

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. Brandi Lira

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

Official School Name Eastwood Academy

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1315 Dumble Street

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

City Houston State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 77023-1902

County Harris County

Telephone (713) 924-1697 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://www.eastwoodacademy.org E-mail blira2@houstonisd.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. Richard Carranza E-mail hisdsuperintendent@houstonisd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Houston Independent School District Tel. (713) 556-6000

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 Ms. Wanda Adams
(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):
 - 169 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 37 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 38 High schools
 - 43 K-12 schools

287 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	37	68	105
10	43	62	105
11	54	53	107
12 or higher	55	53	108
Total Students	189	236	425

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 96 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 2 % 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: 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	1
(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)]	10
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	420
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.024
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 84 %
Total number students who qualify: 358

8. Students receiving special education services: 1 %
5 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
- 3 Other Health Impaired
- 0 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 1 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 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:

	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.	0
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.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 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	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	88
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	68%
Enrolled in a community college	25%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	7%
Other	0%

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

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2011

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

The Eastwood Academy family empowers students to achieve college and career readiness and become globally-minded citizens.

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

Eastwood Academy High School is a school of choice within the Houston Independent School District. All applicants must submit an in-house application, which includes six open-ended response questions, a written essay prompt modeled after the Common Application for college admissions, teacher recommendation, and submission of academic records and standardized test score history. Application materials are entered into our matrix and applicants are assigned a score based upon the weighted categories assigned to the different components of the application. Applicants who score at the first (top) tier based on their academic and test records and the application itself are granted automatic admission. Applicants who score at the second tier are invited to interview with our admissions committee consisting of teacher volunteers, a counselor, and the assistant principal. Interview and application questions are designed to elicit responses from the applicant that would give the committee an opportunity to get to know the applicant on a deeper level, determine the student's understanding of program offerings, gauge the applicant's ability to think critically and problem solve in difficult situations, and determine the applicant's willingness and capacity to persist when faced with challenging circumstances. The interviewing committee scores each question using a detailed rubric and students are given a score for the interview, which is then applied to the applicant's overall application score. Applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements for admissions after an interview are denied admissions. Applicants who just barely meet the minimum requirement are placed on the waitlist pending availability. Parents and students are always welcome to appeal an admissions decision made by the committee. The appeal process involves a one-on-one interview and a student-parent conference with the campus principal. Admissions decisions are overturned very rarely and only after special and extenuating circumstances are presented by the parent and applicant that explain the reason for poor academic history. In these situations, the parent and the applicant sign a commitment to the school declaring their agreement to take the steps necessary to ensure academic success at Eastwood Academy.

PART III – SUMMARY

Eastwood Academy provides a rigorous education for students, which includes cross-curricular connections and real-world experiences to ensure our students are college and career ready. Each curricular area addresses this vision in its own way. By providing grade-level common planning times, teachers are able to plan out cross-curricular units that are linked to one of the two career pathways: Engineering and Cyber Security. Our students experience a day filled with lessons that link from class period to class period and are aligned to address real-world issues. Students are often challenged with identifying a campus, city, state, or nation-wide problem and creating innovative solutions for the issue. Staff at Eastwood buy into the idea that engagement with real-world problems and civic engagement allows the opportunity to make the learning meaningful to the student, yielding more achievement gains than simply teaching to an assessment. Eastwood is focused on linking content knowledge and skills to practice and application in a relevant context.

