

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Kandi Fleming

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

Official School Name HCS Early College High School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2050 Highway 501 East, Building 400

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

City Conway State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29528-0000

County Horry

Telephone (843) 349-3131 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://ec.horrycountyschools.net/pages/Early_College_High E-mail kfleming@horrycountyschools.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. Rick Maxey E-mail rmaxey@horrycountyschools.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Horry County School District Tel. (843) 488-6700

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. Joe DeFeo
(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):
- 27 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 11 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 14 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 52 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	41	60	101
10	71	30	101
11	68	26	94
12 or higher	45	30	75
Total Students	225	146	371

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 24 % Black or African American
 - 18 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 49 % White
 - 7 % 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	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	383
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.023
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 11 %
41 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Portuguese, Tadjik, Hebrew

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 64 %
Total number students who qualify: 238

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %
6 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
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 1 Other Health Impaired
- 4 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	23
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	3
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	11

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 16:1
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	98%	99%	98%	98%	98%
High school graduation rate	98%	99%	100%	0%	0%

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	90
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	51%
Enrolled in a community college	33%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	4%
Joined the military or other public service	2%
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.

Graduates are responsible citizens who are strong critical thinkers, collaborators, and communicators who successfully meet and face challenges to compete in an ever-changing global society.

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

HCS Early College High School is a choice school. Students apply to attend while in the 8th grade. Student selection is centered around serving highly-capable students who score in the middle quartiles on test performance and who are under-represented in post-secondary education - students of color, students from low-income families, first generation to attend/complete college, ELL learners, and others with barriers to accessing higher education.

PART III – SUMMARY

Horry County is a coastal community that is roughly the size of Rhode Island with a population of 300,000. The county has a variety of locales from beach communities to smaller, more rural communities those across the Intracoastal Waterway. With 60 miles of beaches, tourism is the largest industry, providing many year-round and seasonal jobs. Horry County Schools (HCS) is the third largest school district in the state with 51 schools in nine attendance areas with over 42,000 students. HCS Early College High School (ECHS) is a located near the county seat of Conway, and it includes students from all nine attendance areas. This centrally located site is on the campus of Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC). One hundred rising freshmen are selected annually from across the district for admittance to the ECH program. The program was established in 2006 as unique public-private partnership among HCS, HGTC and the business community through the Horry County K-12 Foundation. It is designed as a small, personalized learning environment for students who have the ability to attend college, but may not have considered college as an option. ECHS combines high school and college into a seamless educational program so that students may achieve up to two years of college credit at no cost while also earning a high school diploma. These dual enrollment classes are general college studies, which are transferable to a four-year university or for an identified career. ECHS was designed for the non-gifted and talented student, who is also a first generation college student.

The emphasis on college readiness requires concentration on building strong readers and writers, implementation of project-based and service learning, college placement preparation and testing, and academic support for both high school and college courses. Engaging curriculum work in core content courses is supported by AVID, advisory, service learning, community service and extensive student support services. A schoolwide AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) system provides support for all students to ensure college readiness and improved academic performance. Every ECHS student is scheduled into an AVID Elective class each semester. Guided by the Common Principles developed by the Coalition of Essential Schools, the administration and teachers focus on providing an educational program where there is a total commitment by educators to provide personalized learning, to set goals that apply to all students, to sustain students as workers and teachers as coaches, and set a tone for decency and trust. The student advisory program is another integral component. A diverse group of students is assigned to an advisory in their freshman year. A teacher serves as advisor and follows these students through their academic tenure. The advisory meets weekly and becomes their school "family," and the advisor is their biggest advocate. Each advisory includes well-planned activities that include service to the community, planning and conducting student-led conferences, and completion of a Junior Exhibition.

The Class of 2010, ECHS's first graduating class, had seven percent of students finishing high school with a degree from HGTC, and the average senior earned 46 college credits. During 2011, the program followed state regulations to become a standalone high school. The ECHS Trailblazers Class of 2016 had 58% of seniors earn an HGTC degree or certificate with an average of 51 college hours earned. With the scholarships available from the K-12 Foundation, students have the opportunity to earn a four-year degree from three state universities.

