



## **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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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>	0	0	0
<b>K</b>	0	0	0
<b>1</b>	0	0	0
<b>2</b>	0	0	0
<b>3</b>	0	0	0
<b>4</b>	0	0	0
<b>5</b>	0	0	0
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	87	86	173
<b>10</b>	85	86	171
<b>11</b>	93	91	184
<b>12 or higher</b>	104	89	193
<b>Total Students</b>	369	352	721

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 8 % Asian
  - 8 % Black or African American
  - 14 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 68 % White
  - 2 % 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: 3%

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	13
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	746
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

Armenian, Bengali, Chinese, French, French-Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Telugu, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22%  
Total number students who qualify: 158

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %  
75 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>7</u> Autism                  | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>37</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>8</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>1</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: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	42
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	20
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 17:1

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	97%	99%	98%	94%	96%

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	196
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	80%
Enrolled in a community college	12%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	1%
Found employment	5%
Joined the military or other public service	1%
Other	1%

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.

We pride ourselves on working together to ensure that all students are provided with a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment. Our curriculum is designed to spark intellectual curiosity, develop critical thinking, promote the ability to work collaboratively, with respect and compassion for one another. We foster self-confidence, integrity and an industrious spirit in our students so that they will reach their true potential, become lifelong learners and engaged citizens in an ever changing interdependent global community.

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**

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The Elwood-John H. Glenn High School (JGHS), located in the Hamlet of Elwood in the Township of Huntington, Suffolk County, New York, is one of four schools comprising the highly-regarded Elwood School District. The district, located thirty-five miles from New York City, covers a span of approximately nine miles which includes portions of the towns of East Northport, Greenlawn, and Huntington. A total of 2,191 students attend school in the Elwood District; currently, a student population of 722 is being served by Elwood-John H. Glenn High School.

Under construction when its eponym, Astronaut John H. Glenn, made his historic orbit of the earth in February of 1962, Elwood-John H. Glenn High School first opened its doors to students in September of that year. During the past fifty-five years Elwood has seen tremendous growth, changing from a predominantly rural community that included many farm families into a bustling suburban town. The community is comprised of business owners, professionals, and blue collar workers hailing from a wide diversity of multicultural backgrounds and socioeconomic standings. Although the average size of the graduating class has more than doubled from its original seventy-two students, JGHS remains steadfast to its original commitment of providing an excellent educational experience that empowers and inspires each student to achieve academic, social, and emotional success.

Elwood is unique from other communities in that there is no “Main Street” or “hub” of the town. As a result, the schools are often referred to as the “heart of the community.” Not only brick and mortar structures, our schools are truly where the community joins together to form its identity. There is a tremendous and long-standing sense of pride stemming back to the original two-classroom “Little Red Schoolhouse” which opened its doors in 1915. Community members work collaboratively with the Board of Education, administration, staff, and pupils to ensure that all our students, in culmination of their Elwood experience with attendance at JGHS, are afforded every possible opportunity to achieve their potential. To this end, school and community-based organizations such as the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA), Elwood Educational Endowment (EEE), the Booster Club (EBC), and Music Sponsors work to raise funds to enhance school programs and initiatives. Each year, these community-based organizations sponsor extra-curricular clubs and/or donate funds to enable the school to purchase resources to enhance its programs. Most recently, the EEE and EBC donated funds to purchase sets of Google Expeditions which enable teachers to lead students on field trips using virtual reality technology.

JGHS offers a variety of courses, extracurricular activities, and athletic opportunities to encourage student interests and passions. All students select appropriately challenging courses at the Regents, Honors, or Advanced Placement levels. Students identified with special needs are offered a robust high school experience in an environment that is most appropriate for their needs. Programs include life skills, special class, integrated co-teaching, and resource room support.

Five years ago, JGHS adopted an “Open Enrollment” policy enabling students wishing to challenge themselves to enroll in honors or Advanced Placement level courses. During that period, the school also added five new Advanced Placement courses including the AP Capstone program. As a result of these steps, the number of AP exams administered grew from 314 to 529, concurrent with a decline in student enrollment of nearly one hundred students. JGHS has proudly partnered with local colleges and universities including St. John’s University and Suffolk County Community College to develop dual enrollment courses, thus providing students with additional avenues to graduate high school with college credits. We are dedicated to fostering partnerships with additional post-secondary institutions to broaden the scope of opportunities offered to our students.

