

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 2018 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 2012 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: 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, or 2017.
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 (2017-2018) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 52 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 17 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 17 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 86 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2017 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	7	16
K	32	26	58
1	25	28	53
2	29	25	54
3	49	34	83
4	30	30	60
5	34	33	67
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	208	183	391

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 17 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 63 % White
 - 8 % 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 2016 – 2017 school year: 8%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

Not Applicable (N/A)

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, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	33
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	420
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

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

Arabic; German; Korean; Spanish; Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32%
Total number students who qualify: 125

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
56 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>5</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>22</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

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, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	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 2017.

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

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

To empower all students to collaborate, compete, and succeed in an increasingly interconnected world through the integration of the arts within the curriculum.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts has a rich and storied history. It is located just outside of Fayetteville, North Carolina, with approximately 392 students. The original school was built in 1936 and was used as a high school named, at that time, Central High School. In 1969, Central High School became Central Junior High School. Then, in 1973, the junior high students were transferred to a neighboring school, leaving Central Junior High School to become Central Elementary School, housing Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Grade students. During this time, the community's Kindergarten, First, Second and Third Grade students attended another school, Eastover Elementary School, located near Central Elementary School. In 1983, Central Elementary School and Eastover Elementary School merged to form Eastover-Central Elementary School.

In 1999, Eastover-Central Elementary School looked to integrate arts into the curriculum to better aid their students academically. With this new focus we became known as Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts. In addition to the music and art classes required by the state of North Carolina, our students were then also offered theater, dance and orchestra. Currently, all students receive instruction in theater once a week. We also continue to provide strings to all Pre-Kindergarten through Second Grade students, while our orchestra program is offered to Third through Fifth Grade students. In addition to our cultural arts offerings, our students receive engaging instruction in physical education, media, computer technology and life skills from our physical education teacher, media specialist and school counselor respectively. Not only do our students receive a rigorous academic curriculum, but also a well-rounded education with these enriching programs. We embrace and hold our school to truly live our mission, which is to empower all students to collaborate, compete and succeed in an increasingly interconnected world through the integration of the arts within the curriculum.

Our school was built and continues to thrive on a solid foundation of community support. Many of our students, staff and faculty's parents and grandparents attended our school and possess immense pride which comes from being alumni. This love for our school stimulates active participation in the present. Our parents serve as coaches on the Battle of the Books and Science Olympiad teams. They also provide direct instructional support as academic mentors. Our Parent/Teacher Association works tirelessly to raise funding to support programs and initiatives. Our principal ensures that the school/community bond remains viable by frequently meeting with the Eastover Town Council, informing them of the ongoing events happening in our school and to also invite them to join us at them.

The demographics of our school have changed considerably throughout the years. Historically, our school had low numbers of transient students and few military families. As the infrastructure of Interstate 295 was completed from Fayetteville to Eastover, the population changed and our military association increased due to easier access to Fort Bragg's Airborne and Special Operations Units. We take pride in supporting our military students and families through Patriot Kids, a club created specifically for military-affiliated students.

Eastover-Central students have innumerable avenues in which to excel. We provide our students with the opportunity to perform in our Eastover Little Players Troupe, to sing in our Champion Beat Chorus, or to express themselves artistically in Creative Champions. They are encouraged to lead through becoming class representatives and officers in Student Council. Our students are academically challenged through our award-winning Battle of the Books and Science Olympiad teams. Students also celebrate their academic achievement through their earned membership in the Beta Club. In addition, we create an environment of leadership and social responsibility through the Character Ambassadors club. Selected students are invited to focused after-school tutoring, specifically geared to their academic needs in a specific area. Remediation is extended to struggling students within the instructional day via dedicated times in our master schedule. As evidenced by all of the above, we support our students through a plethora of methods.

Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts exudes excellence. It is expected by our students, parents, community and team of highly qualified educators. This excellence stems from dedication and continual commitment to task. Classroom teachers work jointly through collaborative planning to provide each student

with the tools, knowledge and experiences to succeed. Teacher and administration plan together to create the master schedule allowing for optimal teaching and learning. Our Calendar Committee works together to schedule events in a timely fashion to meet the needs of the entire school. Detailed data disaggregation, with the goal of student academic success for all, occurs through our Accountability Team. Our Student Services Team and the Individualized Education Plan Committee ensure all students have the supports needed to succeed. The School Improvement Team works to ensure our high expectations are met, and that plans are in place to continually move our school forward. Our administration supports all facets of our continuous development as we work to cultivate students whom achieve their fullest academic, artistic and civic potential.