The ECH includes a Bridge Week orientation program the summer before ninth grade. During the freshman year, students enroll in high school courses and receive concentrated study in developing reading strategies and increasing vocabulary while preparing to take the HGTC college placement exam. The sophomore year has students earning a combination of high school units and dual enrollment credits. Junior and seniors are enrolled in dual credit and post-secondary courses.

Focus on acceleration of academic preparation is a key strategy. High school core class curriculum is aligned with entry-level core college core class curriculum. ECHS and HGTC faculty meet together to align curriculum to ensure students have the academic skills required for success in their college classes. As reading and writing are important college skills, emphasis is placed on accelerating these skills. Professional development is provided to all teachers to give them skills to be reading and writing teachers, and all teachers have attended AVID Summer Institute at least once. Students have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities at their base high schools while ECHS offers after-school clubs tailored to meet

the interests of the students.

ECHS was rated as the #1 high school in South Carolina in 2014 by the US Department of Education and was picked by Newsweek magazine as the 204th best high school out of the nation's top 500. HGTC, our partnering institution, was named to the 2009 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction for the ECHS program.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

ECHS provides a seamless educational program through alignment of curriculum to ensure students maximize the opportunity to earn a high school diploma and a two-year degree or certificate. The goals of the curriculum design are to provide a rigorous, challenging, and coherent course of study. High academic standards are the expectation for all students. Deliberately designed as a smaller learning community, ECHS provides students with intensive, personalized support needed to meet these high standards for students to successfully earn a high school diploma while earning college credits toward post-secondary degrees that allow graduates to have family-supporting careers and to participate in society as responsible citizens who are active in their communities. Civic learning is emphasized through advisory, social studies, and elective classes. To engage students, teachers use blended learning, digital content, strategies taught through AVID and Literacy TA. Students are provided structures to help them learn to use their minds well. Lessons are developed that reflect depth over coverage of material, and it is expected that all students master the content. In addition to being accomplished readers, writers, mathematicians, and creative thinkers, students have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate expertise with technology, personal management, and interpersonal skills. The ECHS school-wide outcomes encourage each student to exercise personal responsibility, communicate by clearly and confidently, use critical thinking, and demonstrate personal responsibility. Focus on accelerating academic preparation is a key strategy. High school core class curriculum is aligned with entry-level college course curriculum. Some ECHS teachers serve in adjunct capacity for HGTC, delivering dual credit courses in English, History, and Spanish.

For reading/English language arts, the curriculum is designed around state standards for high school level English classes. ECHS English teachers work with HGTC English professors to align the curriculum to allow students to be prepared to enroll and succeed in English 101 and English 102 as their fourth required English class either in the junior or senior year. Teachers design lessons at each level to scaffold the learning to the next level. Additional reading and writing instruction are provided at each grade level through the AVID Elective classes. Digital content includes Achieve 3000, NoRedInk, and other applications that provide differentiated instruction for content needing additional practice. For students requiring extra instruction in reading and writing, such as students with disabilities or ELL learners, a specially designed elective course, AVID Literacy, provides students with additional instruction in reading and writing. An ACT Preparation elective course provides additional preparation for earning 4-year college entrance and access to scholarships. For students who do not meet the placement score for AccuPlacer in English, the college provides developmental studies courses. Successful completion of these courses provides access to dual enrollment courses.

The State of South Carolina requires students to earn four math credits, and, for ECHS, these courses are Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry, Probability & Statistics, or Algebra 3. Ideally, students will meet the AccuPlacer placement score for dual enrollment in MAT 110 College Algebra or MAT 120 College Probability & Statistics to earn a fourth mathematics credit. ECHS math faculty meet periodically with HGTC math professors to tighten the alignment in our curriculum. Additional instruction and practice is provided through an elective class, AVID Numeracy, which is provided for incoming freshmen who may not be Algebra-ready. Digital content such as ALEKS and textbook-specific applications are used to provide additional instruction and practice.

ECHS students must earn three lab science units for graduation. High school courses offered are physical science, biology, anatomy/physiology, and chemistry. These courses are aligned with SC State Standards and are designed to allow students a seamless transition to dual enrollment courses including biology, chemistry, physics, anatomy, or career-specific science courses for health/science and engineering careers. AVID tutorials allow students to work with their peers and adult tutors/coaches to master content. Students have multiple opportunities to conduct hands-on experiments. Teachers design lessons using standards, district pacing guides, and curriculum maps. Digital content such as Gizmo allows students to participate in online labs. HCS science teachers collaborate with HGTC professors to align the curriculum and to ensure students have pre-requisite knowledge for the dual enrollment courses. Teachers use the college lab

protocol to prepare students for writing their college lab reports.