This year, to further expand our students’ learning opportunities and provide them with greater access to 21st century learning skills, JGHS provided every freshman with a Chromebook computer, thus “leveling the playing field” by ensuring that all students have, both at home and in school, use of the latest and most vibrant of technologies. This effort expanded the one-to-one initiative that began at Elwood Middle School and in three years, will result in all secondary students having been issued devices. Faculty and staff engage in ongoing professional development that is based on the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification,

Redefinition) model designed to cultivate a professional learning community that utilizes technology as a vehicle to redefine student learning tasks and opportunities.

In addition to supporting the academic development of its students, the school is led by a strong leadership team that works closely with central administration, staff, students, parents, and the community to support the emotional and social development of our students. To this end, collegial conversations and professional development are grounded in literature and research connected to equity, how to create a more culturally responsive school environment, supporting the adolescent learner, the positive impact of mindfulness techniques and growth mindset. The entire JGHS community is laser focused on providing a supportive learning environment in which every student is empowered and inspired to pursue personal potential and to the achievement of dreams.

We are proud of the work that we do each and every day. The Blue Ribbon designation would be exceedingly meaningful and would further energize all our efforts to serve the students of the Elwood community and validate what we already know about the successes of Elwood-John H. Glenn High School.

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

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

Students at JGHS engage in a robust curriculum which builds upon the foundational skills developed in elementary and middle school years. The curriculum addresses skills and outcomes which students are expected to acquire to meet success in their next course and post-secondary endeavors. Core courses are designed to reflect the NYS Standards and embed twenty-first century skills, and follow a logical and cohesive scope and sequence. Most courses are offered at Regents, Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) levels, thus providing appropriate options for our diverse contingent of learners.

The English Language Arts curriculum, designed to develop students' proficiencies in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, supports learning in all curricular areas. Engaged in a variety of literary and informational reading and writing assignments requiring the analysis of texts, students are tasked to identify supporting evidence, formulate arguments, study author's craft, and draw conclusions. Classes are designed to build upon these skills with the expectation of students' application with greater proficiency and independence. All English courses include a research component, and twelfth grade students complete a senior project requiring the application of said skills. Students may elect to enroll in AP Seminar, AP Language and/or AP Literature; these courses emphasize skills that students will use in college and beyond.

In mathematics, emphasis is placed on drawing connections between algebra, geometry, and numerical analysis using critical thinking and problem solving. Beginning in Algebra I, students are instructed to analyze problems algebraically and graphically, thus building a foundational approach to more challenging problems they will encounter in advanced coursework. This strategy also helps students to see patterns in mathematics and to derive formulas. Students use graphing calculators and computer programs to visualize the mathematics and aid in computing solutions. Students struggling in a course are placed in every-other-day math labs. AP Statistics and AP Computer Science Principles were recently added to allow all non-accelerated students the opportunity to take an AP mathematics course. World of Technology, Advanced Algebra with Financial Applications, and Introduction to Computer Programming offer students a hands-on and real-world approach to instruction. Introduction to Computer Programming was modeled after Harvard's CS50 course after two of our teachers attended the training on Harvard's campus. College Algebra was added to increase the number of students taking four years of math in high school while also preparing students for college entrance exams.

The social studies department has worked to align the curriculum and assessments to the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Standards and the New Framework for Social Studies. As a result, instructional focus shifted from memorization of content to an inquiry model where students build conceptual understandings and study enduring issues. The curriculum promotes students' abilities to become productive and civic-minded citizens who possess the understandings and skills to make the world a better place. To this end, courses are developed to equip students with knowledge of major world events and the associated outcomes spanning from the Paleolithic Era through modern day. Students engage in reading and writing activities in which they study primary and secondary sources and learn how to pose relevant questions, create arguments, and extract evidence. Students learn to become critical consumers of information as they study historical and current events through multiple lenses and relate many of these themes to contemporary issues. Scope and sequence includes Global History and Geography, American History, Participation in Government, and Economics. Students may elect to enroll in Criminal Justice, Psychology, AP Psychology, and Uncommon Valor. Additionally, seniors may participate in the Gotham course which capitalizes on our school's proximity to New York City via a combination of in-class study and field trips offering the opportunity to explore and learn the history of the City of New York.

