



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 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

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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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 0 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 1 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
<b>PreK</b>	14	14	28
<b>K</b>	24	13	37
<b>1</b>	15	24	39
<b>2</b>	14	12	26
<b>3</b>	17	20	37
<b>4</b>	14	11	25
<b>5</b>	14	14	28
<b>6</b>	15	24	39
<b>7</b>	24	17	41
<b>8</b>	21	24	45
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	172	173	345

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 81 % White
  - 1 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 5%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	345
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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):  
Spanish, Russian, Indian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 16%  
Total number students who qualify: 56

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %  
43 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>5</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>5</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>21</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>3</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>2</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: 14
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	19
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	4

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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

East Amwell Township School district is a safe, supportive community that recognizes all students as unique individuals and provides opportunities for academic, artistic, cultural, emotional, physical, social, and character development in a diverse and ever-changing society.

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

East Amwell School participates in the New Jersey School Choice program and admits students based on availability in accordance with state mandates. Families seeking a quality education from a high performing school complete a student application which is reviewed and placed into a lottery system. Selected students receive a welcoming letter inviting them to enroll and join our community of learners. We also maintain a waitlist for students interested in seats that may come available.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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The walls of East Amwell School tell our story. Visitors are greeted by a vibrant mosaic mural of our beautiful school setting created by students and staff under the direction of a local artist. Pictures of enthusiastic students line the hallways along with another mural displaying our shared character traits and our school traditions that was created by staff as a team-building activity. Outside the gym, the tiled Cougars ROAR wall is a reminder to be the best we can be. East Amwell School, is often called “the hidden gem” of Hunterdon County, a place where education is honored and embraced by our family of learners.

Our school culture recognizes the importance of 21st Century Skills; therefore we nurture decision-making, collaboration, self-reflection, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Through teaching and by example, students at East learn the value of communication, listening, tolerance, and empathy which are traits now being recognized by world-wide companies like Google as keys for success. As a school community, we aspire to ROAR (Respect Others and Accept Responsibility) and follow the motto “All the Children, All the Time.”

Replacing the former one-room schoolhouse, the current building opened in 1938 as a public school serving the local farming community. Subsequent additions and enhancements have created a modern environment for learning surrounded by 32 beautiful acres in Ringoes, NJ located at the southern end of scenic Hunterdon County. This quaint township harkens back to the American Revolution with many buildings on the National Historic Registry. Today, Ringoes is largely a residential community with strong ties to its rural heritage through many prominent agricultural and equine farms. Students range in age from pre-Kindergarten through 8th Grade with a current enrollment of approximately 350 including both local and school-choice students. These students come from suburban homes as well as functional farms where they live and work a rural lifestyle.

Long-standing school traditions unite us, symbolized by the tolling of the original school bell each morning. Upbeat music flows from the outdoor speakers as students are greeted by teachers and school administrators when they enter the building. East Amwell Television (EATV) produces a daily student-run morning program broadcast to the entire school. The hosts lead the Pledge of Allegiance and the program continues with announcements, weather reports, sports, and other fun, engaging segments. Teacher interviews, Riddle-of-the-Day, and Cougars Reading in the Den are regular rotating features. EATV unifies our students who range in age from 3-14 with remote broadcasts on location and short videos shared at school assemblies highlighting special events such as our holiday toy and clothing donation drive.

Student recognition is integral to our school traditions. Cougar Champions are rewarded for academic achievement with a personal congratulatory letter from our superintendent each marking period. Also, our Student-of-the-Month Program praises outstanding students for their character in and outside of the classroom. Students receive recognition for reaching goals in various programs such as ST Math, Accelerated Reader, and Epic Books. We celebrate school spirit each month by wearing blue and white Cougar Clothing.