Social studies courses offered are Civics, American Government, Economics, and US History. All three are required for high school graduation. Dual enrollment is offered for HIS 201 & 202, American History, providing the required graduation credit in US History. Students who are pursuing their associates degrees take other social science courses offered by HGTC. Social studies curriculum is vertically aligned, and teachers design instructional lessons that incorporate project-based learning, Paideia and Socratic seminars, document-based questions using primary and secondary sources, real-world financial literacy projects, and gamification/flipped classrooms. All students participate in National History Day Projects for each social studies course.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

ECH has fully implemented the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) system schoolwide. The AVID system prepares students to succeed with rigorous curriculum. In designing the Early College program in 2005, district personnel knew that a support system would be required to provide students with skills and strategies to be successful in a college path and in preparing students to take dual enrollment courses while still in high school. AVID was chosen and implemented schoolwide. All ECH educators have attended AVID summer institutes and/or path trainings. ECH students are required to take the AVID Elective course each semester. It is a requirement that all students use the AVID binder system, take Cornell notes in all classes, and use critical reading strategies. The five essentials for AVID are writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading (WICOR). These essentials are woven into each curriculum area. In 2016, ECH was awarded the inaugural AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction award which represents the highest level of AVID implementation with quality and fidelity demonstrating excellence in instructional practice and the promotion of college readiness.

The physical education program consists of a continuously evolving and expanding curriculum of lifetime activities that includes ballroom dancing, golf, swimming, yoga, weight lifting and personal fitness. A partnership with neighboring Coastal Carolina University provides students the use of the golf course, natatorium, and the track. The health program focuses on the "whole child" and centers around helping students to make healthy choices related to nutrition, sleep habits, and free time activities. All students take physical education during the freshman year, and an elective course is available for older students.

All foreign language classes are offered for dual enrollment. All ECHS students take dual enrollment Spanish 101 & 102 which are taught by an ECH teacher who serves as an adjunct professor. Study groups, facilitated labs, and other academic supports are provided by this teacher. Students also have the opportunity to take French, German, and/or Spanish 201 and 202.

Each student is issued a Dell Venue in the 9th grade year. The curriculum is technology-fused. Technology courses are offered through HGTC. Students take Automated Office Technology (AOT) 165 to earn dual credit for an introductory computer class that meets the requirement to earn high school diploma. Other students may choose to take additional computer technology courses through HGTC for elective credit or to earn credits toward a degree or certificate in information technology and/or digital arts.

ECHS students take a dual enrollment College 105, a college freshman seminar designed to help freshmen adjust to the college community, acquire essential academic survival skills, with an emphasis on technology skills needed for academic success at the college level. With emphasis on the associates of arts, our students are exposed to the arts curriculum via Horry-Georgetown Technical College course offerings. Students choose two fine arts courses from the music, art, and department areas. These courses vary in depth from appreciation to analysis.

Other high school elective courses include Leadership, Personal Finance, ACT/SAT Preparation, and Driver Education. The Leadership course uses Project Citizen, an interdisciplinary curriculum that promotes competent and responsible participation in local and state government. Students identify community issues, review public policy write a new policy to identify solutions for the issue, and present their policy to the appropriate local or state agency. Personal Finance is designed to help students understand the impact

choices on occupational goals and future earnings potential. While learning to create budgets and develop long-term financial plans, students are faced with real-world problems that can impact the bottom line. ACT preparation in the four areas and SAT preparation is provided to ensure students earn the scores needed to be eligible for state and local scholarships to attend college following their graduation from ECHS.