Eastwood focuses on addressing literacy gaps presented by entering ninth grade students by offering a summer enrichment and remediation program. Based upon academic data provided, teachers identify student needs and invite particular students for the summer bridge program. Some students may require a basic foundation in literacy. These students are offered an online reading program coupled with individualized teacher support to help increase the reading level. Other students with slight gaps in learning are offered an enrichment program whereby teachers begin laying the foundation for the state learning objectives. Students begin practicing open-ended responses and expository writing prompts. During the school year, Eastwood participates in a program that brings professional writers to campus to help the students with the writing process. The program collaborates with English teacher of record to develop innovative lessons that address the writing TEKS. Teachers also embed research and presentation opportunities into each grading cycle so that students gain exposure to written and oral communication beginning in the 9th grade. Once students reach the senior year, students are expected to have the literacy capacity of a college student. In order to differentiate for the needs of students we offer academic, AP, and dual credit English options for the upper classmen. In 11th and 12th grade the focus is on expanding vocabulary, developing literary analysis skills, and providing extensive writing instruction. Our senior English class features a college essay writing unit to help students have a better chance of college acceptance. To help prepare incoming students for the demands of Eastwood and the TEKS, students are required to take a math placement exam to determine the students' level of aptitude. Based upon the results of this exam, students are offered a summer remediation or enrichment program. During this summer program, teachers scaffold the content for students at an individualized level of accessibility. Because the school's career pathways require a strong foundation in math, the Eastwood staff has chosen to offer 10 different math courses, which range from academic Algebra 1 to AP Calculus BC. The math department uses a mix of digital platforms and hands-on activities to address the TEKS with students. Teachers design word problems that elicit a student's ability to apply concepts in a real-world setting. Students analyze the potential losses and gains associated with car value, synthesize information to formulate responses, and provide concrete evidence to justify their stance.

Eastwood offers a robust science program where students are taught lab safety and perform experiments designed to allow students to explore the content through inquiry-based experiences. In very recent years, Eastwood made the decision to re-sequence the science curriculum to better fit the needs of the students. With 100% of students passing the state exams and only a small percentage scoring a three on the AP exams, teachers developed a new sequence that would allow students to access the TEKS on a deeper level. Teachers use problem-based learning opportunities so that students are required to apply their knowledge to a real-world setting. Students who experience significant learning gaps are assigned to Saturday and after school tutorials, which include more foundational activities. Teachers scaffold the content and work with students individually based on the academic need. The social studies teachers address the TEKS by providing inquiry-based learning experiences where students are required to defend or justify their responses to a current issue with evidence. Additionally, students are exposed to opportunities that allow for real-world application. Recently, the district attorney of Houston invited Eastwood students to attend a special field lesson to the courthouse. Students were able to learn how government works and participate in a mock trial.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Eastwood Academy provides a rigorous education for our students, which includes cross-curricular connections and real-world experiences to ensure our students are college and career ready. Each curricular area addresses this vision in its own way, but by providing for grade-level common planning times, teachers are able to plan out cross-curricular units that are linked to a career pathway. As a Linked Learning campus funded by the Race to the Top federal grant, our students experience a day filled with lessons that link from class period to class period and are aligned to address real-world issues.

At Eastwood Academy we believe that literacy is the foundation for student success. We focus intensely on our ninth grade students as many come from middle school with significant learning gaps. Each summer, we provide an enrichment program to help these students gain the necessary skills to succeed in ninth grade English. The enrichment program consists of hands-on lessons from our resident teachers and scaffolded exposure to the content area in preparation for the school year. During the school year, Eastwood Academy participates in a program that brings professional writers to our school to help the students with the creative process. Every year students prepare for their standardized testing by visiting a famous art museum and responding to the art in writing. While students gain the foundational skills needed to achieve on state exams, the focus is also on preparing students for the level of reading and writing that will be needed in college. Our teachers embed research and presentation opportunities into each grading cycle so that our students get exposure to written and oral communication beginning in the 9th grade. As our students progress through each grade level, the expectation for research and presentation increases. Once our students reach their senior year, students are expected to have the literacy capacity of a college student. As such, they are required to present a Capstone Presentation to a panel of industry and community partners. In order to differentiate for the needs of our students we offer academic, AP, and dual credit English options for the upper classmen. In 11th and 12th grade the focus is on expanding vocabulary, developing literacy analysis skills, and providing extensive writing instruction. These are invaluable tools for success on the AP tests, SAT, and in college. Our senior English class features a college essay writing unit to help students have a better chance of college acceptance.