Our standards-based curriculum, which is reviewed and updated every five years, encourages and challenges all of our students. The school maintains established support systems include Response To Intervention (RTI), Basic Skills Instruction, Intervention and Referral Services, and Child Study Team Services. Students have opportunities for enrichment and acceleration within their classes and through SPARK, our dynamic Enrichment/Gifted and Talented program. Uniquely, we provide a Life Skills Class to appropriately educate cognitively disabled students both in school and out in the wider community. Additionally, East Amwell’s inclusive preschool instructs diverse learners using a research-based curriculum. Both programs attract tuition students from surrounding districts.

East Amwell ensures that each student is healthy, safe, and engaged. Our full-time school counselor regularly visits classrooms and is involved in a wide range of activities to promote emotional health and social mindfulness. Wellness needs are addressed through a holistic Physical Education/Health curriculum where students practice yoga, participate in Good Morning Games, and learn from more traditional

activities. A full-time certified school nurse monitors and maintains good health practices within the school community. Communication among staff members is ongoing to ensure that needs in these areas are appropriately addressed so that students are equipped to learn.

East Amwell is proud to be ranked as one of New Jersey's Top 50 Schools. Within that honor, we are among an elite group of twenty high performing elementary schools. Student achievement is evidenced by our consistent high performance on standard assessments such as PARCC. Beyond academic performance, our students are recognized as the top-ranked school in the TerraCycle upcycle program year after year. Junior Solar Sprint Challenge, Law Adventure, Middle School Debate, Scholastic Writing, Patriots Pen, Hershey Music in the Park Festival, Science Olympiad, and Family Tools and Technology are some of the examples of the abundant opportunities for student recognition and academic, emotional, physical, and cultural growth at East Amwell School. Collectively our goal is not to be like other schools; it is for others to be like us.



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

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

Our core curriculum is the bedrock of our commitment to strong academic success and reinforces our culture of All the Children, All the Time. Teachers update curriculum on a five-year cycle continually aligning learning to the latest standards-based research.

The East Amwell English/Language Arts (ELA) program addresses the increasing societal demand for global citizens to process extensive text through the explosion of digital and social media. Literacy learning is an evolving, complex process that requires expert teaching and differentiation. A continuum of language arts skills and development links assessment to instruction while supporting demanding learning progressions as outlined in the ELA New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Literacy learning begins in pre-K with emergent skills and follows a Balanced Literacy approach in grades K-5 including Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Writing Workshop, and Word Study. During the middle school years, dynamic reading instruction is essential and includes opportunities for students to read leveled content, choice books, and shared texts with varied complexities. Middle school writers continue to gain important skills and develop craft with more sophisticated writing during Writing Workshop, Collaborative Projects, and Digital Compositions. Word Study evolves into building vocabulary with Latin and Greek roots. Elementary and middle school teachers use data to focus differentiated instruction on skill mastery leading to increased proficiency and student achievement. More advanced students are challenged through programs like Junior Great Books, Law Adventure, and Writing Contests while struggling learners are supported through successful Response to Intervention (RTI), Basic Skills, and Tutorial programs where growth is tracked through frequent Progress Monitoring. The combined efforts of the East community support our philosophy that literacy proficiency leads to deeper achievement in all content areas.

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Mathematics ensure grade level specific mastery of approved content. In K-3, flexible grouping helps students master concepts. In Grade 4, differentiation and academic grouping move learners forward to the next level. Beginning in Grade 5, higher achievers are placed on an academic path toward mastery of Algebra I by the end of Grade 8. Students in K-5 acquire foundational skills using engaging tools such as Go Math and ST Math, an online learning platform. Big Ideas is used in Grades 6-8 to instruct and challenge students. Beyond the mastery of content, students learn cooperatively, participate in peer-tutoring, and are provided with a solid grounding in the elements of financial literacy. Instruction combines classroom learning with real world application emphasizing individual responsibility and elements of civic engagement within our mathematics curriculum.

