



## **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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 219 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 50 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 37 High schools
  - 40 K-12 schools

346 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
  - Urban or large central city
  - Suburban
  - Rural or small city/town
- Number of students as of October 1, 2018 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>	69	47	116
<b>1</b>	40	45	85
<b>2</b>	43	37	80
<b>3</b>	37	31	68
<b>4</b>	35	34	69
<b>5</b>	29	40	69
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<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>	253	234	487

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 1 % Black or African American
  - 97 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 1 % 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 2017 – 2018 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, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	19
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	502
(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: 34 %  
165 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 90 %  
Total number students who qualify: 436

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
62 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>0</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 19
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	9

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 22:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
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 2018.

<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. 2010

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

Our vision is to provide a loving, caring, and supportive educational environment that furthers a philosophy of respect and high expectations for all students, parents, teachers, and staff. Our mission is to accomplish this by providing students with the necessary skills to reach their highest potential.

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

Parents fill out an application online or in person in order to be placed on a waiting list. Throughout the year, multiple lotteries are held and students are chosen at random. Priority is given to students with siblings currently attending the school.

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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Mater Academy East, a public charter school, has been serving the Little Havana community in Miami, Florida since 1999. The school was originally established with about 75 total students in kindergarten through second grade. We currently serve over 450 students in kindergarten through fifth grade, offering a nurturing environment, which focuses on academic and character development. The majority of our students live within close proximity of the school. The neighborhood we serve consists of families from low socio-economic backgrounds, and 92% of our students qualify for free or reduced meals via the National School Lunch Program. Due to the high percentage of students qualifying for this program, Mater East has been designated as a Title I school. In addition to being economically disadvantaged, our families struggle with a language barrier. Ninety eight percent of our students are Hispanic, and over 50% of them participate in the English Language Learners (ELL) Program at the school.

Since its inception, Mater Academy East has strived for excellence. Our vision is to provide a loving, caring, and supportive educational environment that furthers a philosophy of respect and high expectations for all students, parents, teachers and staff. Our mission is to accomplish this by providing students with the necessary skills to reach their highest potential. Mater Academy East has earned an “A+” for the past 14 consecutive years and has been recognized as one of the top 50 schools in the state of Florida. Over the years, the school has garnered a number of prestigious awards and accomplishments. In 2010, the school won the esteemed National Blue Ribbon Schools award. Additionally, Mater Academy East has received the award for Title I Distinguished schools in the 2007-2008 and the 2009-2010 school years, is a three-time award winner of the Superintendent/School Board of Miami Dade County Public Schools Platinum Award, has been recognized as a top ten-charter school at the Florida Charter School Conference in 2006, and was recognized for educational design excellence that same year. Mater Academy East has also been SACS accredited by Advanced Ed since the 2009-2010 school year.

Mater Academy East’s curriculum focuses on clear measurable goals for student learning. The curriculum has been developed to incorporate traditional techniques with numerous innovative programs in addition to free after school tutoring and enrichment programs. Our program reflects high-quality instruction that implements research-based instructional strategies while using a variety of resources in a technology rich environment in order to maximize learning for all students. We follow the Sunshine State Standards and Florida Standards, which encompass the core subject areas such as Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. Additionally, the students take weekly courses in Spanish, Art, Music and Physical Education.

Furthermore, Mater Academy East offers a variety of during and after school programs. These programs further allow us to challenge and develop students to reach their full potential outside of the core curriculum areas. We currently offer after school clubs such as cheerleading, music, art, fitness, chess, science, cooking, and Florida Future Educators of America (FFEA). During school hours, we have collaborated with Common Threads to provide our students with “Small Bites” lessons, which aims to teach essential nutrition and health content. These lessons also allow for students to partake in hands on cooking demonstrations and are aligned with Common Core and the Next Generation Science Sunshine State Standards.