Our two career pathways are Cyber Security and Engineering. For this reason, Eastwood Academy attracts strong math students. We currently offer 10 math courses which range from academic Algebra 1 to AP Calculus BC. Our large number of math classes have helped students get into Ivy leagues schools. The average student who gains admittance to an Ivy League school, takes 7 or more math classes. To help prepare our students for these rigorous courses, we determine the students' entry level of aptitude and provide remediation or enrichment as needed. A math placement exam allows us to gain a better understanding of the students' strengths and needs. All students are then offered a summer enrichment program in the content area. After the 9th grade, a similar summer enrichment program is offered for our top math students, which enables them to take Pre-Calculus in the summer. Students are then able to take both Statistics and Calculus AB in the junior year.

Eastwood offers a robust science program consisting of academic, Pre-AP, and Advanced Placement courses in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth and Space. Students are taught lab safety and perform experiments designed to allow students to explore the content through inquiry-based experiences. Our chemistry students were part of a mock crime scene investigation. This was especially intriguing for the students in our Cyber Security pathway. Students also participated in a field lesson at Texas A&M Galveston, where they learned of the many science-related majors that are offered at the campus.

Students are required to take five social studies courses. We also offer AP European History and Debate. These courses are offered at the academic, Pre-AP, dual credit and advanced placement level. Our social studies teachers provide opportunities to learn outside the classroom. Every Saturday the students are invited to watch a historically relevant film in the school's lecture hall. The district attorney of Houston invited our students to attend a special field lesson to the courthouse. Students were able to learn how government

works and participate in a mock trial. This opportunity resulted in media coverage for our school. This trip connected well with students who aspire to go into the legal or law enforcement sectors.

Engagement is the key to student learning. At Eastwood Academy our students participate in cross-curricular projects. Each of the projects include a component of the core subjects and one elective. An example of these projects is the 9th grade unit on social injustice. Students explored how social injustices have created bias within medicine, technology, agriculture, and beyond. The project helped students acquire the following foundational skills: oral communication, digital literacy, critical thinking, map and data analysis, expository writing, and data collection. In English students were tasked to write about whether or not violence is a viable solution to a problem. In order to write this essay students studied the social rights era and today's social injustices. Students gave speeches on protecting individual freedom and self-determination. In science students used the scientific methods to explore gender and racial biases in videos games. There are many factors that influence Eastwood's success. We provide a rigorous curriculum with many opportunities to earn college credits. We aim to engage all of our students with various learning styles through our cross curricular project and real world experiences. These practices allow Eastwood's students to acquire the foundational skills they need to a well-rounded student and citizen.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Eastwood offers a wide range of electives aimed at ensuring students graduate from our program as well-rounded individuals. We offer the following types of electives; athletic, academic, artistic, and career and technology. These electives are assigned to students based on grade level and availability. The elective classes follow the same schedule as regular core academic classes where they meet every Monday for 45 minutes and then alternating days the rest of the week for 90 minutes each class.

All students are required to enroll and complete 2 credits of foreign language and the students are able to take those classes as the schedule allows. Spanish is offered as a second language starting with Spanish 1 and ending with the fourth year of Advanced Placement Spanish Literature. Students taking a Spanish course are taught the foundations of the language such as verb tense, conjugation of verbs, conversational language, and are given opportunities to apply the TEKS in a real-life setting at a local business.

The elective classes available to our 9th grade students are physical education (P.E.), Principles of Information Technology (PIT), Art, and cheerleading or soccer based on ability. PIT is a required non-core class that serves as the entry course for both of our CTE Pathways. The PIT course often requires students to use critical thinking and problem solving skills. The TEKS allow for students to learn about the programming language of computers, how to navigate different operating systems, and use of digital platforms. Art students are taught the foundational skills and history of art education, but are also given opportunities to apply the TEKS through patron art projects and competitions across the city.

10th graders are enrolled into an electronics course as part of the CTE pathway where the students have hands-on experiences with circuits and semiconductors, use Real-world components, and test equipment that will increase a student's awareness of the industry. 10th grade students are also allowed to take the Debate course, which addresses public speaking through the use of rhetorical devices. The debate students apply TEKS in campus-based presentations in class and as part of cross-curricular projects and off campus in competitive settings.