East Amwell's science curriculum is aligned with the NJ Student Learning Standards for Science that support Next Generation Science. Students learn in engaging environments through hands-on discovery and interactive learning of science and other STEM areas. Teachers Curriculum Institute and Science Fusion are resources for scientific exploration and content material. Students learn in all modalities and science classrooms are alive with students organizing, analyzing data, and creating visual representations of scientific inquiry. Numerous civic opportunities are available through community involvement in recycling and visits from local professionals. East Amwell partners with the Exxon/Mobil Teachers Academy as an annual grant recipient school. Teachers from East Amwell Township School received training from the Mickelson Academy and the Sally Ride Academy to bring STEM learning into K-8 classrooms.

In social studies, our K-8 students are guided by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards that outline studying various cultures, tolerance, civics, government, citizenship, and economics. We extensively use primary sources to synthesize information along with Project-Based Learning, Data Based Questions (DBQ), and a multitude of hands-on opportunities such as role-playing to integrate cross-curricular studies with civic learning.

Preschool is a gateway for families to join the East Amwell Community. The Tools of the Mind standards-based curriculum provides individualized academic instruction and play-based learning where students develop citizenship in leadership and cooperative roles. Achievement is monitored through formative

assessment administered by the lead teacher and enhanced through technology (Epson Board, iPad), special areas (PE, Art, Music, Spanish), and learning from older students who visit the classroom regularly. East Amwell preschool students enjoy widespread success in the primary grades because they are academically prepared and learn as active participants in our community, understanding rules and taking part in school traditions.

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

In accordance with East Amwell's commitment to educating the whole child, students learn valuable skills and life lessons in special area classes. The arts are essential to education and integrated into all curricular areas. Students follow a standards-based art curriculum in classes held at least 40 minutes per week beginning in pre-K. Students study colors, perspective, portraits, and ceramics using our kiln as they master art elements and principles. Cross-curricular art units are team-taught to support the academic core curriculum. All student artwork is displayed on Artsonia, an online student art museum, where students share their personal portfolios with the community. Student projects are shown at extensive art shows throughout Hunterdon County, at the state Capitol, and in New York's Time Square. Art achievement is evidenced by the high numbers of East Amwell students admitted into Gifted and Talented art classes at Hunterdon Central Regional High School.

Music education enriches our school culture throughout the year. Students in grades pre-K to 8 attend music classes at least once per week in general music, vocal music, or instrumental lessons. Performance opportunities abound for members of chorus, select ensemble, band, jazz band and strings at school concerts, community events, on EATV, and during cultural celebrations etc. Our students learn to sing/play in tune, sing/play to the beat, and appreciate all types of music, theatre, and dance. Their achievements at East lead them to consistent success in arts classes, performing groups, regional/state choirs, band, orchestra, and musical productions at Hunterdon Central Regional High School (HCRHS), a highly competitive Blue Ribbon School of 3000 students. Art and music collaborate to create whole school theater productions and concerts integrating scenery, artwork, chorus and instrumental performances, plays and musicals.

Our Physical Education (PE) and Health curriculum educates the whole child to thrive and achieve. Classes in PE along with outdoor recess provide exercise to meet the state standard of activity. While physical fitness is emphasized, students also develop leadership and character through essential movement, mindfulness, sports, and health education. Students participate in school events like Jump Rope for Heart, Discover Running, and Field Day sponsored by the PE staff.

Technology is woven into the fabric of learning at East Amwell and all of our students develop strong computer skills and digital literacy learning utilizing our state-of-the-art computer and technology labs during scheduled 40 minute classes. Students learn by using multiple platform orientations which help them successfully navigate the digital world. Our computer curriculum includes instruction in coding which promotes student problem-solving and critical thinking in an authentic learning situation. In addition, MakerSpaces in the library and technology lab allow students to create projects sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge. In keeping with East Amwell's goal to prioritize the purposeful, thoughtful use of technology, students utilize commercial applications including Excel, ST Math, Google Drive, and develop keyboarding proficiencies to solve real-world challenges. As previously mentioned, EATV is a fully-equipped television studio run by our technology department and student staff. They produce a daily show while filming special events throughout the year.