Mater Academy East most recently began the process of becoming a STEM designated school through Advanced Ed. The school has implemented a STEM program across all subject areas and has given students the opportunity to engage in STEM related activities such as creating generators with the help of Florida Power and Light (FPL) employees, producing their very own Stop-Motion Studio Movies to re-create scenes from a book and actively participating in the Miami Dade County’s SECME Olympiad Competition. Our curriculum fosters a technology rich environment where all students have access to their own laptops, and school computer labs. Mater Academy East supports a highly innovative curriculum, which blends traditional approaches with innovative programs and techniques. In order to meet the needs of our students, we are consistently initiating new programs and practices. Our faculty is comprised of certified, highly qualified teachers who are dedicated to excellence. A tradition of parental and community involvement are an integral part of the school’s success. These collaborative efforts ensure that Mater Academy East meets high standards for all students.



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

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

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

Mater Academy East’s reading and language arts curriculum follows the Language Arts Florida Standards (LAFS). The literacy program focuses on thematic instruction using the state adopted texts coupled with a novel based approach while incorporating explicit instruction in phonics, vocabulary and comprehension. The curriculum focuses on various comprehension themes such as inferences predictions, text organization, story elements/structure and features of a text. In addition, students engage in research and informational skills by learning how to read graphs, diagrams, timelines and knowing how to select appropriate multimedia resources and connecting them to real world problems.

The reading and language arts curriculum engages students in a language rich environment. All grade levels receive an uninterrupted instructional reading and language arts block daily. Within this block, the school takes a holistic approach and immerses students in whole and small group reading instruction. Differentiated Instruction is conducted daily. Students are placed in homogeneous reading groups and teachers use a variety of leveled resources to reteach and/or enrich the curriculum. Groups are created based on the most recent data analysis and teacher observation. Diagnostic Assessments, through the use of i-Ready - a technology-based program, are administered multiple times throughout the school year to monitor student growth and progress, thereby empowering teachers to make more informed instructional decisions and to motivate students with access to their own personal path to growth.

Additionally, the writing process is used in the classrooms to allow the students to communicate clearly and effectively. Students are encouraged to seek out information, explore subjects in depth and gain a deeper understanding of the world around them. Writing plays several roles in the classroom. For example, it allows students to describe by using their words, encourages logical thinking by forcing students to organize their thoughts and helps them learn how to tell a story, communicate ideas and record important moments. Students who need additional academic assistance in reading receive tier two interventions to focus on areas of needed growth. These students receive an additional uninterrupted block of reading instruction in a smaller group setting in order to apply skills and strategies in reading with teacher support. Close monitoring of student progress is conducted, and re-teaching takes place as necessary.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

The math curriculum at Mater Academy East follows the Mathematics Florida Standards (MAFS). The core of our program lies in an authentic, real-world approach. Students are encountered with genuine problems that arise outside the classroom or social issues that students can learn more about through mathematical analysis. These strategies used amongst all classroom teachers at Mater Academy East are an integral part of the curriculum for engaging students in mathematical modeling and for preparing students to use mathematics beyond the classroom. Teachers continuously engage students to draw on their real-world knowledge and experiences and approach tasks authentically.

Mater Academy East has a long tradition of the use of manipulatives in teaching mathematics. The use of manipulatives allows students to construct their own cognitive models for abstract mathematical ideas and processes. It also provides a common language with which to communicate these models to their teacher and classroom peers and/or other students. It engages students by increasing both interest in and enjoyment of the mathematics curriculum at our school.

Students identified as needing additional assistance in math receive a supplementary uninterrupted block of mathematics instruction daily through the use of an intervention program. The students receive instruction in a small group setting in order to target specific math strategies with teacher support. Close monitoring of student progress is conducted, and re-teaching takes place as necessary. Technology programs such as i-Ready are used to track and monitor student progress. In addition to i-Ready, all students take district topic

assessments, which allow teachers to make data driven decisions. Subsequently, data chats are conducted on monthly basis whereby teachers, students and administration discuss individual progress. Adjustments are made as necessary based on this data in order to ensure students meet their yearly goals.