We, and all stakeholders, are exceedingly proud to call Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts home. We believe in high expectations, hard work and a dedication to every single student's academic success. In turn, our students achieve this because of tradition, rigor and relationships.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts looks to partner academics and ingenuity as we work to promote the development of the whole-child. We are proud to offer a rich curriculum designed to reach a diverse group of learners. Eastover-Central staff and faculty are dedicated to providing our students with tools to not only meet, but master, the learning objectives held by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Math, the North Carolina Essential Standards for Science and Social Studies, and the Information and Technology Essential Standards for Media and Technology. Additionally, this mastery is demonstrated in real-world applications. As the only elementary School of Arts in our district, we feel it our duty, as well as an honor, to offer programs designated solely in the arts. However, it is the integration of both the arts and technology within the curriculum which challenges our students to become dynamic thinkers prepared for a global society, and is why Eastover-Central is such a special place.

Collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking are demonstrated by our students, and modeled by our teachers, in the Professional Learning Communities known as collaboratives. These weekly, 85-minute blocks of time are dedicated to teachers reflecting and problem solving, designing rigorous lessons using research-based methods and ensuring instruction is presented in the most meaningful ways. Vertically among the grade levels, our school works together to maintain schoolwide strategies. These strategies provide a familiar, proven framework for students to build upon each year as content becomes increasingly complex.

Select students begin their curriculum experience in our Pre-Kindergarten program. This program is student-centered and designed to promote the development of the whole child in an age-appropriate, warm and inviting climate. Kindergarten through Third Grade standards are linked through center-driven activities which include reading readiness through read alouds, math development through the use of manipulatives, social-emotional development through play, fine-motor skill development through cutting and writing, and creative expression through art and music. A capstone of this program is the social maturity it nurtures in each child, preparing them for Kindergarten and beyond.

English language arts curriculum skills are integrated and cultivated through a balanced literacy framework, yielding crucial opportunities for students to fully engage in literary scholarship. A balanced literacy framework is built upon three distinct segments: whole group, small group and independent practice. This model ensures students gain a strong foundation of literacy skills within deliberate instruction, as teachers provide a high level of support through the modeling of best practices demonstrated by skilled readers and writers. Interactive lessons and discussions, as well as differentiated small group instruction, are settings for students to problem solve and apply strategies. Standards-based assessments allow for teachers to monitor the progress of their students and remediate accordingly. Vocabulary word walls, schoolwide strategy posters and anchor charts serve as connective resources for students in each classroom.

Our mathematics curriculum concepts are illustrated for students by modeling and encouraging use of the eight standards for best mathematical practice: making sense of problems and persevere in solving them, modeling, constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, attending to precision, using appropriate tools strategically, looking for and making use of structure as well as looking for and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning. Across grade levels, a conceptual understanding of word problems is stressed with emphasis on understanding the situation being presented. A wide variety of math manipulatives solidify the foundational understanding by first exploring concepts through hands-on engagement.

The science curriculum is one that is inquiry-based, beginning with simple investigation techniques at the Kindergarten level, and advancing to more complex individual and group investigations in Fifth Grade. Students employ language, drawings, models, charts and graphs to communicate results and explanations. The three strands that comprise the science curriculum are physical science, earth science and life science. Integrative Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects foster exploration and aid

the development of scientific literacy for all students.

History, geography and environmental literacy, economic and financial literacy, civics and government, and culture are the strands of our social studies curriculum. Students in Kindergarten through Third Grade are introduced to an integrative approach to social studies by exploring aspects of self, others, families and communities around the world. In Fourth and Fifth Grades, concepts are explored through the targeted scope of both our state and country. Student inquiry drives discussion of topics in developmentally responsive ways, allowing students to exercise critical thinking skills, while also communicating and synthesizing information about the community and greater world in which they live.

While all North Carolina public schools follow the same prescribed curriculum, Eastover-Central's students are further enriched by an embedding of focus on the arts as well as the integration of project-based learning, where our students expand beyond the core subjects and link learning to their personal experiences. Moreover, Eastover-Central faculty firmly believes in the integration of technology within the whole curriculum. All classrooms are equipped with interactive SmartBoards and ceiling-mounted projectors, as well as access to a class set of computers and iPads. Our core curriculum, when delivered by our student-focused, caring and engaging faculty, results in infused instruction that enhances curricula, deepens engagement and widens student scope.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Eastover-Central Elementary School enhanced our rich academic tradition when we became Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts in 1999. Embedding a strong focus on the arts within our core curriculum enhanced the daily instruction of our students 19 years ago; this practice continues to the present day. We offer multiple ways for our students to assimilate content, affording tremendous academic gains. Our extracurricular subjects are unique due to the collaboration between teachers integrating both core instruction and these content areas, piquing students' natural curiosity and talents. Art, guidance, media/technology, music, physical education and theater arts offerings are extended to all students, Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, once each week.