The elective and career and technical education courses offered through ECHS are limited as the students have the opportunity to a vast number of courses offered by HGTC. Students may select courses based upon their career interest to include manufacturing and industrial technologies, business, culinary arts, engineering, health sciences, public service, legal studies, information technology, digital arts, occupational technology, and natural resources.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

ECHS is committed to providing personalized learning for all students. Instructional approaches used include blended learning, service learning, use of digital tools, teacher-directed instruction, project-based learning, and targeted grouping. Every teacher posts a daily agenda with the standard(s) listed and any required homework. All teachers require students to use the AVID Binder system and to use their agendas for posting dates for assignments, homework, and projects. Lessons for new materials are structured for "I Do, We Do, You Do" allowing gradual release to students to tackle new content. Students use Cornell notes with written summaries. To promote active student engagement, teachers design lessons to include AVID strategies, Kagan strategies, and blended learning groups with differentiation. Classes incorporate project-based learning to give a more authentic learning experience, such as national programs including National History Day, the Financial Literacy project, Project Citizen and school-based programs including student led conferences and junior exhibitions. These are incorporated in academic and AVID classes throughout their high school careers. All of these projects allow student-choice and/or individualization while focusing on real life applications that go beyond the classroom walls.

Digital content and digital resources provide a differentiated and personalized learning pathway for each student. Digital content like No Red Ink, ALEKS, USATestPrep, and Achieve 3000, challenge students to grow at levels true to their capabilities. Teachers make data-driven decisions for personalized small group instruction based on student performance using this digital content. Small groups are frequently adjusted as teachers monitor student progress. This year the focus for using the digital content and blending learning, has been collaboration and creation. Everyone, from administrators to teachers, are trained on how this looks and how to encourage the implementation.

ECHS uses a variety of assessments to assist with personalization of instruction. Students are selected for ECHS based upon scores on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), individual course grades, and attendance. ECHS students take MAP in the fall and spring during 9th through 11th grades. Academic teachers use MAP scores to group students during blended learning and in assigning work on their individual reading levels. Students are challenged to increase their Lexiles and math RIT. Scores are used by academic and AVID teachers to personalize instruction. Benchmark testing is used for our courses requiring SC End-of-Course testing - English 1, Algebra 1, Biology, and US History. The district benchmark test assists course teachers in determining student performance and making changes to improve the performance in targeted standards. HGTC uses ACCUPLACER and ACT scores for college placement. ECHS freshmen take ACCUPLACER for Reading and Writing early in second semester to identify those students who are ready for enrollment in college courses and those who may need to take a developmental course in English for fall semester of the sophomore year. Freshman AVID teachers differentiate instruction for students who do not meet the college placement score on either test, and students get a second attempt near the end of second semester. HCS administers PSAT to all sophomores. In AVID, students review their scores and career assessments which help with determining career paths and course selection. ACT is the state test administered to all juniors. Results are used to help students determine additional study and practice to increase scores if needed for scholarships and college entrance requirements. BE2, our business partner, pays for additional ACT remediation to improve the scores during the senior year.

There is no noticeable achievement gap between subgroups of students. The AVID program is designed to close any gaps in achievement. Schoolwide implementation of AVID and high expectations for all students

has closed the gap for ECHS students. The ECHS administration and faculty have quarterly data team meetings to review all student data to monitor and adjust to meet the needs of all students. Time is built into the AVID Summer Institute for the AVID Site Team to review the school's annual data and a self-study to develop the upcoming year's AVID Site Plan. Using this information, the team reviews the AVID Essential Elements and identifies areas of growth. A comprehensive action plan is developed that also shapes the school's Plan Do Study Act plan required by the district. Both plans are "living" documents and are discussed with all faculty, and all commit to the work required to continue to raise student achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The culture and climate of ECHS are unlike any other school. ECHS stresses the importance of college and career readiness. From the moment students enter the program as rising ninth graders, they begin a transformation. We establish high expectations and expect nothing less than the absolute best from each and every student. Our school does everything we can to prepare our students for college. Many will begin taking college classes during their sophomore year with many continuing their education after high school graduation at either a technical college or four-year college or university. The opportunity to earn college credits while attending high school motivates many of our students. ECHS lives and breathes college, community, and family. ECHS is where "everyone knows your name." ECHS is fortunate to have a school site on the campus of HGTC. Being on the campus gives the school the advantage of "Power of Place," which contributes to the college-going atmosphere and fosters a sense of identity as a scholar.