The science curriculum is linked to real world applications. Students are taught to show and explain their thought process when working through calculations and when crafting written responses. The science department integrates inquiry-based lab activities reflective of the Next Generation Science Standards which focus on content, process, and analysis of information. For example, in Living Environment students discuss the influence of politics on climate change and assess data presented by various scientific groups.

JGHS offers all four Regents level science courses: Earth Science, Living Environment, Chemistry, and Physics. Students have access to an independent science research course and AP Capstone Research. Students have the ability to further explore their scientific interests through courses such as AP Biology, AP Chemistry, AP Physics I, AP Environmental Science, Forensics, and Anatomy.

Career and college planning begins in Freshman Seminar with students' introduction to Naviance, beginning their exploration of colleges and careers. Students and parents have access to career search tools and interest inventories offering assistance with exploration of career paths. Each year, students complete surveys and provide information about their interests and aspirations. This feedback is used in shaping future curriculum offerings and helps guide individuals towards meeting personal goals. Many students capitalize on opportunities to graduate with college credits by enrolling in AP or dual enrollment courses. Counselors meet with students to help maximize the benefits of current course offerings while appropriately challenging and preparing the students to meet their college and career goals.

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

JGHS recognizes that our students come to us with a wide range of interests and passions that extend beyond the core curriculum. To encourage development of such skills and talents, we offer students a comprehensive instructional program which includes courses in a multitude of disciplines. These courses are designed to enable students to pursue their passions.

Many students are enrolled in daily music class(es) or ensemble. In addition to Orchestra, Band, and Chorus, students may enroll in AP Music Theory and an online Honors Music Theory course. Co-curricular activities offer opportunities for further study and performance beyond the school day. These include Marching Band, Jazz Ensemble, Wind Ensemble, Chamber Strings, Chamber Choir, a school musical and Tri-M Music Honor Society. Instruction is focused on music literacy, technical skills, and performance with emphasis on interdisciplinary and multicultural learning. Teachers work with students on an individual basis to assist in preparation for auditions and honors ensembles. Music students contribute to the Elwood community with various performances throughout the year. This year, the JGHS Band was awarded a grant from the EEE to commission a piece of music in honor of the late Senator John H. Glenn. Students collaborated with the composer, enhancing their knowledge of the music composition process. "In Eternity" was performed to an audience, including community members and alumni. Select students participate in county and state honors ensembles. This year, a choral student earned the opportunity to participate in the National Association for Music Education's All-National Chorus.

Students are offered opportunities to explore, create, and find success through the visual arts. Using the elements and principles of art and design, students are able to engage and connect with exciting 2D & 3D experiences. Projects reflect principles of art history and technology and incorporate a wide array of mediums and techniques. JGHS offers courses such as Studio Art, Drawing and Painting, Digital Photography, Ceramics, and AP Art.

All students are enrolled in physical education each of the four years of high school. Students are introduced to a wide-array of activities ranging from organized sports to yoga and Zumba, with the hope that they will enhance their lives through pursuit of such activities outside of school and into adulthood. Teachers customize courses to incorporate activities that are most appealing to students. A Health course is completed prior to graduation, the curriculum of which focuses on fostering a healthy and active lifestyle. In addition to promoting a lifetime habit of healthy choices and physical fitness, our Health and Physical Education program strives to develop team-building, social interaction, and sportsmanship skills.