Our art program introduces drawing, origami, painting, pottery and sculpting to our students. Art history is woven into the students' projects. Students become familiar with significant art and artists from a wide variety of cultures and time periods. Reading and math are integrated into the visual arts to support different learning styles. Our students proudly display their artwork throughout the school and within the community. Artwork is also showcased annually in our community mall and published frequently in the local newspaper.

Our comprehensive and developmental school counselor works with all core curriculum faculty to provide academic, behavioral and career preparatory skills in an effort to make our students responsible citizens. The counselor integrates many literary sources and vocabulary while cultivating civic responsibility, as our classroom teachers then take those specific traits, and find unique ways to implement them within their normal, daily instructional presentation.

Media and technology classes use core content to educate our students to fully create, evaluate and efficiently utilize information, media and technology. This added exposure affords students a deeper understanding as they become true 21st-century learners.

Through singing, playing instruments and creating music, our students discover and develop their innate abilities while learning to recognize and demonstrate basic musical elements. Our music teacher uses various instruments, songs and rhythms, both domestic and international, to incorporate core content. The program offers a variety of student performances throughout the year for our school and community.

Physical and health education encompasses the well-being of the whole child. The curriculum provides students with a variety of skills that enhance their quality of mental, emotional and physical health. All of our students participate in an annual Field Day, and selected students are invited to compete in a yearly district Super Fitness Field Day.

Our theater arts teacher has been recognized as a leader in her field, as evidenced by her selection to develop our district's elementary theater arts curriculum. The program encourages our students to be creative, think critically, problem solve, communicate and collaborate. Students are given opportunities to read plays and write scenes, create and design projects, and perform in skits and plays through the use of technology. Collaboration between the theater arts teacher and English language arts (ELA) teachers results in literature which is studied in ELA classrooms coming to life through skits and plays in theater arts class. The Eastover Little Players is a practicing student troupe which writes, directs and presents an annual production for our school, neighboring schools and the community each year.

In addition to the above offerings, the strings program is taught to all Eastover-Central students, Pre-Kindergarten through Second Grade, with instruments provided to students at no cost. Our strings teacher meets with these students once each week. Students in Third through Fifth Grades have the opportunity to continue with the violin or choose another orchestral instrument through our elective orchestra program. Those students who continue meet with the orchestra instructor twice a week with approximately 40% of our upper-class students choosing to take advantage of this elective. As the only elementary school, among 52 in our district, to offer strings to all students, we instill a life-long love of the performing arts for all.

Every school stakeholder, including administration, staff, faculty, and parents and guardians, strongly believe that our extensive extracurricular programs not only provide each student a strong foundational comprehension, but also enriches the knowledge base in their core curriculum classes through the dedication and collaboration of regular and extracurricular faculty members alike. This strong commitment and dedication to our students' overall learning experience is another delineating factor which separates us from other schools.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Our school uses a variety of instructional methods for students. Complimenting these, we also administer multiple assessments, and use the subsequent data garnered from them to plan targeted interventions to ensure academic success for all.

We implement six instructional practices that are critical for effective student-centered instruction. Initially, we establish and maintain a positive environment for students where they feel safe and supported. Organized lesson plans are then designed using state standards, assessment data and best practices. Thirdly, in order for students to synthesize their knowledge, they participate in meaningful learning activities. Thus, student engagement, our fourth pillar, is maximized. Infusing academic rigor to vigorously challenge each student is our fifth instructional practice. Lastly, students are provided timely and, specific feedback so they are aware of their progress and can make adjustments where needed. Staff and faculty are engaged in professional learning throughout the year to support these core beliefs, and continue to improve our daily instructional practices.

These practices are delivered through three distinct avenues: whole group, small group and individualized instruction. Teachers are supported in these avenues through the implementation of the Enrichment and Remediation blocks, an approach proven extremely successful at Eastover-Central. These dedicated blocks of time within our daily instructional schedule are provided to enable teachers to work with students in both individualized and small group settings. This is also an opportunity for faculty to reach students whom are unable to stay for our weekly, year-long after-school tutoring. Through this practice, individual student needs are targeted and remedied.

