pursuing the fields of education or nursing have the ability to elect from two wonderful programs. Our Allied Health program and Education Practicum provide real-world, on-the-job learning. Students enrolled in these programs spend part of the school day with us, and the remainder in their respective programs, gaining a real-world glimpse into what those in the medical fields and those in the education field do every day.

Connected by wireless technology, interactive white boards, laptops, and iPads are integrated throughout the curriculum to create a dynamic learning environment. Currently, three of our four grade levels have been issued personal laptops, and next year, all four of our grades will have laptops, thus enabling our students and staff to connect in new and exciting ways and providing new opportunities to broaden our curricula through the use of online textbooks and other tools.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At WC East we believe that students should "discover who they are" during their four years with us. Merely earning a diploma is not the end goal; rather, we work with our students to develop their strengths and find their talents. While our students and the school overall excel in the academic areas and perform impressively on standardized tests, we believe there is more to high school. Being a well-rounded individual means being

able to do more than math and reading (though math and reading skills are critical for success). Being well-rounded also means trying new things, taking safe risks, and putting one self "out there." There are plenty of opportunities for our student body to do all of these things at East with the help our committed staff. During their four years at East, our students have the opportunity to take classes in a wide variety of elective areas, including: world language, visual and performing arts, family consumer science, and computer science, just to name a few. Some of these courses are offered every day, all year, while others are offered by semester. The elective areas play a critical role in helping students develop their personal interests, find their talents, and refine themselves. In our wood tech and drafting classes for instance, students have an opportunity to apply their learning in a very real way, designing, crafting and building projects they imagined and seeing them come to life. Recently, several of our wood tech students designed and built a beautiful set of benches for one of our common areas in the building. Our arts program, led by three of the finest art teachers around, helps students develop their artistic sense. We offer a range of courses, from the introductory level to AP Art. Each year, the art department exhibits its work in our annual Spring Art Show (a personal favorite of mine). It's one of the many ways we find to showcase our students' talents, and it's typically attended by 400 to 500 visitors, including many from our community. We recently wrapped up our spring musical. This year's production was Grease! It was fantastic and extremely well-received. The show was great, the audience loved it, and the impressive performers had a blast, but my favorite aspect of this year's production was the number of students who participated. Between our orchestra pit, stage crew, and performers, we had nearly 100 students involved. It was quite a sight! East is lucky to showcase award-winning choral, band, and orchestra programs, and each year, we have students qualify for PMEA. Our dedicated musical directors work tirelessly with our talented and hard-working students to put on great shows each season.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

WC East offers most of its curricula at three and four academic levels, designed to meet the needs of our varied student body. The vast majority of our students take a mix of course levels and more than 80% of our students attempt an Honors level class at some point during their high school tenure. Our faculty utilize a range of instructional strategies, from direct instruction, peer grouping, flipped learning, to backwards design. While most of our courses are offered in a traditional format, we are proud to offer non-traditional formats as well. Two years ago, we began offering "blended learning" opportunities for students. Currently, a variety of our elective courses are offered in a blended format, whereby students attend class part of the week, then are "unassigned" for the remaining portion, thus allowing them flexibility and helping to foster independence. Through our partnership with a local university, we also offer dual enrollment courses. Seniors are free to sign up for one of many dual enrollment courses that provide credit at both institutions and real-life college experience. Student data plays an important part at WC East. Our staff have access to many data including: reading scores, SAT and ACT, state test scores, and demographics. This year, we adopted a program called On Hands Schools, a web-based data warehousing system that allows quick and easy access to many data sets. Our staff have been using this to refine classroom instruction to better meet the needs of individual learners. Teachers are available to students for extra help before and after school and our math support room is open all periods of the day.

When the need arises, we offer an array of interventions including: drug and alcohol support, psychological and counseling services, and through our Child Study Team (CST), our counselors and administrators confidentially discuss the individual needs of students and strategically plan for how we can better meet those needs. Approximately 160 of our students receive special education services and access to additional supports. WC East is considered a high performing school in most categories. Each year, nearly 100% of our students graduate, 90% go on to college. Our students do very well overall on the Keystone Exams, the state-mandated tests. Having said that, there are areas where we continue to strive for improvement, specifically with our minority and SPED populations. We start by using quantitative and qualitative data to identify those students and learning about them to input supports. Students in need may be scheduled for additional remediation, or access our math and writing supports. Our staff are dedicated to helping ensure that all students succeed and maintaining that high level of success is important, which is why the staff holds high expectations for our students and work diligently to help them achieve their very best.