### **1c. Science:**

Mater Academy East's science curriculum has had a successful track record due to the dedication of students, staff, parents and community partnerships. The overall goal of Mater Academy East is for students to achieve their full potential as young scientists by incorporating the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards across all grade levels and a technology rich environment in its approach to set the pace and topics covered throughout the school year. Teachers begin to introduce scientific vocabulary and concepts from early on to give students the tools to help them succeed as they move from one grade level to the next. Weekly hands on experiments involving critical thinking and broad scientific concepts encompasses the classroom environment. Teachers expose students to scientific and mathematical concepts at every opportunity by using a number of standard aligned resources through technology programs such as Discovery Education and the Happy Scientist. These technology rich programs provide teachers with tools to teach their students to think critically about the content they use, see, and experience in their daily lives as well as ask questions about the world around them. Furthermore, programs such as the Happy Scientist provides the opportunity for students to engage in digital lessons and labs. Student progress is monitored through district-made topic assessments as well as teacher observation.

Most recently, Mater Academy East has begun the process of earning a STEM designation. This two-year process engages students, parents, and community members with the end goal of increasing literacy in science, technology, engineering, and math. Events such as the Invention Convention, SECME Olympiad, and the Mater East Science Fair Expo bring students, families and community partners together to allow students to achieve the skills required for personal decision-making, participation in civic and cultural affairs, and economic productivity.

### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

At Mater Academy East, we are fully dedicated to developing well-rounded students who are prepared to deal with the issues that are relevant to today's society. All social studies lessons are aligned with the Florida Sunshine State Standards. It is an immersive program where students are encouraged to ask questions, make inferences and connect historical and current societal issues and relate them to their daily lives. Furthermore, we expect our students to celebrate their cultures as well as other cultures through community events which include a yearly school wide Hispanic Heritage Festival and a Black History Month Cultural Street Festival. All social studies units explore specific themes through the concept of history, culture, economics, civics and geography.

Mater Academy East's social studies curriculum focuses on research and analysis to help students become active and informed citizens in an ever-changing world. Teachers work to integrate social studies in language arts and reading to extend the students' understanding of concepts. Students gather information through various primary and secondary sources and use this information to learn, reflect and connect the past with the present. Students use a variety of resources such as historical and currently relevant texts as well as maps, interviews, documents, photos and artifacts. In addition to these sources, students have online access to Studies Weekly, a magazine specifically aligned to the grade level standards. Through this program, students develop inquiry-based questions, research topics, and demonstrate their understanding through writing in different genres, which include reports, diaries, poems, songs and newspaper articles. Additionally, each unit of study is accompanied by a weekly unit assessment, which allows teachers to ensure students have mastered the topics being taught. Due to the nature of such an immersive social studies curriculum, which also provides students with the opportunity to celebrate a variety of cultures outside the classroom, our students are expected to continue to be productive members of society with an innate sense of cultural sensitivity well beyond their years at Mater Academy East.

### **1e. For secondary schools:**

## **1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:**

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

Mater Academy East offers a variety of additional curriculum areas in order to allow students to reach their highest potential. Besides our core curriculum, Mater Academy East offers courses in art, music, Spanish Language and physical education. These courses allow the students to venture out of the standard core curriculum and enhance the learning experience.

Certified art teachers focus on a curriculum that integrates aesthetics, studio art, collaboration and art history in an engaging, creative and imaginative environment. Technology supports all lessons through the use of Promethean boards and laptops. Art history/aesthetic visual discussions make frequent use of projected images. Students discuss and observe various aspects of the images such as color, space, line, and form. They participate in discussions of how these images make them feel, what they see, and what they like and dislike. Knowledge of the artists and their backgrounds also play a large role in the students acquiring an understanding of the art. Additionally, projects relate to concepts covered in the visual presentation and discussion. While students work on their projects, images are displayed for continuous reference. The art curriculum is also shared with the general education teacher to enhance the core curriculum.

Physical Education encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, physical fitness, motor skills, social skills and positive attitudes that foster and empower students to sustain regular, lifelong physical activity as a foundation of healthy, productive and a fulfilling life. At Mater Academy East, students take part in developmentally appropriate activities and experiences which contribute to the growth and development of the individual child. In kindergarten and first grade, the curriculum emphasizes on learning basic movement and motor skills, developing the basics to understanding healthy fitness levels and providing opportunities to develop effective personal and social skills. The upper grade program focuses on further developing a broad spectrum of physical skills and the knowledge necessary to use these skills and maintain fitness for a lifetime of active participation.