As a school, we also incorporate research-based technology to simultaneously enhance curriculum and increase student engagement. Teachers use resources such as, Kahoot, Let's Recap, MobyMax, Symbaloo and Google Classroom. These resources aid in addressing the diverse learning needs of all students by meeting them at their initial, individual levels and then allowing them to work at their own pace. This, and all of our technological support, are used by both core classroom teachers as well as the school's Resource team.

Eastover-Central also equips our students with iReady, a diagnostic resource used to individualize

instruction. All fifth grade students use the program as a curriculum supplement in the areas of math and reading, while other grade levels are incorporated, as needed, for those students requiring additional instructional support. Through this program, students are assessed periodically during the school year to generate individualized lessons to match current deficiencies and improve skills sets.

A foundational belief at Eastover-Central is disaggregation of student data across grade levels, including Standards Mastery Assessments, district-created tools which give students a brief assessment centered on a specific Common Core standard; Benchmark assessments; Schoolnet teacher-made assessments; Reading 3D and district primary Math Tasks, all used to aid in the planning of support for every student. Results from these are discussed and utilized by teams each week during their collaborative planning to tailor instruction so that individual student academic needs are met. Because we feel so strongly in this practice, extensive time is given following the close of each reporting period for grade level teams to analyze data from all assessments administered thus far. It is during these Data Days that teachers are able to create small groups and plans to specifically support student academic improvement.

Although there are many facets to why we have maintained our decades-long tradition of exemplary scholastic performance, it is our commitment to partnering data-driven instruction with dedicated teachers who are leaders in their profession that stands at the forefront. This is accomplished through our faculty consistently and continuously practicing self-reflection. Although administration encourages this practice, our faculty is intrinsically motivated to do so. This, coupled with formal observations as well as "Learning Walks" by our leadership team, results in viable teachers fully ready to assist every student in reaching their academic potential.

While these practices have resulted in prolonged student success, additional reinforcements are provided for both students who are struggling academically and excelling. Three subgroups have a difference of more than ten points based on the most recent state standardized assessments. To combat this, the aforementioned methods are supported and strengthened by our Student Services Team working diligently to assist these students with tiered interventions tailored for each specific individual. Alternatively, Academically Intellectually Gifted students are immersed in a program which extends and enriches the curriculum as we look to satisfy their natural curiosity.

As a school, these approaches are systematically utilized to both maintain and improve upon our existing lofty student achievement. While this will continue each day, we will not rest on previous laurels, but strive to remain professionally viable.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

We daily strive to provide a nurturing climate which supports the social needs and emotional growth of students through a variety of ways. Schoolwide events such as Birthday Lunch celebrations, Digital Learning Day, Lego Days and Read Across America Week are offered to all students. Third through Fifth graders are encouraged to join extracurricular clubs which serve a variety of interests; these include Battle of the Books, Beta Club, Champion Beat, Character Ambassadors, Eastover Little Players, Science Olympiad and Student Council.

All of these enhance the social skills of our students as they develop bonds with peers and teachers that last beyond their years at Eastover-Central. Several of our clubs have a service-centered focus which builds community relationships. Beta Club members mentor students in the primary grades through the Beta Buddies program, and these members as well as Student Council officers and representatives, complete annual service projects.

Students, in addition to club offerings, find support emotionally through the caring ethos of our staff and faculty, as well as through groups facilitated by our school counselor. Specifically, Patriot Kids was founded to support students in our school who have parents or guardians serving in the military. These students meet monthly during their lunch to discuss how to deal with a parent's deployment, build relationships with family members that do not live with them, or possibly prepare for a move.

Our school culture is one of shared beliefs and teamwork. Teachers feel valued and motivated, and our students reap the rewards of this dedication, thereby enabling them to meet and exceed the high expectations which the Eastover-Central community has held for decades. Teachers are encouraged to participate in Champion Check-Ins, a feedback system developed by administration to allow staff and faculty an avenue to share their thoughts regarding the current state of our school, both instructionally and socially. Administrators review these and then respond to each teacher about their comments, help rectify their concerns and answer any questions they may have. Not only does administration address individualized concerns, but they also continually reward our teachers for their dedication to our students and school. One such way this is done is through a Monthly Treat, a surprise snack which administration delivers personally to all staff and faculty members' room. Personnel are also indulged through our Parent/Teacher Association's monthly breakfast buffet which is catered to the school. Though these rewards are extrinsic, they continue to enhance the high morale in our school.