The library/media center provides learning opportunities for all students. Our librarian conducts weekly classes for grades pre-K to 6 when students borrow books, learn Information Literacy Skills, and work on cross-curricular projects. The library sponsors Read Across America Week when we celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday and literacy by engaging the community in School House Reads, author visits, and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR). The larger community, including Board of Education members, county governmental officials, local business representatives, and retired teachers join us to read aloud to students in grades K-4.

World Language education is centered on Spanish and connects our students to the larger world by

mastering essential interpretive and interpersonal skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition to language acquisition, students gain understanding of the perspective and practices of another culture by following a standards-based curriculum. Exposure to Spanish language begins in the primary grades Pre-K to 2. In Grades 3-6, students are instructed 40 minutes per week for two marking periods and Spanish is one of the six core subjects for middle school students. Students enjoy cultural enrichment by participation in Spanish Club, Day of the Dead cross-curricular celebration, Spanish Fiesta, and a field trip to a local Spanish restaurant where students use conversational Spanish to interact with the staff.

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

“All the Children, All the Time” is the guiding principle of our high performing school. Dedication to quality instruction, intervention, and assessment maintains high levels of student achievement. All of our teachers have a passion for their profession and are well-versed in instructional methods that meet the needs of all learners. Lessons include not only direct instruction, but also modeling, demonstration, guided practice, inquiry, and experiential learning to name a few. Through the use of Writing Workshop and Balanced Literacy, teachers plan mini-lessons targeting the acquisition of skills that students then apply in their work. For example, primary teachers conduct shared reading lessons modeling skills such as sequencing that are later practiced in small, guided reading groups. Technology is readily available to both teachers and students and incorporated into everyday learning. Classrooms are wired so that everyone has access to the interactive Epson boards, Google classroom, Google docs, Smartboard lessons, Accelerated Reader, StoryWorks, multimedia resources, etc. Access to technology coupled with strong teaching has allowed students to mature into self-guided learners who are independently motivated and engaged. Study skills instruction supports self-reliant learning through interactive notebooks, study guides, note-taking, time management, and planning. Our teachers are skilled in differentiation strategies to ensure student success by varying modalities, leveling questions, and modifying content, process, product. Teachers adjust pacing for optimum student learning and create alternate methods of assessment. Common planning time allows for team-teaching which frequently occurs in a variety of settings throughout the school. Teachers instruct classes in the computer lab, science labs, technology lab, school garden, and our beautiful outdoor classroom.

Abundant student-centered learning throughout the school leads to high performance and achievement. East Amwell teachers use both formative and summative assessment to focus instruction and refine teaching strategies. The Developmental Reading Assessment II (DRA), PARCC, ST Math, and LinkIt, our schoolwide formative assessment program, provide data for targeted instruction. Based on these tools and teacher-made assessments, students are given opportunities for practice, re-teaching, and alternate evaluations. Students learn during small group instruction such as guided reading or leveled reading groups. Flexible grouping is implemented for skill development, extra practice, or cooperative learning projects. Hands-on learning in science and social studies includes projects completed with partners and peer groups. Peer editing, close reading, and self-assessments are other examples of student-centered learning.

Students are supported through Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS), Child Study Team Services, and the 504 Committee. Professionals and parents are involved in creating plans to meet the needs of students while in school and at home. I&RS and Individual Education Plans (IEP) allow for preferential seating, flexible pacing, study guides, therapy, mentors, and homework modification. Communication is ongoing among the counselor, teachers, and administration when necessary. IEP's and 504 plans also allow for extended time on all assessments. These plans are reviewed and adjusted with all stakeholders at eight to ten week intervals throughout the school year. East Amwell also maintains strong special services to support students with Speech, English Language Learning, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy needs.