The Foreign Language curriculum is designed to encourage students to become global citizens and life-long language learners. The department works to establish an understanding of the languages studied while also emphasizing the values and contributions of their related cultures. Approximately 99% of students enroll in a foreign language during their high school career. Students have the opportunity to study Spanish, Italian, and American Sign Language. Many students continue their studies beyond the third year by enrolling in AP courses, dual enrollment courses, or conversational language classes. JGHS is one of a select few to offer the New York State Seal of Biliteracy which recognizes, through examination and oral presentation, those

students who demonstrate proficiency in speaking two or more languages. Foreign language extracurricular clubs include, activities and events such as World Language Honor Society, International Club, Spanish Club, Italian Club, and International Night.

The Industrial Arts department offers elective courses reflective of traditional woodworking programs as well as modern technologies such as robotics and engineering. Students learn how to use industrial tools and computer programs such as CNC Routers and AutoCAD. As Juniors and Seniors, students are afforded the opportunity to gain college credit from Suffolk County Community College (SCCC).

Family and Consumer Science (FACS) courses include International Cuisine, Gourmet Foods, and Foods and Nutrition. The FACS curriculum is aligned to health courses by reinforcing healthy eating habits. In the area of Business, students take electives such as Personal Finance Management, Accounting, Business Law and Sports Management. These courses assist students in developing lifelong financial literacy skills. Accounting students may take the course for credit through SCCC.

The library at JGHS offers a robust collection of resources that support students' learning in all curricular areas. It also provides an abundance of titles that promotes students' reading for enjoyment. The Library Media Specialist works collaboratively with all teachers to develop projects, prepare resources and provide instruction for students in the library. The Library Media Specialist has been particularly critical in ensuring that students are learning and applying research skills across disciplines.

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

The JGHS instructional program is customized to meet the needs of all students. Various levels of coursework ensure students ready access to the curriculum enabling them to achieve their academic potential. The Instructional Support Team (IST) meets bi-monthly to discuss student progress and establish intervention plans when warranted. Tutoring in the four core subjects is provided by content-certified specialists for students requiring academic intervention services (AIS). All other students may access this support as needed. A certified reading specialist individualizes instruction to address student deficits and supports literacy skills across content areas.

The role of educators at JGHS is much akin to that of coaches or facilitators. A gradual release of responsibility model is widely implemented, providing time for explicit instruction, guided practice and independent application. Student collaboration is fostered through partner and group work as teachers circulate to monitor progress, collect data and coach students. This model also lends to differentiation of tasks, student groupings, and resources, enabling teachers to reach the entire spectrum of learners. Google Classroom is utilized, allowing provision of individual learning platforms.

Data is collected via exit tickets, tests, quizzes, anecdotal conference notes, and homework. Assessments and rubrics are standardized across like courses reflecting exam structure and scoring tools associated with the NYS Regents and Advanced Placement exams. Teachers use BARS (Board Of Cooperative Education Services Assessment Reporting System) to identify trends in performance on NYS Regents exams. Data is extrapolated at multiple levels and is used to inform instruction.

Providing Chromebooks to all ninth graders has altered both teaching and learning strategies. Students conduct research, access resources through Google Classroom, and tap into an array of programs and apps. Chromebook carts strategically placed throughout the building provide upperclassmen access to this technology. Examples of assessment tools used to provide teachers with immediate data are Kahoot, Castle Learning, and Quizlet. NewsELA, an online resource, provides articles that can be customized by Lexile level, allowing all students to access the content.

All English Language Learners (ELLs) are supported by an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher through a combination of stand-alone and integrated co-teaching programs. The ENL teachers work collaboratively with content specialists, sharing successful practices and resources to support ELLs. Chromebooks are provided for translations, photographs to clarify vocabulary, and text-reading applications to assist in acquiring English skills. A summer school program is provided to build upon language

acquisition skills.

Students with Disabilities (SWD) participate in an instructional program designed for their individual needs within a least restrictive environment. Instruction is scaffolded for students in self-contained, inclusion, and resource room programs. Scaffolds may include the use of technology to read text or use of text-to-speech programs. Students in the life skills program are provided opportunities to have job experiences at locations such as Home Depot and Modells. Academic testing is updated annually to have a consistent measure of assessing the student's level of reading, writing and mathematics. These scores, along with teacher, parent and student input, help create IEPs that are distinctive and beneficial to each individual student.