Generally, we are a high-achieving school, and that success is reinforced through the curriculum and celebrated throughout the school. Our website, newsletter, and social media campaigns are all geared toward

sharing the story of our successes. One social media campaign that stands out is our Did You Know campaign. Each spring, we produce posters marketing the accomplishments of our students. These posters are then hung around the school for our staff, student body, and guests to see. The intent is to further the idea of success in our building, believing that success breeds success. This campaign has been really successful and it's one of the things our staff and students have come to anticipate each year.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The climate/culture at WC East is strong and thriving. On average, about 90% of our student body is involved in a club/sport/activity. Here, it's unusual for students NOT to be involved. And better yet, our students genuinely support one another. We have big turnouts at our football games, but we also have big turnouts at our other events. During the fall season, for instance, it's not unusual for our girls' soccer team to attend the boys' soccer game and cheer them on and vice versa. Our student body attends our drama productions and musical productions, they come to our annual art show, and they cheer on our graduates at Commencement. Our students volunteer in their community; as such, we are known in the area for "giving back" to various charities, including Toys for Tots and the Red Cross. Just recently, we wrapped up a very special event here at East called the House of Hope Concert, a completely student-organized event that features 15 to 20 musical acts, showcasing the talents of students in the building. Patrons attend to see our show and pay a small entry fee, which goes to benefit a local charity called the Home of Sparrow, which is established to assist women throughout Chester County who are in need of assistance. To my knowledge, East is the only high school doing this. At our even the other night, we had nearly 400 guests and raised over \$3,500 for the cause.

Our students are polite -- many of them actually thank their teachers at the end of each class period; it's one of the things visitors often note about our students. We are fortunate to have many of our coaches and advisers here in the building with us, and we work hard to make sure they feel supported and have access to the training they need.

One of the initiatives we started last year is our "Stress Free Fridays." Every Friday, our student council officials choose music to play over the PA system between classes. It's amazing what impact this small act has on people. We literally have students and staff dancing in the hallways on their way to class. Just that small thing goes a long way toward de-compressing the building, helping to ensure our day is that much smoother. Additionally, two Fridays per month, we host other activities, such as "makers" areas in our library and guest lectures. The favorite stress-free Friday event is when we have rescue dogs from the local shelter come visit us. The dogs get a lot of loving attention, and our students get a few minutes to "de-stress" and take a little break from their hectic lives, something our young people need to do more often. Our proms are coming up, and they are always well attended as well as beautifully designed. Another one of East's points of pride is our senior post-prom, which is run almost entirely by our parent-run post-prom committee and funded with donations from the community. Our parents transform our school and work diligently to ensure that the post-prom is something kids WANT to do and will attend. Each year, easily 90% of our prom attendees go to the post-prom afterward, thus ensuring their safety that weekend.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

WC East enjoys a strong positive relationship with the community. Our parents, boosters, local businesses, and neighbors each contribute in their own way to making East the school that it is. We are fortunate to enjoy the support of our PTO, which assists the school in a variety of ways, including our annual mini-grant drive, geared toward raising funds to provide teachers with resources outside the scope of regular school budgets. Each of our varsity sports and each of our musical/drama programs has a booster program comprising parents who really care about the success of our students and programs. Whether it's hosting spaghetti dinners for the kids, or designing and constructing sets for our theater productions, our parents are in our school and involved! Each year, our Open House event takes place in the fall. It's an opportunity for our families to get into the building, meet our faculty and administrators and hear about our programs. It is extremely well-attended, typically with more than 1000 parents attending.

In mid April, we will host our annual Career Day event. We'll have more than 60 guest speakers join us one afternoon for scheduled sessions with our students. This event is important not just for connecting our community and school, but for providing our students an opportunity to hear from professionals in the field, who generously offer their time and expertise to our students. Often, these connections lead to

internships that further the bond between school and community.

East routinely hosts college recruiters, ensuring that students are able to talk directly with admissions representatives and gain insight about schools and the application process.

East prides itself on communication with parents. Aside from keeping our website up to date, we frequently utilize email and phone blasts, an online newsletter, and an online learning platform called Schoology, which allows teachers to post lessons, grades, and other important information for parents to see. Our Interact Club plays in our school and community. One of their roles is connecting with other service-oriented clubs, such as the local Rotaries. East has the biggest and most successful Interact Club in the area, thanks to our philanthropic kids and wonderful advisers, who volunteer their time.