As students move on to the 11th grade their options for CTE courses doubles as they have to declare what pathway they will pursue. If a student decides to take the Engineering pathway then they will be enrolled in the Scientific Research and Design class where students learn to use an engineering log, hone their critical thinking skills, work in teams and solve real world engineering problems. If the student chooses to enter the cyber security pathway then they are enrolled in the Telecommunications and networking course where they learn about computer programming, computer hardware, hone their critical thinking skills and work as teams. The 11th grade class is roughly divided in half when the students choose their pathway. About 35 of these students decide to take the film studies course where they learn to write critiques of the film genres and develop judgment skills. Thirty-two 11th graders may choose to take theatre arts where they learn to interpret prose and enhance their creative writing techniques. The 12th grade students are the students with the most flexibility in their schedules and therefore with the most available time to take elective courses

beyond their requirements to graduate and their elected CTE pathway. Seniors in the engineering pathway are required to take the Engineering Research Presentation course. In this course students are expected to work side by side with industry leaders and develop products or methods that are needed in the field. Students continue to hone their critical thinking and problem solving skills culminating with their senior capstone project and OSHA 30 certification. The other half of the 12th graders who decide to enter the cyber security pathway are enrolled in the Web Technology course where the students apply their critical thinking and problem solving skills to combat cyber-attacks and defend against malicious software attacks. These students become aware of the real cyber threats that exist today. These student also work side by side with industry partners and some of them go on to pursue paid internships and earn over 10 certifications while they are participating in this course, preparing them for the immediate entry into the workforce if they decide.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Instructional coherence is emphasized at Eastwood. Using district curriculum documents such as Horizontal Alignment Planning Guides, the Vertical Alignment Matrix, Scope and Sequence documents, and TEKS/STAAR Correlations. Teachers work in collaborative teams to plan lessons that incorporate research-based strategies. This concerted effort to align the written, the taught, and the tested curriculum allows teachers to set benchmarks used in identifying specific student needs crucial to differentiating instruction. The faculty has embedded within the master schedule time for teachers to meet together as grade level professional learning communities (PLCs). During this time, teachers discuss student needs and work together to create personalized supports for students. This meeting time is also used to meet with parents as a team. The parent, student, and PLC collaborate to devise a plan for academic intervention after discussing student assessment and classroom performance data. The approach to assessment is to utilize both qualitative and quantitative data from a variety of sources to obtain a balanced and integrated evaluation of the instructional program. To assess student performance staff members analyze standardized tests, i.e., STAAR, PSAT, SAT, and AP and common assessment data, examine cyclical course grades, review pre-STAAR diagnostics, monitor attendance and dropout rates, and track enrollment in Pre-AP and AP courses. In addition, the school distributes surveys to students, recent graduates, alumni and parents and collect parent sign-in sheets at meetings. The administration establishes timelines for objectives and allocate resources based on the information derived from these sources. All of these measures are utilized to support student growth, revise the curriculum and direct future goals. This approach is consistent with the school's mission. In addition to standardized test data, teachers and administrators use regular benchmark assessments to identify weaknesses in the curriculum, plan intervention programs, flag at-risk and gifted students and study annual trends. Eastwood student test scores are significant compared to district, state and national averages. Administrators review student's cyclical grades to see how well they are meeting curricular objectives and to analyze teachers' effectiveness. Content area leads meet with the principal at benchmarks throughout the year to analyze data, identify areas of need by objective, class period, and by individual students. Before and after-school tutorial offerings are adjusted each six weeks to meet student needs. Cycle and semester grades are systematically reviewed for inflated grades and high failure rates. In-service training is provided to remedy weaknesses in teacher performance. Departmental groups, under the direction of the department heads, study common assessment data each six weeks and propose adjustments as needed. Departmental and grade level PLC's are charged with the responsibility of studying assessment data, setting annual achievement goals, and proposing recommendations if fluctuations are noted. A results-oriented approach to data drives the goal of continuous improvement for all our students. Eastwood Academy High School makes a concerted effort to meet the needs of all students. Students with disabilities are identified by the Houston ISD, and The Admissions Review Dismissal (ARD) committee develops an Independent Education Plan (IEP) for each teacher to follow. Currently, Eastwood Academy High School has 504 and Special Education classified students. Most of these students have Attention Deficit Disorder and are on the Autism Spectrum; each of these students receive modifications in their classrooms. Gifted and Talented students are encouraged to enroll in advanced placement courses. Eastwood Academy High School offers advanced placement courses in: Biology, Chemistry, Calculus AB, English Language, English Literature, Spanish Language, Statistics, Physics, United States History, European History and World History and many dual-credit college course offered in participation with Houston Community College. All Eastwood Academy High School teachers are GT certified and participate in Laying the Foundation (LTF) an instructional development program designed to improve rigor in pre-AP and AP classes. At-risk students