High-achieving students enroll in a variety of advanced placement courses. Recently courses such as AP Computer Science, AP Music Theory, and AP Capstone Seminar and Research were added to expand student choice. JGHS partners with local colleges and universities to offer dual enrollment courses in technology, business, and world language. Students participate in independent study courses such as Science Research, Seal of Biliteracy, and Studio Art to further develop skills in areas of passion. Students have taken courses such as Mandarin and Macroeconomics to expand their portfolio through the school's virtual high school offerings.

JGHS consistently outperforms schools at regional and state levels. Highly successful in all academic areas, we nonetheless always strive for improvement. We continuously evaluate assessment data; whenever a gap is identified within a given subgroup, we address the deficit. For example, recent data indicated SWD and ENL student subgroups scored ten points or more below their peers making this a focus of administrators, teachers and support staff work. In response to this data, we have increased contact time with an ENL teacher, developed a stand-alone instructional period wherein a dual-certified ENL/Social Studies teacher prepares students for Regents exams, hired multilingual personnel to support ENL students as appropriate, and increased opportunities for all teachers to receive professional development related to strategies to support ELLs. To further address the needs of our SWDs, the school added a lab component to identified science and mathematics courses, providing these students additional practice and support in acquiring key skills. The Leveled Literacy Intervention Instructional program was adopted to support students with reading abilities significantly below grade level. Additionally, we focused on hiring special education teachers dual-certified in core content areas. The school partners with SEPTA to provide students with after school tutoring to help them prepare for their NYS assessments.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

JGHS is a collaborative learning community that supports the growth of students and staff. The Shared Decision Making team created a vision statement to reflect the guiding principles and values of the community. With the goal in mind of each student reaching his or her true potential, we recognize that the more connected and supported students feel, the better they will perform academically.

There is a strong emphasis on creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all students. To facilitate a smooth transition into high school, middle and high school staff meet to collaborate and create action plans for identified struggling students. The Freshmen Buddies Mentor Program pairs incoming ninth graders with upperclassmen to offer peer support during the transition year and beyond. Mentors meet with all eighth graders, lead building tours during Freshman Orientation, and continue to meet regularly to discuss topics such as getting involved, study skills, and social pressures. The Natural Helpers program taps into the existing peer-support network and trains members on how to actively listen and when to refer peers-in-crisis to staff members. Topics such as drug and alcohol awareness, mental health, dangers of cyber-bullying, and character development are discussed in class and during school and community presentations.

Students bring forth ideas to help improve the school culture through their student government representatives. A student advisory committee meets to discuss concerns and ideas for improvements, such as new elective offerings and proposals for new clubs. The Superintendent's Round-table invites seniors to meet with the superintendent to share suggestions on how to improve the overall experience of students. The staff works diligently to respond to students' suggestions. Over the past two years, five new student-initiated clubs were approved; among these are Unity with Diversity, Table Tennis, and the Gay Straight Alliance.

To further students' academic, social and emotional growth, the school administration and staff invest themselves in becoming well-acquainted with students and their families. Administrators greet students as they arrive at school and present in hallways during transition between classes. Staff members are available in the hallways and greet students at classroom entrances. The hallways of JGHS feature print materials posted to celebrate students' athletic, artistic, and academic achievements. Counselors meet with ninth graders during Freshman Seminar, then hold individual meetings annually with each student to discuss course planning and post-secondary plans.

The faculty and staff are vibrant contributors to the positive culture that exists at JGHS. Frequently, teachers attend workshops and conferences that support professional growth. The Sunshine Club celebrates one and all during times of joy while offering support during times of need. The Noble Knight Award (named for our school mascot), was created for faculty members to acknowledge colleagues who actively embody the mission of JGHS. The recipient is tasked with highlighting the great efforts of yet another outstanding member of the faculty, at the following month's faculty meeting.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

JGHS prides itself on the strong connections it has formed with the families and community members of the district. Parents are integral participants on a variety of committees and school-based organizations such as Shared Decision Committee, SEPTA and PTSA. These organizations provide JGHS with the opportunity to benefit from the families' input and insights on school initiatives via assistance in planning events such as community information nights which focus on topics including safe driving practices and the college application process. Last year, representatives from the Suffolk County Police Department presented "The Ugly Truth" to over three hundred students and parents, providing a powerful and informative seminar on drug education and awareness.