3. Professional Development:

When it comes to professional development, our goals here are two-fold: make it relevant and make it applicable. Seems simple enough, but providing quality professional development (PD) to such a large staff at a complex school like WC East can prove challenging. This is especially true when considering the number of initiatives with which our district is currently involved. When we are designing PD, the administrative team begins by asking, "What would we need/want if we were teachers?" Then we talk with our staff to find out how they would like to spend their PD time. We conduct interest inventories via surveys, and we make sure that whatever we do, it aligns with our goals as a building. We seldom bring in outside "experts." Why would we? We have experts right here in our midst. We believe in the concept of teachers teaching teachers. If we are focusing our PD on the concept of infusing technology into lesson design, we have professional staff who excel at that and can lend their expertise to others. The same is true with the topics of cultural competency and best instructional practices, two other common PD topics.

Providing teachers with an opportunity to lead these PD sessions also provides them an opportunity to lead and grow. We showcase those members of our faculty who step up to take on this role. During our February PD session, for instance, our time was focused on best instructional practices. After talking with our department chairpersons to lay the groundwork for that day, we communicated our interests to the entire staff and solicited volunteers to lead our sessions, which focused on myriad topics. We had more than 20 staff members step up to lead a session. Twenty! Often, we survey our teachers about their professional development sessions and we do this for two reasons: assess the extent to which the PD was effective, and to help us plan for the next session. WC East is lucky to have so many capable and willing teachers, who are here working hard not only for their students but for one another.

4. School Leadership:

The principal of the building is, ultimately responsible for the school, but he is not the only leader. High schools today are too complex and the stakes too high for any one person to run a school by him or herself. At East, we are fortunate to have a strong administrative team. Our three assistant principals and athletic director each has separate duties and plays a different role in our building. As a team, we conduct ourselves according to a few core beliefs: school is intended to function for the best interests of our students, lead by example, and work diligently for the best interests of those we serve. Our administrative team meets formally once and twice a week, and during those meetings, we discuss a variety of topics, and ensure that we are staying on top of (and maybe even in front of) what's happening in the building. These meetings are important for communicating and helping ensure we are on the same page and working as a unit. While much of what we do is behind the scenes, it is important work, and good schools can exist without good administrative teams. But the challenges are many. Complex schools, complex communities, complex times mean that we need to always be on our toes, handle things in stride and appear calm and composed, something that can prove difficult when dealing with matters like threats of violence and school safety issues. Recently, the admin team faced two separate "threats" to our school safety. We investigated the matters, implemented our protocols and policies, and communicated with students, staff, and parents. The real challenge came when the rumor mill got going and spinning stories that were far more colorful than the events themselves. With the advent of social media sites, such as Snapchat, staying ahead of rumors and gossip is nearly impossible and certainly complicates our jobs, but as a team and working closely with local

police and others in our building, such as our guidance counselors, we persevered and reached a good conclusion to the matter. There will be other events like this, events that disrupt and take us away from doing the things that we love, like visiting classrooms and talking with students, but it's our job and we take it seriously. Our leadership team and our staff strive to find ways to say "Yes" to our students. We look to remove roadblocks and provide supports to our students and develop their own sense of ownership and leadership. For instance, we work closely with our elected class officers, student council reps, GSA officers. Regardless of the challenge set before us, the East administrative team is fully capable of resolving it and will always put the students' best interests first.

At East, we are fortunate to have many leaders: staff who step up to lead initiatives, run workshops, help colleagues; staff who come running when we need them and often take care of students in subtle ways that never receive outward recognition. Our teachers are leader in the classroom every day. They work diligently for our students' interests and needs and profoundly impact the trajectory of their young lives. Here, we often refer to ourselves as the "Viking Family," and in many ways we are. Each of us in this building is a member of a community, and we work together to make sure that our students have what they need and that we are always improving, always getting better and better.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

WC East is a unique place. Here we focus our efforts on the whole child. Our programs, our efforts are geared toward helping our students discover who they are and who they can be and taking care of them along the way. In our classrooms, students learn to think critically about their world and apply that learning to new challenges. Our arts programs are there to allow our students to express themselves creatively. Through Interact and our other service organizations, students have the opportunity to give back to others in need. On our courts and fields, they learn to push themselves in competition and win and lose with dignity. People sometimes ask about the best part our job. The answer is simple: the students. They are bright, smart, and accomplished. They are not shy about saying hello as they pass by or asking us to attend one of their events or to come see them give presentations in class. While certain elements of our jobs are very challenging, the students make it all worthwhile. Our tiered course offerings, 50 plus clubs and activities, 23 varsity sports, DECA, Music and Arts programs -- there is something here for everyone and for those students who choose to make the most of their four high school years, they leave here with the promise of knowing that they have laid the foundation for future success in whatever journey they choose next.