World Language-Spanish is offered across all grade levels. Kindergarten and first grade students receive Spanish instruction thirty minutes daily and second through fifth grade students receive 90 minutes weekly. The Spanish curriculum at Mater Academy East emphasizes oral use of the language in all experiences. At all levels, students develop skills within contexts which build a greater understanding of the Hispanic cultures. Reading and writing are introduced as students begin to gain mastery of the oral language such as sounds, structures, and vocabulary. Reading comprehension skills are taught not only to reinforce the oral language, but to develop the literacy skills needed to master full fluency in the language.

The Music Program at Mater Academy East offers a program which follows a sequential format based on the elements of rhythm, melody, harmony, structure, timbre and musical expressions. Students are taught at a young age to read musical notes and play instruments such as recorders and percussion instruments. Current technology offers many options for expanded music learning. The students use interactive Promethean boards and various websites to enhance musical engagement and learning. Technology also provides for experimental exploration of music in many world cultures, providing various opportunities for our young musicians.

### **3. Special Populations:**

In an effort to address the individual needs of the diverse population served at Mater Academy East, the Response to Intervention process is in place. This practice of providing high quality instruction and interventions aligned with student needs with data-based information is useful for identifying, defining, and tracking students' progress in academic and behavioral areas. Students are pulled out of the classroom and with an interventionist, focus and work on the areas of need. Also, small group instruction within the general

education setting allows assistance to students who may be struggling. This process is essential to the attempt of closing achievement gaps so that all students could reach their appropriate academic level. As students continue to demonstrate academic difficulties, they move through the Response to Intervention process. As a student moves to Tier 2, they are placed in small group interventions. If that does not suffice, they are moved to Tier 3 where, along with the small group intervention, they will also receive one-to-one instruction/interventions. Students who do not adequately respond to several well-implemented intensive level interventions are considered for evaluation for Exceptional Student Education.

Mater Academy East practices a culture of belonging, equality, and individual worth. Teachers work collaboratively while planning and providing substantive instruction. Teachers assess and evaluate student progress, as well as actively engaging in teaching and supporting all students in the classroom. Collaborative and integrated services are provided to students with disabilities, English language learners, and migrant students. Mater Academy East makes available highly effective instruction and uses the appropriate supports and services within a general education setting. Accommodations, consultation, and collaboration are imperative to helping our students meet their individual goals. Differentiated instruction, whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, project-based learning, and guided instruction are all evidenced-based instructional methods used.

All students, regardless of disability, English Language level, or legal status, are included in all activities. Teachers actively participate in the development of Individualized Education Plans, whether it is the initial, annual, or interim, to ensure all accommodations and goals are appropriate for the individual student. The Multidisciplinary team reviews academic goals, areas of need and areas of strength in curriculum and learning, social and emotional status, independent functioning, health care, and communication skills. Should the child need any of these services, they will be provided within the school and general education classroom.

All general education teachers have a copy of the Individualized Education Plan for students participating in Exceptional Student Education Program and the English Language Learning Program. Using a list of accommodations, teachers document their lesson plans so that appropriate accommodations are used when necessary.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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

The school climate and culture has proven successful by having a staff and leadership team that is visible and available and allows for students and parents to feel valued, appreciated, and respected. Teachers and staff at Mater Academy East work together on a common set of beliefs and values to provide a school culture that promotes the students' ability to learn. For example, Mater Academy East employs a full-time school counselor that plays a vital role in helping all students in the areas of academic achievement, but also career, social and emotional development. Character education has played a pivotal role in the school counselor's commitment to promoting a continuous learning process that enables our students to become moral, caring, and responsible individuals. Teachers provide an extension of the program by creating meaningful character-building experiences for their students across the curriculum and a wide variety of teaching environments throughout the school day.