Our students are challenged in their academic courses with a rigorous curriculum that promotes the development of academic skills such as exposure to complex texts, opportunities to write across the curriculum, and experiences that foster critical thinking skills. Students are enrolled in AVID electives where they learn about themselves and the necessary strategies to be successful in both high school and college. When students are accepted into our program, they are assigned an advisory teacher. Advisory meets once a week throughout the school year, and the group remains together through their academic tenure. In advisory, we celebrate our accomplishments, develop life skills and coping strategies, and prepare for life after high school. Advisories participate in community service and service learning, compete in challenges, and develop strong bonds with both their classmates and teachers.

Teachers are well-respected and encouraged to participate in ongoing professional development, recognized for both personal and professional milestones, and celebrated throughout the year. Teachers are excited about the opportunity to share their passion for teaching, not just with our students, but also with educators from across the district and state. As faculty members, we value each other's time and respect the various approaches teachers take to deliver their content through a myriad of instructional strategies and practices. Teachers are autonomous and allowed to experiment, modify, and adapt to best meet the needs of the students. The administration goes above and beyond to provide us with the supports needed in the classrooms.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The school is a partnership between Horry County School district, Horry-Georgetown Technical college, and Business Education Expectations. The school principal meets with this board monthly to report progress. Initiatives, such as Dancing with the Horry County Stars and STEM Premiere, allow the community to interact with Early College in a face-to-face and digital forum.

Outside of a personalized education, ECHS reaches the "whole child" through monthly cultural activities, helping hands donations to students experiencing financial challenges, and student-selected community service/service learning projects. This process morphs based on student needs.

Students complete student-led conferences beginning their fall freshman year. Parents, advisors and teacher are included in this conference and it is led by the student. This is an opportunity for the student to reflect on his/her strengths and weaknesses and community service to-date. New student achievement goals can be developed and supported by the child's whole support system at this time. Family engagement activities include incoming freshman orientation, providing a night for incoming freshman parents to meet with their students' advisor. The parents receive an overview of the curriculum and the parent contract is discussed. Parents are instructed on how to monitor their child's progress by using PowerSchool and Google Classroom. Parents also receive information about the Parent Resource Center. Throughout the year, ParentLink and the school newsletters keep them in the loop for school activities. These newsletters highlight high achieving students and staff!

The annual block party is an opportunity for parents to learn about school clubs and service-learning opportunities. AVID Family Nights provide an opportunity for parents to receive information. Freshman parents learn about end-of-course exams, agendas, Cornell note taking, AVID binders, course standards and curriculum. Sophomore parents receive training on SCOIS, and the components of the individual graduation plan. Junior parents explore various career opportunities available through HGTC and ACT information. The options of attending four-year colleges are also reviewed. Senior parents discuss financing college through scholarships, financial aid, and loans; parents are assisted with completing the FAFSA.

Junior Exhibitions serve as a culminating activity for student reflection during their third year in high school. During this exhibition, students reflect on academic achievements, gather community service/service learning hours, and obtain letters of recommendation. Parents and community members are invited to observe and question students on their presentation. These presentations often highlight the drastic influence ECHS had on the lives of our students.

3. Professional Development:

School-level professional development sessions are conducted throughout the year led by district specialists, fellow teachers, and digital content providers. In recent years, the digital integration specialist sessions have focused on blended learning, creation, collaboration and proper incorporation of digital tools. These sessions are formatted to personalization based on content standards and developing implementable classroom strategies. Throughout the year there are also periods specifically for reflecting on successful strategies and observing other teacher classroom-management styles using learning walks. Professional development of AVID strategies occurs during AVID Site Team school meetings, building a foundation of common practices. These two types of meetings allow students to develop strong skills practiced thoroughly in multiple classes. Smaller groups of teachers receive training from digital-content sites specific to their providers, such as Achieve 3000. Individually teachers are provided opportunities to conferences focusing on a variety of topics, content specific and focused on the needs of our student population such as the National Dropout Prevention conference, Youth at Risk conference, and the National AVID conference. Teachers share in faculty meetings new teaching strategies acquired at their conferences so everyone benefits.

Over the summer, staff members attend AVID Summer Institute where the team creates a site team plan, which serves as a “living” document revisited at the monthly site team meetings. This plan provides the foundation for a year-long strategic professional learning community where staff, parents, students, and community members collaborate to improve student achievement. This plan addresses three areas of improvement and each staff member sets a goal for how to address that weakness. As that weakness is improved, the site team meets to reflect on another area to improve; it is a fluid process. Monthly, site team members also receive training on research-based methods. Students, parents, and community members reflect on how these strategies may impact student achievement. At the final meeting, the site team reflects and provides artifacts to document student achievement and academic growth. All students, parents, administration, guidance counselors, and teachers sign a contract agreeing upon school achievement goals, which in turn increases student achievement as all accountability roles are explicitly stated. This contract is scanned and stored for the student to reflect on as needed.