Teachers maintain classroom websites where students and parents access homework assignments, the

course syllabus, class notes, and more. Student grades are posted to the parent portal so parents can monitor their child's academic progress. Teachers, administrators and support personnel collaborate with parents, providing assistance to students struggling socially, emotionally and/or academically. Teachers and administrators often contact parents to offer reinforcement of positive student attributes, complementing those who have demonstrated excellent effort, shown improvement in grades and/or behavior, and who exhibit acts of kindness.

JGHS connects students with community members and organizations in areas in which interest has been evidenced. For example, students visit the Cold Spring Harbor DNA Center to perform labs under the direction of research professionals, the journalism class has attended press conferences led by local politicians, and the Mock Trial team collaborates with attorneys from within the community. Students participate in competitions such as Northwell Health's Medical Marvels wherein they interact with professionals in the medical field.

Students enjoy giving back to the community at large via singing in local nursing homes, organizing food, clothing and toy drives, assisting with Habitat for Humanity builds, and hosting a holiday party for local children in need. Annually, the community service club provides a much-anticipated dinner for senior citizens in the community followed by the senior citizens attending a performance of the annual JGHS musical production.

Elwood is fortunate to benefit from several community organizations invested in supporting educational programs in the district. The Elwood Education Endowment funds teacher-created grants for acquisition of teaching materials such as data-collecting probes for science labs and book lending libraries for English classes. The Elwood Booster Club invests in materials and equipment that enhance programs such as robotics and classroom technology devices. The Music Sponsors organization works with high school staff members to host local school districts in invitational music events. Additionally, each year many community organizations and individual community members generously sponsor scholarships for graduating seniors.

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

The Elwood School District strongly believes that an investment in professional development is an investment in our students' futures. The Board of Education, district and building administrations as well as staff recognize the importance of continuously growing our programs and practices. Therefore, we support a multitude of professional development opportunities including continued education through colleges and universities, workshops provided through local BOCES, NYS Department of Education, professional organizations, collegial literature circles, and training sessions led by administrators and staff members.

Professional development opportunities at John Glenn High School are focused on developing a positive and engaging learning environment and seek to continuously improve student achievement, address the shifts in technology integration, and use data to inform instruction in alignment with the goals of our Board of Education, district and building mission statements, as well as the NYS learning standards. Surveys are administered to identify need, value, and efficacy of professional development. The Professional Development Committee is comprised of administrators, faculty, staff and parents, all using these survey results to determine areas of focus for the school year that align with school and district short- and long-term goals. Examples of ongoing professional development opportunities include, but are not limited to: workshops on building Google websites, using Google Classroom and Google Expeditions as an instructional tool, co-teaching strategies, equity and mindfulness, supporting English Language Learners, and cultural competency.

Another focus of professional development is building of leadership capacity among staff members. We believe that some of the best learning opportunities can be provided within our school and district community. In order to foster this collegial learning community, every faculty and department meeting begins with sharing of successful practices and staff members who attend training lead turn-key workshops. Additionally, schedules are designed to allow collaborative team planning; and teachers are invited to visit their colleagues' classrooms to observe best practices. Thus, the most successful instructional strategies are

shared among the faculty and may be replicated as appropriate. Faculty members have applied for and been accepted to participate on committees at the state level to develop assessments, worked with colleagues across the district to vertically align curriculum, and have also taught in-service courses within Elwood.

The staff engages in interdisciplinary planning and collaboration during faculty and department meetings. For example, the AP Statistics and AP Biology teachers collaborate to identify skills common to each course and plan instructional approaches to support student mastery. Administrators and staff participating together in workshops and conferences are examples of the school-wide commitment of identifying and perpetuating best practices with the goal of providing the most optimal learning environment possible for our students while propelling our programs to the next level.