Our successful RTI literacy program for primary grades was highlighted in the current New Jersey Literacy Association newsletter and provides tiered literacy instruction in grades K-3 to facilitate achievement at benchmark levels. Students meet with an interventionist or special education teacher for targeted, leveled instruction four to five days per week. Researched-based programs by Foundations, Fountas and Pinnell, Orton-Gillingham, and SPIRE were thoughtfully chosen for intervention instruction. Basic Skills instruction occurs daily supporting literacy and math development in Grades 3-5. Language Arts and math proficiency is supported through direct instruction of standards-based skills in small groups. Concurrently, both RTI and

Basic Skills students receive intervention and differentiated instruction by their classroom teacher. Middle School Tutorial in both math and language arts is offered to eligible students based on teacher recommendations and performance levels on a variety of assessments. Students learn in small group classes either before or during school once per week. Tutorial teachers analyze student performance data to target instruction in designated skill areas. All support programs utilize focused progress monitoring to ensure growth towards mastery.

The integration of these programs, interventions, and assessments support the diverse needs of our students. The administration and appropriate professionals, including speech therapists, the Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant, literacy specialist, special education teachers, and others, work cohesively to close any achievement gaps by identifying students who need assistance and providing the services outlined above. The progress of identified students is closely monitored so that instruction can be modified for optimum achievement.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### **1. School Climate/Culture:**

Our culture encompasses All the Children, All the Time where the Cougars ROAR (Respect Others, Accept Responsibility) every day. The Cougar Steering Committee sponsors activities with monthly character themes to highlight the importance of good character in our community. These principles and school-wide initiatives not only keep our school focused on its overall mission, but engage and motivate our students toward reaching their potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

Our meticulously maintained and beautiful physical environment is a positive one by design and Cougar spirit is evident throughout the building. The Cougar Walkway of engraved bricks honoring school community members greets everyone entering the building to remind them of the importance of family at East Amwell. Murals, student artwork, photos, our tiled wall, and dynamic bulletin boards proudly showcase love of our school family and honor student achievement. In the elementary wing, a lush garden maintained by fifth grade science students and the Environmental Club provides stunning views to our breezeway and delicious salads for spring snacks. We cooperatively work to protect the environment by recycling and upcycling as an award-winning participant of TerraCycle. East Amwell School is a strong community of dedicated stakeholders who appreciate our beautiful rural surroundings, facility, and supportive leadership.

Teachers work collaboratively with the administration as members of vital committees and serving as Unit Leaders. The administration relies on valuable input from units, committees, and individual teachers to maintain our positive culture and continued academic excellence. Communication is valued among colleagues and with administration where there is an “open-door policy” to share information and concerns. Teachers feel valued by students, parents, and the administration. This is brought to light each year during Teacher Appreciation Week when the PTO outdoes themselves every year to provide daily meals and surprises such as chair massages. The superintendent treats the staff to a Thanksgiving breakfast and both he and the principal cook a pancake breakfast for teachers every year. The administration shares in hosting our annual holiday party and teachers celebrate our special community with monthly breakfasts along with several social get-togethers through the year concluding with a June luncheon. Teachers and students flourish in this environment that values education and family.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

East Amwell Township School is an engaged community where meeting our children’s social and emotional needs is a collaborative effort of students, staff, parents, PTO, and community. Students find success through varied leadership opportunities. Peer Leaders host Red Ribbon Week, sharing themes that promote a healthy lifestyle and serve as school ambassadors greeting guests when they arrive for community outreach programs. Student Council provides leadership through charitable activities like face-painting to raise money for Breast Cancer Research, supporting veterans through Jeans for Troops, and hosting peer social events. The annual Talent Show, sponsored by student council delightfully showcases the varied talents of our students to an enthusiastic, supportive audience of students, teachers, and families.