A student code of conduct has been established since the school's inception in order to provide clear guidelines and expectations with regards to student behaviors. Our unwavering commitment to upholding the guidelines set forth by our student code of conduct has helped to foster an environment where students are able to flourish. Our student code of conduct was designed to mitigate behaviors that could potentially detract from a learning environment that is optimal for student success. Our school's Dean of Discipline is tasked with the daily responsibility of upholding the school's code of conduct by collaborating with teachers, students and parents to minimize truancy, violation of school policies, as well as behavioral and/or academic concerns.

The physical safety of our students and staff is paramount at Mater Academy East. The school has developed an extensive School Safety Plan, which has been tailored to meet the specific needs of our school. As a result, students, parents, teachers and staff have the ability to freely function in an environment that has been tailored to provide them with an invaluable sense of security at all times. Mater Academy East provides an environment that is inviting, celebrates success, promotes team building and encourages teachers to impart meaningful feedback throughout our decision-making processes. Teachers can also take solace in knowing that Mater Academy East is steadfast in its commitment to support an environment that invites innovation and input. Subsequently, staff morale remains high and has been one of the major factors that has contributed to productivity and overall student success.

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

Mater Academy East prides itself in bringing parents, families, and communities together to create a trusting environment. Family engagement continues to be at the forefront of the school's efforts to achieve student success. Part of its success has been attributed to its parental volunteer program, which has been in effect since the school's inception. The goal of this program is to encourage families to be part of their child's education by participating in school related activities such as becoming a room parent, reading to the class, attending field trips, and organizing special events. Additionally, Mater Academy East has had a long-standing relationship with community partners such as City of Miami Parks and Recreation, McDonalds, Common Threads and Amigos for Kids. It is through these partnerships, such as Amigos for Kids, that Mater Academy East is able to offer workshops to educate parents and families on best practices in parenting.

With our designation of being a Title I school, Mater Academy East has a full-time community involvement specialist that serves as a bridge between the home and the school. The community involvement specialist is tasked with providing informational workshops to parents, surveying the community to target areas of critical need, and performs home visits to ensure the welfare of students and families in times of need. The community involvement specialist also maintains the Title I Parent Center. This center provides parents with flyers, coupons, monthly calendar of activities, school news, a laptop computer, as well as informational texts that are available for checkout. The community involvement specialist also tabulates ongoing data on a monthly basis, which provides the school with an insight into the

amount of parental engagement that is occurring and the ways in which parents are communicating with the school.

Lastly, Mater Academy East's Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) is responsible for final decision making at the school as it relates to the implementation of the components of the School Performance Excellence Plan. The EESAC committee is comprised of the principal, teachers, educational support employees, students, parents, and business/community representatives. The EESAC's function is to bring together all stakeholders and involve them in an authentic role in decisions that affect instruction and the delivery of programs. The EESAC committee is one of the key components in Mater Academy East's ability to effectively engage families and the community in a way that truly impacts student success.

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

Promoting continuous professional development at Mater Academy East has been responsible for a high teacher retention rate, attracting and keeping staff engaged and preventing teacher burnout. Our end goal is to ensure teachers and staff continue to be competent and successful. This is made possible by building confidence and enabling teachers to develop the knowledge and skills they need to address student challenges and improve on their instruction and their instructional approach.

During the process of selecting professional development opportunities, teachers are asked to state measurable goals and outcomes. Upon completion, teachers must reflect on the information that was disseminated and interpret relevant student data in order to determine the impact of the professional development. The success of the professional development opportunities provided for our teachers and staff are also measured through teacher and staff surveys as well as formal and informal classroom observations. Additionally, the teachers and staff at Mater Academy East are afforded the opportunity to work with an in-house Professional Development Liaison. The Professional Development Liaison acts as a bridge between the school, state and local school district by assisting teachers with the professional development requirements that teachers must fulfill for the purposes of continuing education and certification. Furthermore, the Professional Development Liaison's role is to motivate and seek new learning opportunities for teachers and staff. These learning opportunities are targeted to each individual's areas of need and/or growth, while also seeking professional development opportunities that are aligned with the academic standards and goals of the school.