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

The administrative team at JGHS consists of the building principal and two assistant principals. The principal, a welcome and ubiquitous presence, works on-the-go behind her mobile desk. She may be found, throughout the school day, greeting students and staff in the hallways, observing cafeteria events, or simply observing the JGHS family during its school day, augmenting the culture of secure confidence. Both assistant principals are equally evident throughout the school building where they interact with students and staff with a heartfelt integrity of purpose. Additionally, the assistant principals each oversee two grade levels of students and are the primary point of contact to address any specific issues that arise. They work closely with the building principal to support the well-being of all.

This team works closely with central office administration to support the vision, goals and instructional practices that promote students' academic success and social and emotional well-being. They serve as instructional leaders while working collaboratively to establish building goals, promote the sharing of successful practices, and participate in professional development training sessions with teachers.

The administration promotes a collaborative learning environment where all stakeholders are valued and contribute to the organization's overall success. They work to foster relationships with stakeholders in order to establish an environment rooted in mutual respect. Teachers are encouraged and empowered to pursue their own professional goals and are supported in the application of new instructional techniques, utilization of new technologies or in leading new courses. Each year, faculty members are invited to propose new courses pursuant to student surveys which are used to determine interest. The courses that evidence the most interest are offered the following year.

The leadership team is accessible to students, staff and parents. An open-door policy enables the team to further relationships and proactively address questions or concerns. The building administrators informally meet on a daily basis to ensure that the team is working in concert to support the initiatives of the day and to ensure that all members of the team are abreast of any pressing issues. Additionally, administrators meet monthly with representatives from the Elwood Teachers Alliance, the PTSA and student government to seek feedback, address concerns, and plan school events. Committees such as Shared Decision Making, Principal Advisory, and Student Principal Advisory Committee (SPAC) provide students, teachers, and community members opportunities to offer input and be involved in curriculum and policy evaluation and change. An administrator is present at each of these committee meetings to ensure that the focus remains on offering students the best educational experience possible.

At JGHS, it is not uncommon for teachers and students to be the agent for change. For example, a group of students recently articulated an interest in pursuing studies in computer science. They met with building leadership with the result of approval for the addition of the course.

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

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The students at JGHS achieve successes in many arenas and as such, bring a tremendous sense of pride to the Elwood Community. Our students are some of the most high-achieving students in the country and have earned acceptance into many of the most prestigious post-secondary institutions. We attribute this success to the close relationships that are cultivated with students, the customized academic, social and emotional support that is given to them throughout their high school career.

One of the primary objectives included in our vision statement, is to provide a learning environment and experience that enables students to “reach their true potential.”

Additionally, we subscribe to the philosophy of educating the whole child. Ultimately, we want our students to feel safe, secure and to recognize that the adults in the building are committed to their success. Prior to entering the high school all incoming freshmen get to meet with the students and adults that will be working with them throughout their high school career. Freshmen Buddy Mentors make connections with their eighth grade buddies and address questions or concerns that they may have about transitioning to JGHS. A survey is sent home to the parents of all incoming ninth graders to help gain feedback about topics to be addressed at Freshman Orientation. All ninth grade students in Freshman Seminar are given an interest survey to help the school counselor plan a four-year academic program that supports each student’s college and career goals.

The counseling department uses a graduation credit review worksheet and a four-year planning document to help monitor student progress. Each counselor pays close attention to the students and if necessary develops plans of action to assist any student that is struggling to meet the goals established. Our staff meets regularly to discuss students who require special attention (academically, socially or emotionally) and works collaboratively to develop action plans that help to build student capacity to access resources on their own, such as extra help, AIS, weekly progress reports and other resources. Our teaching and support staff are also highly invested in our students’ success and their influence extends beyond the classroom walls. It is not uncommon for the faculty and staff to be present at an athletic competition, musical production, or other school and community events to demonstrate support for the students beyond the school day.

Our faculty and staff are teachers, coaches, class advisors, mentors, and for many students, like family. We treat each student as if we would treat our own. In short, our success as a school community can be attributed to the caring and customized approach that we constantly strive to provide for every John Glenn Knight!