The Environmental Club leads our extensive recycle and upcycle programs. In 2011, our school was awarded a \$50,000 grant for placing first in a statewide upcycle contest sponsored by TerraCycle. The grant money purchased a greenhouse for environmental education and updated our gym bleachers. Civic responsibility extends to the community as families regularly send in recyclables. Also, the club added collection centers to the municipal building and the local ShopRite. We continue to raise thousands of dollars through this program while helping to save the environment daily.

Various activities invite parents, families, and community members into the educational process. In addition to chaperoning field trips or helping in classrooms, there are volunteer opportunities to coach Science Olympiad, present at Career Day, and conduct Gallery Time lessons. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) 5K Color Run involves students, parents, and the community in an event that supports

school pride. Parents and teachers annually collaborate for Field Day and the PE department coordinates Discover Running where the community celebrates wellness, exercise, and sportsmanship.

Each year, East Amwell School unifies to support children served by Children's Home Society located in Trenton, NJ. Over \$62,000 has been raised by our school community to donate toys and clothing to 730 extremely needy children in Central New Jersey. Cougar SHARE connects our school with a deep sense of giving and service. Kindness, generosity, and pride create an excitement that permeates the building during our Cougar SHARE drive.

Communication with parents/guardians is essential to school success. The school's interactive website shares information and highlights activities and achievements. The Cougar Courier, our monthly newsletter is sent to all households and is available on the website. Teachers maintain classroom websites and our Parent Portal allows parents to monitor academic progress. Ongoing communication with parents occurs through emails, phone calls, and our Twitter account.

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

Professional development is one of the driving forces behind our successful school. Student achievement is the direct result of our insightful, effective professional development. The overall approach to professional development is to provide staff members with the knowledge and tools they need to educate the whole child in this complex world.

Within our school, the Staff Development Committee works closely with administrators, Unit Leaders, and staff members to ensure that the professional needs of the staff are effectively met. This includes training in the newest technology to enhance learning, valuable differentiation strategies, and the use of data to drive instruction. The school uses the expertise of staff members to provide professional development as well as bringing in outside presenters. When educational programs and initiatives such as Guided Reading, ST Math, Writing Workshop, and Next Generation Science are implemented, release time is arranged by the administration for staff to be trained, coached, and mentored. Also, the administration ensures that resources are available for purchasing books, instructional materials, and online professional development opportunities. New staff members are mentored and supported by peers and the administration to develop their craft and provide quality instruction for student achievement.

East Amwell Township School participates in multiple professional development opportunities as part of the sending districts to Hunterdon Central Regional High School. The administration works closely with the high school to align expectations and curriculum. Our teachers collaborate with the high school at monthly departmental articulation meetings to ensure that our students succeed as they move forward in their educational pursuits.

Our administration provides generous support including time and resources to our staff for outside professional development. This includes attending conventions, workshops, expert training, and pursuing advanced degrees. Our literacy specialist is part of the Rutgers Literacy Network and attends sessions at Teachers College at Columbia University to provide the most recent expertise and our computer specialist is a certified Google Educator. Several science teachers were trained at the Mickelson Academy and Sally Ride Academy demonstrating the value that East Amwell Township School places on continued professional education.

Integral to professional development and student achievement are assessment and analysis of student data to drive instruction, achievement, and growth. In particular, LinkIt formative assessment provides teachers with data on skills, standards, and growth throughout the year. Teachers use this data during professional development to focus instruction and lead students to greater success.

Professional development is ongoing and emphasizes current research and best practices. These opportunities for professional development unite the school community towards student achievement and school improvement.

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

East Amwell Township School believes that if the culture is in place, everything else positive and productive will follow. The school's leadership structure includes a superintendent, a principal, a Business Administrator, a Curriculum/Child Study Team Director, and Unit Leaders. Our leadership community also includes PTO, Peer Leaders, and Student Council.

Our school leadership philosophy has at its core the development of the whole child. Leadership is united around this common goal collaborating through small collegial committees to develop curriculum, collect student data, and formulate instructional strategies to promote student achievement.