Mater Academy East has placed an emphasis on teachers seeking professional development opportunities outside of the conventional methods used in teacher education. Our school has seen first-hand the value of utilizing innovative instructional strategies taught by nationally acclaimed instructors who promote critical thinking and the use of unconventional teaching methodologies. These professional developments also differ in their approach in offering additional opportunities for in depth observations, reflection and growth.

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

The leadership at Mater Academy East is comprised of the Principal, Assistant Principal, and a Lead Teacher. The core leadership at Mater Academy East is also complemented by its department heads, as well as its Reading, Math and Science coaches. While each member of the leadership team plays a specific role, they all work collaboratively to achieve one common goal, which is ensuring the success of its students.

The Principal and Assistant Principal at Mater Academy East are instructional leaders with an extensive background in curriculum and instruction who sustain a shared vision for the students' academic achievement. Collaboratively, the Principal and Assistant Principal ensure that rigorous, standards-based instruction is taking place in all classrooms and support continuous professional development opportunities for all teachers and staff members. Additionally, the mentor and mentee program has long been established by the school Principal at our school. This program chooses from a pool of experienced volunteer educators who have collaborative and cooperative skills and can commit to the process to train, support and ultimately retain new teachers. The mentoring process at Mater Academy East not only provides beginning teachers access to veteran teacher's expertise and wisdom, but also gives the experienced teachers a way to

validate their expertise. The Assistant Principal at Mater Academy East carries out a significant role in progress monitoring of all students and analyzes data collected to ensure proper design of a rigorous curriculum is in place.

The Instructional Coaches play a significant role in the school's leadership approach. They are responsible for meeting with teachers during common planning to support the design of detailed unit plans. They provide resources and assist teachers in locating and using instructional materials that support best practices. The Reading and Math Coaches ensure proper implementation of interventions are being met for at-risk students. Lastly, the Staffing Specialist gathers student data collection and collaborates with general education teachers while providing additional support through ongoing consultations. Staffing Specialist ensures IEPs, EPs and 504s are created and implemented. Our Guidance Counselor makes up part of our leadership team by providing guidance services and character education to our students.

Extensive knowledge of the instructional environment, individual student needs, strengths and weaknesses, have laid the foundation for an effective school leadership at Mater Academy East. A culture of positive beliefs and high expectations for all of our student body, faculty and staff have fostered an environment to empower a shared sense of ownership in the success of our school.

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

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The after school tutoring academic enrichment program at Mater Academy East has been instrumental to the school's overall success. Since the school's inception, this program has been paramount in student academic achievement. This program was implemented by its current and founding Principal and was designed to provide safety and supervision for an at-risk school population while providing academic support to all students in the areas of reading and math. The curriculum for this academic enrichment program was designed to provide additional support in the core curriculum areas by providing a skill focus in reading and math and to help re-mediate fundamental skills. Grouping students in each grade level according to skill deficiencies, conducting pre and post assessments to confirm growth and/or additional supports and instituting a consistent weekly schedule along with monitoring attendance has set the foundation for a successful/data driven academic enrichment program. Selecting staff that have a high level of expertise in the specific subject has also benefited stakeholders and provided a time and place for teachers to collaborate on best practices.

Additionally, the program offers a distinctive array of supplemental curriculum materials and comprehensive teacher support to accelerate achievement for learners. Targeted practice and standards mastery for reading and math both in print and online encourage curiosity and discovery in our students. The program provides an environment designed to engage our students and improve their capacity to learn. Using the right tools for the right students at the right time helps students achieve a deeper learning to conquer the standards with targeted research-based instruction. Practice, support, and test preparation for reading and math are provided with both print and digital/online resources. Thereby resulting in better student preparedness, which results in improved grades and better test scores.

This academic enrichment program has long been considered the brainchild of Mater Academy East and is considered to be one of the most integral aspects of our school's ability to produce repeated academic success. Because of the repeated and proven effectiveness of our enrichment program, many of our sister schools have adopted this model which has resulted in significant and measurable academic gains. This is made possible by implementing a curriculum that is universally adoptable due to its data driven nature and its focus on student specific needs and outcomes.