are identified early, and interventions are provided. Classroom teachers give students and parents' progress data each three week period. If a student is struggling and has course averages of less than 70% or unsatisfactory conduct, he/she is scheduled for a parent-PLC conference. At this conference, the team, student, and parent devise a custom plan for intervention based on the student's needs. If no progress is seen by the next grading cycle, the parent and student are scheduled for a conference with the Dean. During this conference, the student is placed on a growth plan. The growth plans evaluate progress in class work, attitude, class participation and test grades. The plan also outlines what the school commits to do in an attempt to support the student and parent to ensure student success.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Upon walking through the modest doors of Eastwood Academy High School, visitors and guests quickly observe the family like culture of the campus. Every staff member knows names of the 420 students that walk through the halls daily. Faculty and staff work intentionally to engage students in finding their life's passions and to motivate these students to fulfill their goals. The daily advocacy period is used in a variety of ways to this end. On Wednesdays, students participate in Town Hall Meetings with their grade level peers and class sponsors to plan fundraising events, discuss upcoming projects, and develop a plan for moving the class forward. On Thursdays, counselors lead lessons focused on teaching the 21st Century Skills for Success that our students will need post-high school. On Fridays, our students are encouraged to attend club meetings. Eastwood embedded these meeting times into the bell schedule so that the tutorial instructional period after school remains uninterrupted. Many of our students come to us without the social capital that makes their affluent peers more marketable to college recruiters. To address this need, Eastwood has solicited the partnership of One Jump, a non-profit organization that has compiled hundreds of summer enrichment opportunities that allow students the chance to explore a variety of fields from culinary arts to biomedical engineering. Students receive personalized assistance with applying for opportunities and attending these programs. Eastwood has created a cultural expectation that all students will attend at least one of these opportunities each school year. The school works with parents and industry partners to ensure monetary costs to attend are never a factor for students. Teachers at Eastwood Academy are encouraged to take risks in the name of innovation and creativity. In a time of high-stakes testing and accountability, it is important that teachers have the confidence and trust needed to explore alternative teaching methods. When guests walk into the hallways, teachers and students can be seen launching hot air balloons, sending CO₂ powered race cars down the hallways, and creating aquaponic systems of sustainability. The sky truly is the limit for the students at Eastwood and teachers know that the principal supports their attempts to get students to rise to the occasion.

In addition, Eastwood Academy provides a comprehensive guidance program to meet the emotional, social, and physical needs of our students. The school employs two counselors responsible for approximately 210 students. Students from first-generation families are often reluctant to leave out-of-state for college out of fear of leaving their family behind. For this reason, Eastwood counselors host monthly parent nights organized by grade level. Counselors use this time to coach and counsel parents through the process of letting their children go away to college. Counselors also organize and lead group sessions with students for a variety of emotional and mental conditions such as depression, anxiety, and grief.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

In addition, Eastwood has an annual tradition of inviting incoming parents and students to Boxer Camp before classes commence in August. This orientation gives students chance to meet their peers, the administrative team, teachers, and get a glimpse of what is in store for the school year. Furthermore, Boxer Camp allows students to see old friends and create new ones; thus, creating a culture of camaraderie and a sense of family. The school's accomplishments are advertised in local news media, on the website, on the school marquee, via word-of-mouth, and most importantly, on all social media outlets including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and SnapChat. Campus and district-wide celebrations are held yearly along with student and employee incentives for academic improvement.