All of these lead to Eastover-Central truly being a student-centered school, and one in which they are taught by cared-for teachers. The various practices which are in place for our students, staff and faculty continue to make our school a superior learning community where all feel encouraged, valued and motivated. Our stakeholders firmly believe these supports and the resulting climate that is born from them, is one of many reasons, albeit a prevalent one, that has resulted in our long history of exceeding academic performance targets.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts relies heavily on family and community support. As the living embodiment of a "community school", Eastover and our school have been closely linked for decades. The key strategies found most successful in working with our families and community are involvement and relationships.

Our parents directly impact student success through our Academic Mentor program, which was developed by the Student Services Team in August 2014. The Academic Mentors are assigned to students in need of focused skill building, remediation and tutoring. Our parents also directly impact our school's success through their many hours of volunteering in other capacities. We have many parents that volunteer every day to provide valuable services to our students and teachers in various roles. Other parents choose to serve

specifically as coaches for our Battle of the Books and Science Olympiad teams.

Our Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) is strong and supportive. Through extensive fundraising, our PTA is able to provide funding for many instructional supports including Scholastic News, MobyMax, Flocabulary and after-school tutoring. They also provide teacher supply reimbursements, mini-grant opportunities and student academic planners. Our PTA is a vital part of providing Eastover-Central with support on many levels which directly correlates to our academic success.

The PTA President also serves on our School Improvement Team (SIT). This allows the PTA President to collaborate and gather important information concerning the school's focus, goals and initiatives to share with the PTA Board for planning purposes. We also have additional parent representatives on the SIT, as they provide invaluable insights in the team decisions we make impacting our students and school.

Parent/Teacher Conferences are used to help all students succeed while keeping them informed of their child's total school experience. Parents are provided with early afternoon and evening appointment times to encourage their attendance at these beneficial meetings. Our teachers also use platforms such as ClassDojo and Bloomz to actively communicate specific student and classroom information to parents.

In this vein, we actively seek to ensure all stakeholders remain informed. We provide important and timely information to our extended school family using our ParentLink automated phone service and printed monthly newsletters. Our website highlights valuable information about upcoming events, student successes and school milestones, as do our social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter.

Our principal attends Eastover Town Council meetings to provide information about our school, as well as thank members for their continued support. Another way we extend our school to the community-at-large is through our Champion Partners in Education Program. This symbiotic relationship benefits both our school as well as those investing businesses, as we recognize them throughout the school year. All of our stakeholders and school family join together to celebrate student success at our quarterly recognition programs.

3. Professional Development:

For students to continually succeed, teachers must constantly hone their skills and use timely teaching methods; this is accomplished through our professional development. Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts knows the vital role of professional development, and places a strong focus on both its importance as well as its implementation.

When choosing our annual professional development, we looked first to the area identified by school staff and faculty as needing strengthening. Due to our school being one of only two elementary schools within our district which does not receive federal Title I funding, our technology availability does not compare to others. As a result, we feel that we must use the technology available to the fullest extent so our students become the epitome of true 21st-century learners. To this end, our annual focus became student-centered learning through digital integration.

Instead of having non-school presenters, or even administration, we realize that the true value of the PD sessions would be attained only when our teachers themselves take ownership of the material and serve as our on-site implementation team through a distributive and shared leadership approach. Our administrators are active participants in our professional development sessions, but teachers from our school's Distributive Leadership team and Curriculum and Instruction committee provide professional development sessions to our staff and faculty. While developing the content of our digital learning professional development, we closely aligned it with the North Carolina Digital Learning Competencies. We used surveys to identify the school's specific digital interests and needs. Additionally, sessions were imbedded with materials teachers could use immediately with their students so gains in academic achievement were instantly realized. Our professional development sessions are held on districtwide early release days, as well as during each monthly faculty meeting, so our topic remains fresh and at the forefront of all faculty members' thoughts and instructional practices.

The digital learning professional development has been tremendously successful and has resulted in our students having a greater understanding of technology and how it can supplement their daily instruction. Knowing that today's students are more technologically savvy than ever before, our instruction is tailored to their learning style and the technology-driven world in which they live. Our students are now able to use Let's Recap to record ideas and responses online, Google Classroom to submit classwork and collaborate with their teachers and classmates, Symbaloo Learning Paths to navigate at their own pace through standards that are designed specifically for their learning needs, and many more digital resources that enhance our student's instruction. Professional development has played, and will continue to play, a huge role in the ongoing academic success at Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts.