District-level professional development includes sessions on content standards, new best practices in particular fields, and the introduction of new technology programs for classroom enrichment. Digital content providers also provide sessions for smarter use of programs. These sessions are either content specific or are self-chosen for individual classroom needs.

4. School Leadership:

ECHS administrators set the vision and tone to promote college and career readiness and high expectations for all students. As instructional leaders for the school, this team is a strong advocate for the ECHS students, faculty, and staff, and are lifelong learners who promote this philosophy with teachers and students. A culture of trust has been established and empowers teachers to be educational leaders both at

the school and in the district and state. Supporters of the AVID program, they support the AVID program both philosophically and financially, assure the program is administered with quality and fidelity, attend AVID institutes, and lead faculty and staff to truly believe in the students and work not only to assist students with academics, but to also help mold them into responsible citizens.

The relationships we have with our students makes ECHS far surpass Early College students nationally, with 100% earning college credits, 85% earning more than one year of college credit, and 58% earning an associate's degree or two years of college credit in addition to earning their high school diplomas. Horry County Schools monitors the program success through annual performance goals to include student performance on state end-of-course tests, ACT testing, MAP testing, the college placement testing, and in college and high school courses. In addition, survey data from parents, students, and teachers are reviewed regarding school climate and school/community relationships.

The AVID Coordinator/Curriculum Coordinator works directly with our teachers to ensure we are staying on the cutting edge of instruction and the latest digital content/devices. She also works to ensure all faculty are trained and implement the AVID Methodologies.

The guidance department works directly in the classrooms with the students on scheduling for college classes and testing. This department also works with each student and parent to complete the Individual Graduation Plan during all four years of high school.

The administration shares all of the previous year's data with all stakeholders. The partnership between the district, the technical college, and the business partner ensures students earn college credits, works to ensure scholarships for additional education, and funds learning experiences outside the classroom.

Each year a theme is chosen for the school and is focused on throughout the school year. This year's theme is #EaCH1 matters. With the theme, we spotlight students and staff who lived out the theme. #EaCH one does matter at ECHS... we know each student by name and work to ensure they are all loved.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

ECHS features many avenues to promote student success but the single most important practice is building of relationships with students and families. This relationship is formed through several pathways, but they all center on one singular thought. Our philosophy is a simple mathematical equation-- $R1 = A3$, which is relationships equals advisory. AVID, and academics.

This occurs through the advisory class. Students attend Bridge Week during the summer where they participate in team building activities. They meet students and an advisor who will be with them for three years. The advisors make contact with the students prior to arrival for the week, and the students form a family with their advisory group complete with a chosen advisory name and mascot. The group meets every Friday, and they participate in planned activities and service projects. Relationships with parents and guardians are established during Bridge Week and through student-led conferences and frequent communication with the advisor. Students conduct student-led conferences with their advisors and families. During the conference, the students must reflect on and explain their academic progress, share work samples, provide strategies for improving academics, and discuss their participation in service. Students take ownership in their learning, and parents feel like a part of the school family.

The AVID class is another relationship-building course that enables students to flourish. In this class, students are taught social skills through team building activities and reflective journal entries. Tutorials, Socratic seminars and philosophical chairs provide a framework for student to discuss and create new knowledge in a supportive group format. AVID coaches provide assistance in specific areas for individual students and an additional support for encouraging the students to achieve to their highest skill level.

Academic tutoring is available after school, before school, and during lunch. For students who have fallen behind due to illness and absences or who have gotten behind with submitting assignments, the principal and assistant principal provide ICU (I Care About U) sessions to provide support and encouragement for maintaining academic success.

Blended learning and differentiation in academic classes ensure that students are receiving instruction at a level which meets their specific needs. Teachers work with small groups and plan instruction that meets targeted goals for students. Teachers are trained in research-based practices, and these practices are used to foster student growth. Teachers have high expectations for students, and those are communicated regularly with the school's use of School- Wide Outcomes (SWOs).