The school has an established Cyber Security Advisory Board consisting of several industry and college-based partners. The board meets with school leaders monthly to evaluate the needs of the school and develop events and strategies for addressing the campus needs ranging from Career Fairs, mock interviews, resume-building, student internships, and teacher summer externships.

Eastwood Academy also hosts Community Walkthroughs throughout the school year. The principal invites community members, local business owners, industry partners, parents, and principals from neighboring middle and elementary schools to walk through the building and into classrooms. The day begins with an

introductory presentation about the school, student demographics, and learning targets for the school year. Participants are then invited to tour the school and observe classrooms. Before leaving, the principal gathers feedback from the participants and allows them an opportunity to share ideas for collaboration with the school. Coffee with the Principal and Dinner with the Dean are held on a monthly basis. During these events, parents and community members are invited to sit down with administrators and discuss school-wide celebrations, areas of need, and planning. Students are also invited to present classroom projects and assignments to parent and community audiences. For the last two years, Eastwood has also started conducting Parent Instructional Rounds. The administrative staff takes parents into classrooms for observations with a focus on student engagement and higher-level thinking skills. Parent Instructional Rounds allows our parents to get a glimpse into the daily lives of their children. The goal is for parents to understand the ever-changing environment of the modern classroom, so they can become equipped with the skills needed to support their children's academic needs at home.

3. Professional Development:

Tony Wagner's 21st century skills for success are embedded in instructional practices and the culture at Eastwood Academy. Many teachers are reluctant to engage students in meaningful discussions related to metacognition, reflective thinking and problem solving, fearing their students will be inadequately prepared for the rigors of standardized testing. At Eastwood Academy, however, this urgency to adequately prepare students, coupled with an emphasis on cyber security and engineering, keeps all parties engaged and in tune with real world issues. Each spring, teachers submit ideas for professional development activities for the upcoming year. The professional development team targets consistent areas of interest and considers whether or not teachers' suggestions will advance curricular goals.

This school year began with an alumni panel. Eastwood graduates from the last five years were invited by the current principal to serve on the panel and inform teachers about their experiences in the postsecondary setting. A common theme that arose from this discussion was the fact that students felt they were not prepared for the level of writing they were expected to produce in their college classes. Throughout the year during faculty meetings, PLC meetings, and in appraiser-teacher conferences, leaders are constantly referring back to meeting the needs of students to ensure they leave with the skills needed to be successful in college, a career, and in life. Eastwood also has an annual tradition of incorporating team-building and personality inventory professional development into plans. At the beginning of the school year, new staff members are required to take the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Inventory and the Strengths Finder assessment. Teachers are then asked to work with their academic teams to determine strengths and potential areas of concerns for the team given the dynamics of the different types within the group. This information is referred back to throughout the year when conflicts arise. These activities are all designed to build team capacity so that the PLCs can better work towards student achievement through a common lens. Every summer, Eastwood works with industry partners in Cyber Security and Engineering to provide teachers and staff with externships. During these externships, teachers get the opportunity to participate in site-based learning experiences at the Federal Reserve Bank, The University of Houston's Cyber Security offices, The FBI, and Vopak-Deerpark. The goal is for teachers to hear from partners what knowledge, skills, and attributes students will need to be successful in the respective industries. Teachers are then given time to meet with their grade-level teams to plan out innovative unit projects linked to the industry pathway. The TEKS are laid out by each teaching within the PLC and the group works together to place the lessons on a timeline that makes the most sense for students. All Eastwood Academy High School teachers meet or exceed the required forty-five hours of professional development. In addition to campus level professional development, teachers are encouraged to attend state and national conferences as well as Advanced Placement workshops at local universities. HISD provides on-going professional development for all Pre-AP and Advanced Placement teachers through district coordinated content PLCs. At these events, teachers are able to acquire resources and materials needed to stay up to date with course content expectations.