4. School Leadership:

The school leadership at Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts relies heavily upon authority being shared to ensure that all students both reach and surpass their academic potential. The use of this distributive leadership model allows all staff and faculty to be viable members of decision-making processes. All are architects of our shared philosophy resulting in Eastover-Central having a single, unified, known-to-all goal of every student realizing academic success.

The principal and assistant principal meet weekly to review all areas of the school. These leadership discussions detail all facets of Eastover-Central and guarantee that the administration is fully aware of all aspects within the school, keeping the shared goal of student academic success at the forefront of all decisions. Following this meeting, the instructional coach joins administration to discuss curriculum issues, review and disaggregate student achievement data as well as share ideas concerning innovative ways in which instruction can be presented to fully capture and expand the minds of our 21st-century learners.

Administration distributes leadership capacity to grade level chairs at monthly meetings, enabling them to hear concerns, answer questions and also seek insights from the faculty regarding decisions that face the school. By serving as representatives for their professional colleagues, grade level chairs embody their peers, giving everyone a voice in the ongoing processes of the school.

An additional facet of our distributive leadership model is our School Improvement Team (SIT). Our SIT meets monthly to discuss the managerial aspects of our school. More importantly, each meeting also has a curriculum focus so that, collaboratively, we can review the pedagogical and instructional processes occurring in classrooms at Eastover-Central.

Following the 2014-2015 school year, the results of our End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments, which all North Carolina Third, Fourth and Fifth Grade students are administered, demonstrated a decline in student achievement across all grade levels. To that juncture, we traditionally offered after-school tutoring beginning in March of our school year in an effort to provide focused interventions prior to EOGs being administered in May. Following our disappointing results, the administration, grade level chairs and SIT discussed the root causes of the issues, as well as our tutoring approach. It was collaboratively decided to have all EOG faculty provide weekly after-school tutoring beginning the second week of our school year, and lasting until a week prior to the administration of EOGs.

The shared decision made by our stakeholders, and through our distributive leadership approach, resulted in sharp statistical gains throughout all EOG subjects and grade levels: the students' EOG overall composite proficiency rate rose from 10th in our district among 52 elementary schools to 3rd in the 2015-2016 school year, and improved again to 2nd during the 2016-2017 school year. This tangible, dramatic increase in student learning was only possible through the shared realization of our collective goal of student achievement for all, and was logistically achieved through our distributive leadership model.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Though it is difficult to pinpoint a single facet which has led us to continual academic prosperity, the one practice that stands above all others is the insistence that Eastover-Central Elementary School of Arts be a data-driven school. All of our staff and faculty are committed to using every datapoint at our disposal, and the disaggregation of it, to simultaneously guide and shape what our students receive each instructional day.

Data leads all decisions with universal student success as our ultimate goal; this begins with administration using student achievement data to determine which faculty members will best meet the needs of students. The principal and assistant principal extensively review a variety of student achievement data to make these determinations. These are namely: Reading 3D TRC results; findings from Standards Mastery Assessments (SMA), brief district-created assessments centered on a specific Common Core standard; and results from End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments. Our practice of having data guide all discussions and decisions is further exemplified in weekly meetings with the principal, assistant principal and instructional coach, during which they peruse current assessment data to ensure all students achieve continual academic growth.

This belief is embedded in our school culture. Two examples of this are grade level collaborative meetings, as well as our Accountability Team. Our school has a dedicated, uninterrupted, weekly 85-minute block of time for each grade level so that the teachers, as a team, may discuss and disaggregate student data. This method is then extended vertically throughout the grade levels via our Accountability Team, which consists of all faculty who teach an EOG subject. The team meets throughout the school year to look at datapoints, trends and areas of concern to ensure a viable path to academic success is available to all students.

Yet another way we embed data within our school processes is through our Data Days concept. These sessions, funded through Title II monies, correspond with the close of our first three Reporting Periods. They enable grade level faculty, Kindergarten through Fifth Grade, to review exhaustive and comprehensive data on each student in the grade to aid them in their individualized learning and have them prosper academically.

All of the above display both a schoolwide commitment to the use of data, as well as how it is utilized at Eastover-Central. This, more than any other factor, is why we as a school have seen our district EOG overall proficiency composite ranking increase from 10th (2014-2015), to 3rd (2015-2016), to 2nd (2016-2017) among the 52 elementary schools in our LEA, as well as have our school both meet and/or exceed expected student academic growth projections the last two years.