Curriculum is monitored to support learning standards and high expectations while student data is collected through resources such as LinkIt to drive instruction and mastery of skills. Administrators encourage professional collaboration by providing common planning time for educators to focus differentiated instruction based on standards and student needs. Also, this leadership strategy includes utilizing master teachers to provide model lessons and coaching throughout the year. Initiatives like guided reading, project-based learning, and ST Math were implemented using this approach. These initiatives keep student academic growth at the forefront of all we do.

The responsibility of school leadership also involves helping students to mature into productive citizens. East Amwell Township School prioritizes the development of the whole child through a multi-faceted approach. Parents provide support through our active PTO that plans activities and provides funds for school-based assemblies. Peer Leaders and Student Council lead the school by involving students in programs like Drug Awareness Week and Jeans for Troops. The Cougar Steering Committee, comprised of the principal and faculty, meets monthly to establish a focus for character development. Through the leadership of the Cougar Steering Committee, the Kindness Challenge inspires classrooms to encourage each other to perform random acts of kindness. East Amwell School is proud to be a Kindness Certified School. Students look forward to our annual month-long Cougar SHARE Program supporting children and families in need through the Children's Home Society in Trenton, New Jersey. Using monetary donations from the school community, selected students shop for toys and clothes at a local Toys R Us. The whole student body is then involved in writing cards and distributing the gifts.

Students are trained in mindfulness-based stress reduction in PE to encourage positive interactions and develop strong character traits. Our counselor reinforces mindfulness skills when visiting classes and working with small groups. This emphasis on mindfulness gives students tools for dealing with peer conflict and provides opportunities for them to be role models for others.

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

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East Amwell Township School is a community of digital citizens. We prioritize the purposeful, thoughtful use of technology to facilitate learning, achievement, and communication among all community members. We define digital citizenship as a commitment to creating a safe, responsible, and digitally-literate environment. Our technological proficiency is the most instrumental practice for our school's success keeping our community connected for collaboration and communication.

East Amwell students each have their own devices because of our commitment to one-to-one technology. Beginning in Kindergarten, students learn with the support of individual iPads. In Grade 3 and continuing through graduation, students are assigned their own Chromebooks which they use in all subjects areas. Through one-to-one technology, students learn skills to navigate multiple platforms optimizing learning. In addition, students use their devices to access online learning opportunities such as Accelerated Reader, NoRedInk, ReadWorks, ST Math, Epic Books, and Quizlet. The Google Education Suite which includes Classroom, Docs, Sheets, Drawings, and Forms supports independent learning. Thus, resources, tools, and assignments are digitally available for learning in a variety of settings. Teachers accommodate students by differentiating assignments providing for support or advancement as needed. Communication is ongoing through this platform as students share ideas, ask questions, and provide feedback to their peers.

Our technology initiatives keep our community connected and focused on student achievement. All teachers use Planbook.edu online which allows them to collaborate and share with colleagues while planning instruction to maximize student potential. Administrators access Planbook.edu to monitor curriculum implementation and communicate with teachers providing feedback and suggestions. Teachers also confidently bring technology such as Kahoot, Co-Writer, NoRedInk, Quizlet etc. to facilitate learning.

East Amwell School uses the Genesis online student data system as a hub for attendance, grades, health information, and parent contact information. Through Genesis Parent Portal, parents have access to student assignments and grades keeping them involved in their child's academic endeavors.

The addition of LinkIt, which is a schoolwide formative assessment program, impacts instructional decisions ensuring growth potential. This platform provides data for teachers to analyze student achievement and growth. LinkIt tracks student mastery of Common Core Standards, automates grouping for intervention, details item analysis, and provides statistical reviews for test reliability and item validity. Using LinkIt and the information it provides, enhances learning at East Amwell and propels us to be a top performing school. East Amwell seamlessly uses technology in all we do. Student achievement is at the forefront of our efforts and the purposeful use of technology continues to be the most instrumental practice for the school's success.