4. School Leadership:

The Principal and the Assistant Principal are responsible for the day to day operation of the school. They are assisted in curricular matters by department and grade-level leads, who are responsible for implementing the school's curriculum. The teachers present suggestions to their department chairs who

then present proposals to the principal and assistant principal during the monthly Department Chair meetings.

Eastwood Academy High School concurs that school improvement is a process, not an event. Thus, the school strives to create an internally coherent campus where everyone works in unison to achieve academic excellence for all in a highly diverse community.

We highly value students' input when defining school goals and priorities. Each grade level elects representatives to the Student Council, who meet with the principal regularly.

The small-school environment enables Eastwood Academy High School teachers' to influence decisions on a number of levels, involving all aspects of our school. In addition to their contributions to departmental meetings, teachers participate in decision making through the SDMC. The SDMC holds monthly meetings to include all members of the community in the decision-making process concerning the budget, staffing, and curriculum.

This instructional focus is continued throughout the school by creating a shared calendar which highlights important events happening during the week. Furthermore, the administrative team meets with grade level and department chairpersons monthly on Tuesdays. During the meeting, the principal acts as a facilitator who encourages discussion through journal articles and insightful use of student data. Aside from this effort to align all school leaders, Eastwood Academy High School has an open door policy which empowers teachers, staff, and parents to take an active part in the school's endeavor to provide a first-class education for all students.

The administrative team is dedicated to educating the whole child and providing hands-on, project-based learning experiences linked to a real-world setting. For this reason, the principal and assistant principal work alongside teachers and staff members to make decisions and implement school-wide systems that make sense for students.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

In this era of high stakes testing and accountability, schools must be certain curriculum is aligned with the tests, but never at the expense of sound instructional practices and meaningful, relevant subject matter. At Eastwood Academy, students are taught the content needed to pass a multiple-choice test as well as strategies to think critically, access information, and apply new skills. Instruction is also aimed at addressing the affective domain or encouraging creative and innovative thinking. As a result, a variety of different types of data are used to paint a detailed picture of how to continuously improve teaching and learning. Data is used to inform long range planning, hiring practices, recruitment efforts, student interventions, as well as day to day learning. In fact, data from all stakeholders is a crucial part of all collaborative decision-making efforts. At the beginning and end of each school year, in numerous ways, standardized test data is shared with staff, students and parents and drives all our decisions. Demographic data such as the number of students enrolled, lunch status (free, reduced, or paid), special population numbers, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) coding impacts budgeting allocation decisions as well as services needed to support students and families. Student, staff, and parent perception surveys, as well as data on our community are also used in planning. Weekly, formative, summative, and benchmark data are shared and analyzed in grade level teams as well as department meetings. “Deep dives” into EVAAS data are also a regular occurrence. Personalized learning supports are designed and implemented based on this very important information. Additionally, the leadership team has gathered a large amount of data about staff and uses it to guide decisions on a daily basis. Besides knowing general information such as certifications and personal interests and hobbies, administrator also know the personality type based on the Meyers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI) of all staff members. This information is used to enhance effectiveness in coaching and growing staff, as well as understanding the impact of decisions on certain persons. For example, one particular type thrives on consistency and will challenge any kind of change. The leadership team has learned to run policy changes through these individuals before presenting to the faculty, so they can enlist support or better prepare for opposition. The MBTI information is also useful in forming teams for particular tasks and working through conflict. Students also participate in the MBTI assessment and the data is used in counseling students, especially in the area of career exploration. In addition, this year we used the Strength Finder assessment was used to identify staff strengths and this information has greatly enhanced communication among all staff and assisted the leadership team to capitalize on staff strengths, improving job satisfaction and effectiveness. In general, student learning data is used to measure the effectiveness of instruction, perceptions data provide valuable information about the learning environment, and school processes data assist the leadership team in maintaining a culture of learning for all.